



VHDF News

A QUARTERLY NEWSLETTER OF THE
VERSATILE HUNTING DOG FEDERATION

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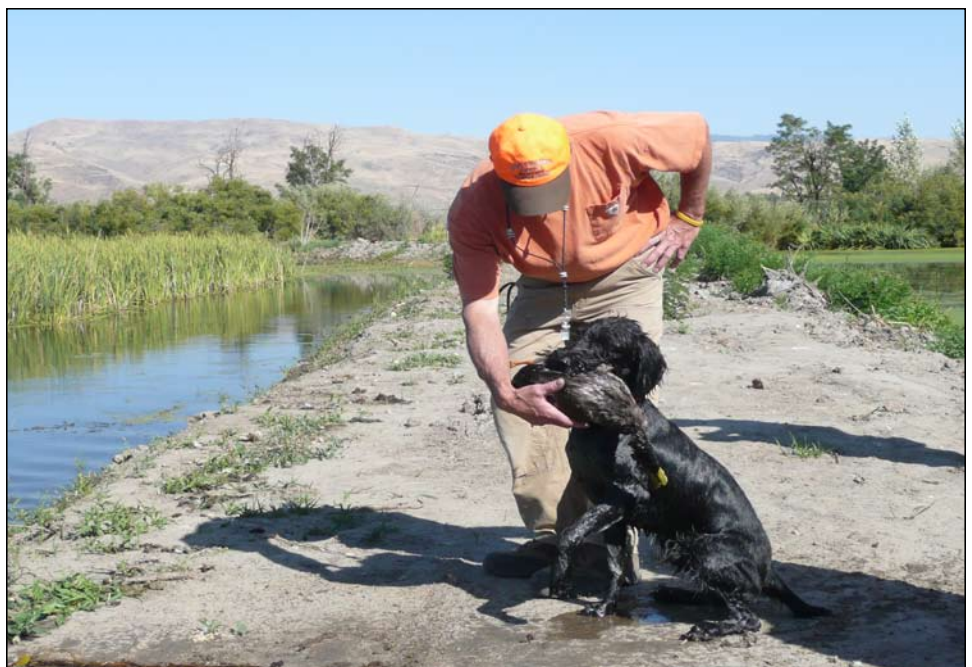
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Chairman's Message - Submitted by Jeff Funke

It's a new year and we are a new organization facing many challenges and opportunities. This will be a critical year for such a young group, so it is very important to approach our goals with determination and optimism. The economic reality is such that people are not likely to spend money on the new and unknown; thus we have an opportunity to take maximum advantage of our existing strengths. Your officers and directors are determined to focus on what we can control and continue to develop the most forward-looking, detailed, and efficient versatile gun dog testing organization in history. You will read more on this from each of the directors in the pages below.

New for 2009

I would like to introduce our membership to several new faces on the Board of Directors for 2009. This newsletter is being edited and published by Blanche Johnson, our new Director and Newsletter Editor. Clem Walton, our former Editor, passed away earlier this year. Ed Bailey is kind enough to provide us with a few words in this newsletter about Clem. I should also thank Cortney Schaefer for her work as assistant to the Editor for her work largely completing the last several newsletters by herself during Clem's illness. I have known Blanche personally and professionally for many years and I am very excited to have her on our team. Blanche has been involved with bird hunting, versatile dogs, as well as editing and publishing for many years, so her experience will serve her well in her newsletter position with VHDF.



Randy MacFarlane with his DD, Angus, at the fall AHAE test in Idaho.

Chairman's Message (cont. from page 1)

As you know from our last newsletter, Bodo Winterhelt and Joe Schmutz resigned as Chairman and Vice-Chairman after two great years at the helm of VHDF during our formative months. Bodo has been a great motivator for VHDF, but he has his hands full at home and he has chosen to allow others to step up. Thank you, Bodo, for your efforts towards VHDF. Joe Schmutz has donated countless hours and energy for the benefit of VHDF. He will now focus his efforts on our testing rules and application as Chairman of the Testing Committee. As Testing Committee Chairman, Joe is also charged with developing Apprentice Judge educational resources, and creating a complete Judge's Education Curriculum. Thank you, Joe, for all your help in the past, and we look forward to your future contributions.

Our officer terms are three years, so the board had a special session to fill the vacated positions. The result was that they appointed yours truly as Chairman; Vance Lester as Vice-Chairman; John and Dawn Smith as Co-Treasurer (filling my vacated treasury position); and Michael Jansen as Director of Testing (filling the Smith's vacated Testing Director position); and Lynda Kieres remained as Secretary. If you do the math, you will realize that 2009 will be an election year for officers and you will see a ballot



Ed "Viking" Erickson after setting a duck.

in the mail later this year. A committee will be raised to select a slate of officers, but it is my hope that each of the existing officers will seek a second term to continue with their duties in a focused, cohesive manner for the next three years.

I have known Vance Lester for many years and, his culinary tastes and expertise notwithstanding, I have great confidence in his ability to help lead this organization to do great things. Vance is a Health, Safety and Environmental Management System Consultant at the University of Saskatchewan and is thus very familiar with the development and management of many overlapping processes. His professional experience along with his many years of experience hunting, training, testing, judging, and raising versatile gun dogs makes him an ideal person to have in the Vice-Chairmanship.

Some of you have met Michael Jansen while he was judging at several VHDF tests. Mike has been with us from the start, and has been a VHDF judge from the start. He is a long-term member of the Pudel Pointer Club of North America and he currently sits on their Board of Directors. He has also judged with several other versatile dog organizations.

The Board has also added a new IT Director position for the management of information technology, and I am pleased to announce that Richard Nugen has accepted that appointment. Richard is from Spokane Washington, where he is involved with the ownership and management of a company that designs, writes, and maintains unique software applications for web-based communication media. Richard is an avid hunter and trainer of his own dogs. He is also an early member of VHDF and has tested his current dog very successfully in the aptitude tests. Richard has volunteered for the monumental task of making the VHDF "web-enabled" if you will. Our long-term goal of developing a web-based testing platform that will automate our test entry and data entry process and culminate with a searchable online database will become a reality under Richard's guidance.

Welcome aboard to all, and we thank you all for donating your time.

I would also like to thank each of our members for your commitment to betterment of your versatile hunting dogs and for your support of VHDF and the Board of Directors. We have the best system and the best members in the sport, so let's work together this year to overcome our obstacles and ensure the brightest of futures for our beloved bird dogs and the VHDF.

Vice-Chairman's Report - Submitted by Vance Lester

Greetings VHDF members! My name is Vance Lester and I look forward to serving this great organization as Vice Chair. I have big shoes to fill, working with such esteemed members on the board and trying to continue the great work that Joe Schmutz began as my predecessor. Luckily Joe is still active in the organization, chairing the Test Committee, so I have support to learn the ropes. I hope I can keep up the momentum that Joe started – thanks for all your hard work Joe, and I look forward to many more great years working with you for the benefit of versatile hunting dog owners everywhere.

I've been hunting since I was old enough to carry a gun and I immediately fell in love with bird dogs the first time I saw a dog point; and my heart still pounds every time I see a dog using the talents it was born with. Even the most talented dog needs some coaching, so we human members of the team get to feel a part of the magic when the dog that we trained does such wonderful things. The magic of a well-bred and well-trained versatile hunting dog is something that hunters everywhere should have the pleasure of enjoying, and when we get to hunt with a truly versatile hunting dog we should all feel very blessed.

I live in Saskatchewan and I hunt upland birds, waterfowl, and (in the winter) snowshoe hares with my dogs, so I need a dog that can retrieve large Canada geese in the morning, hunt sharptails on the open prairie all day, and finish the day hunting ducks on a freezing pond - I need a truly versatile dog. I think I am typical of many hunters in North America where we hunt a variety of species with the same dog, and North American hunters need a venue to evaluate the genetic and trained abilities of their hunting dogs. As hunters, we need an organization that will provide an evaluation of individual dogs to help us identify opportunities for improvement in our training program to get our hunting dogs ready for hunting season. As breeders of versatile hunting dogs we need a venue to objectively test the abilities of our dogs to evaluate their breeding potential. We need a well-designed testing system that reflects the conditions that hunting dogs face, and we need judges who are experienced hunters that can evaluate our dogs in the context of the hunting abilities of the dog.

I'm thrilled to be a part of VHDF because there is a real need for an organization for hunters to have their hunting dogs evaluated by other hunters, and the vision of VHDF is to provide just such a mandate. I'm committed to maintaining that vision, and I'm confident that the board of VHDF will work hard toward that end.

Happy Hunting.



Break time in the January 2009 Arizona hunt. Dennis Carlson with Bella and Richard Nugen with Ruby.

Secretary's Report - Submitted by Lynda Kieres

Highlights from the 2009 Annual Meeting:

This year's annual meeting was held January 30 through February 1 in Phoenix, Arizona. We had a full two and a half LONG days of very productive discussions and decisions. Jeff really knows how to organize a meeting and everyone was extremely pleased at how much we were able to accomplish in a relatively short time.

In attendance were: Jeff Funke, Chair; Vance Lester, Vice-Chair; Lynda Kieres, Secretary/Membership Officer; John and Dawn Smith, Co-Treasurers; Chuck Johnson, Communications and WebMaster; Dennis Carlson, Records Officer; and Barry Wild, Director of Judges. Absent was Mike Jansen, Director of Testing.

Special guests, Blanche Johnson and Richard Nugen were also in attendance.

Significant motions that were brought forward and passed are listed below:

The first motion to be presented and passed was: "dismiss the requirement for VHDF-imposed required test entry/per dog fees" which will allow sponsoring clubs to set their own entry fees (so that they can hopefully recoup some of the actual costs of holding tests).

It was decided to post member's information on the website so that test coordinators can verify whether entrants in tests are members in good standing; and so people can locate fellow members in their area if they want to start their own club, or just get together to train dogs. The Secretary will be sending out a notice to all members to obtain permission to publish their contact information. On that note – if you have NOT been getting the newsletter by email – it could be because the email address we have for you is inaccurate (or we can't decipher it). Also if your email address has changed, or if you've obtained an email address where you didn't have one before, please notify Lynda at topperlyn@hotmail.com. Our preferred method of communication is by email because it is so much faster and saves the club in postage and printing costs; so it's really important that you keep your information current.

The next significant motion was to form a subcommittee to review and revise as necessary the organizational by-laws. There are some areas that need to be rewritten in order to meet legal requirements to be designated as a 501C3 non-profit. The subcommittee consists of Jeff Funke, Vance Lester, and Chuck Johnson.

EXCITING NEWS

It was decided to add a new membership classification of LIFE MEMBER. The "introductory" dues rate for LIFE MEMBERSHIP is \$500. We already have TWO LIFE MEMBERS! First to take advantage of this opportunity was Jeff Funke, followed closely by Barry Wild. Thanks to both of them for their support.

Much time and effort was invested in the next project and that was to finalize the Judge Standards by which Apprentice Judges are appointed and our cadre of Approved Judges is maintained. It is recognized by everyone that the value to our testing system relies on the quality and consistency of our judges. The revised version of the Judge Standards (originally drafted by Barry Wild and Lynda Kieres) was approved and it was decided to apply the standards retroactively to currently Approved Judges and Apprentice Judges. All judges will be getting a letter from Barry outlining what they need to do to remain current.

Along that line, seven Apprentice Judges were reviewed and approved. Congratulations go out to Ed Erickson, Paul Falkowsky, Dave Girtman, Rick Halwyler, Del Peterson, Byron Pugh, and Darren Temple.

One new Apprentice Judge was also approved: Larry Ray. We look forward to working with all these new Judges and we thank them for their support and dedication.

The next significant action was to review and clarify some areas of the test rules. Quite a bit of time was spent on this project, as well, and the details will be reported by the Director of Testing, Mike Jansen.

In conjunction with Dennis Carlson's report on our database system, special guest Richard Nugen made a presentation of the web-based Test Data Platform that he has developed. This is truly a state-of-the-art concept and everyone was amazed at the possibilities. It goes without saying that the motion to add a board position of IT Coordinator, to be filled by Richard, was approved. We can't wait to see this project come to fruition.

Several enhancements to the website were discussed and Chuck will be incorporating these as they get finalized.

Our next big project will be to finalize the Judge's Handbook. The Testing Committee will work on that.

Next year is an election year so a nominating committee was formed. Expect to be hearing from them.

It was also decided that an annual meeting just isn't enough to cover all the business that has to take place, so a mid-year meeting was scheduled in conjunction with the Montana Test in August. This will be a meeting of just the

Secretary's Report (cont. from page 4)

Officers and Board. The dates and location for the General Membership meeting will be determined at the mid-year meeting.

Since there were no members outside of the Board in attendance, the General Meeting on Sunday was short and sweet and those official actions that had to be taken care

of were dispatched in short order. Following the conclusion of the official meeting, guests Jim and Jean Cassara from Scottsdale were provided with a personalized introduction to VHDF. Jim is an active participant in several pointing dog venues in Arizona and expressed interest in learning more about this format. We thank them for their interest.

VHDF GOALS: PAST, PRESENT, AND FUTURE

Submitted by Jeff Funke, Chairman

Over the last two years, VHDF has gone from no more than an idea to a mature testing organization that has a sophisticated testing system with well-trained judges that have the ability to assess the talents of the versatile hunting dog from puppyhood to the fully-finished adult dog. VHDF is also putting the infrastructure in place, one piece at a time, to maintain the quality of the testing system as we continue to grow. This is a great accomplishment in such a short time, and we owe much of this to the efforts of Joe Schmutz, as Vice Chairman. Joe has been able to keep the Board of Directors focused on the task at hand, as well as involve a good part of the talents from our dedicated membership. The goals that we initially set were high, and thanks to the hard work of the Board of Directors and valuable input from our membership, we have accomplished most of our initial goals. With these initial goals in place, we realized that we had only seen the tip of the iceberg! As it turns out, VHDF is a complex organization with many moving parts to make the finished product a reality. I am confident that the Officers and Board of Directors are able to handle this daunting task. To spare you all of the boring details, I have outlined a few of our accomplishments and future goals.

Goals Accomplished

Our first and most important goal was to develop the best, most comprehensive, and most detailed testing system which would be relevant and valuable for breeders as well as trainers, owners, and hunters in North America. We needed and wanted a system that would not only allow us to identify exceptionally talented individual dogs, but one that would also allow us to consistently measure the aptitude of geographically dispersed progeny. Our 12-point scoring system or, more appropriately referred to as 10-point-plus-2 scoring system, has worked well so far; exceeding expectations of almost everyone involved. We also needed a system that would allow us to measure aptitude at a higher level than natural ability. Our Advanced Hunting Aptitude Evaluation does this nicely and many long-time versatile dog enthusiasts have commented as to the value of this test and how it has filled a huge void. By addressing these two issues in our testing system, VHDF allows breeders to increase selection pressure on current and future individuals as well as entire litters. This increase in selection pressure, be it in general hunting ability or in specific categories, is not only valuable for the breeder, but it pays huge dividends to hunters and trainers in the form of better, more complete dogs at a faster rate. This detail-oriented system is also an invaluable tool that better allows breeders and breed clubs to custom tailor their dogs to meet their particular preferences while placing pups across a wide geographic area. We have accomplished our testing goal, and its success has been measured by the level of satisfaction recorded by breeders and participants of VHDF events.

Our next most important goal was to identify, educate, and involve a highly talented pool of judges that we could rely on to implement and facilitate our testing system. The best testing system is worthless without knowledgeable, reliable, fair, and consistent judges. We now have a large pool of highly qualified judges in place, and we have a well-thought-out policy for training and approving judges. This is an ongoing process that will be continually assessed, reassessed, and revamped if necessary.

If we have a good testing system, and good judges managing this program, we still don't have much unless we have a way to collect and manage the data. We have written and developed a comprehensive relational database with all relevant data on dogs tested in VHDF. We consider this to be a very important issue, and we have great plans for future

VHDF Goals: Past, Present, and Future (cont. from page 5)

improvements.

Our rank and file membership is the heart and soul of the organization. We have implemented a membership record-keeping program and all members are kept track of and receive renewals annually.

Once our membership began to grow, we needed a reliable, consistent, and timely way to communicate with our members. We started a newsletter to better communicate with our membership base. Admittedly, the VHDF newsletter has not been as consistent as we would have liked. It was not until January of this year, that we had actually filled all of our Board positions and that all programs became fully functioning. We had a few folks doing a large number of things, but now we are confident that VHDF will produce a timely newsletter with useful information.

In order to promote the VHDF and provide reliable information with ease of access, we created a website. The VHDF website is and will continue to be the “information center” where we hope to provide all relevant information that any member may need or find useful. Please feel free to contact us with your ideas regarding the newsletter and the website.

Our member clubs are both centrally located and remote. We wanted to develop a cost structure that would allow for the dogs to be tested, no matter where they were located. Many organizations leave the member clubs to fend for themselves when it comes to putting on a test or trial and pay for judges, no matter how many they need to pay for and how far they have to travel. This system results in large, financially healthy, centrally-located clubs and small poor clubs in the outlying areas. VHDF charges a set fee to each club for the cost of the judges, data entry, scorebooks, underlying infrastructure, and posting of results. While VHDF has no desire to control the financial affairs of member clubs, we do have a desire to make it just as easy for a dog to be tested whether it finds its home in Canada, California, Minnesota, or Florida. In addition, the Treasury has developed a sophisticated bookkeeping system that processes membership dues and test sanctioning fees while providing reimbursement to volunteers for the out of pocket expenses, and we can do this in both U.S. and Canadian funds.

Our testing started with only two clubs hosting a test in the first year. Now we have 25 test days scheduled for this year. Through our Director of Testing, we have developed a series of informational articles and forms to help walk the Test Coordinators through each part of the process.

VHDF Goals Present and Future

At the first of February of this year, ten of your fellow VHDF members spent two and a half days locked in a meeting room in Phoenix, Arizona. The meetings were productive; identifying needs for the VHDF membership and mapping out strategies to meet our needs and accomplish our goals as well as brainstorm potential needs that may arise in the future. When you start something from scratch, you have many challenges and the possibilities can be overwhelming. VHDF faces many challenges, and I am confident that we can meet our challenges if we have the perseverance to overcome the obstacles that stand in our way.

When you start something from scratch, you have many competitive advantages that you can capitalize on if you take the time to focus on what you do have instead of dwelling on what you don't have. Let's take a look at some things that we can take advantage of and examine how these things will help us to meet our goals.

Most breeders of versatile dogs in North America place their puppies, even from a single litter, over a large geographic area. In order for VHDF to be a useful system for breeders, it must be consistent; the results must be repeatable across locations and among any combination of judges. In addition, it must be universally available across North America. The VHDF Testing Committee, the group that wrote the test rules, is now charged with maintaining our testing standards. As we identify possible improvements or discrepancies, this committee will review our rules and make recommendations to the Board of Directors if changes are needed. They have already identified several possible improvements that can be made to our test rules.

The Testing Committee is now chaired by Joe Schmutz. Joe and his committee are also charged with the huge task of developing a Judge's Educational Curriculum for new judges, as well as continuing education for existing judges. We expect to develop an intense curriculum that will give VHDF Judges the highest quality of education available. This program is the best way for us to achieve our testing consistency goal. We need your help, the help of the membership, to advance our testing program to the point where it is universally available. The quality of the system is our best selling point, but we need your help to get the word out, and encourage peers and clients to utilize the VHDF system.

We have also created a conformation show committee. Now, first let me say that VHDF has no intentions to outdo or override the conformation events that many breed clubs now offer their members. VHDF recognizes that we are an all-breed group, and we can never be as educated about the physical structure of a particular breed as can

VHDF Goals (cont. from page 6)

the breed club. We can however, educate our interested judges about basic canine conformation. This has been the number one request that I have had from breeders and owners since becoming involved with VHDF. Many are well versed in performance and they know what to expect from their dogs based on their training and hunting experience with previous dogs. What they do not get much experience with is conformation. The “Total Dog Concept” is not new and is widely practiced in Europe. A well-bred, high quality versatile dog should be physically fit, mentally fit, have the proper coat, proper build, the proper aptitudes, and the ability to put it all together and perform in the field and the marsh and woods, before and after the shot. In the US, the AKC has caused a distinct split between conformation, or the “Bench” and performance, by not requiring working breeds to prove their ability before being bred. On the other hand, performance-based organizations have over-emphasized performance and have not emphasized conformation at all. The result is highly-talented dogs that either have a greater possibility of wearing out before their time – often needing expensive surgeries to correct these faults – or continually suffering because of conformation deficiencies. So, for those of us who do not have FCI-registered dogs or are not involved in one of the North American-based breed clubs that offer conformation - such as LMCNA does – we can surely benefit by becoming educated on conformation. We are planning a conference and show at our mid-year meeting in Montana in August. If any of you are interested or have something to offer on this topic, please contact me.

Since we are starting with a small amount of data in our system, we have the ability to design a database that we feel will be the most useful for our purposes. One of the most important goals for VHDF is the development of a web-based information platform that will enable our testing process and showcase our test results in an online, searchable database. This system is in the works and will enter a test phase later this year. In the future, we hope to allow any form of related data to be added to this database. You will read more about this project in this newsletter.

In conjunction with our web-based information platform, comes a new website design. We will move to a content management system that will allow more timely flow of information from responsible parties as well as allowing user input from individual users or members. We will continue to publish a quarterly newsletter with detailed information about VHDF but, with a new web content management system, we plan to establish a members’ forum. This forum will allow for daily exchange of information to and from members. In addition to inside VHDF information, we plan to offer information on training, testing, breeding, genetics, etc.

We have had several requests to clarify the testing event process, so this year in an effort to aid our member clubs with the test host duties, we will be developing pre- and post-test manuals with step-by-step instructions for properly completing the event.

We have also had requests for help with insurance for VHDF events. We have researched a number of policies and are in the process of acquiring the policy that best suits our needs. This policy will allow our member clubs to add event



A successful Arizona quail hunt. Richard Nugen with Ruby and Dennis Carlson.

coverage for the VHDF test at a flat fee for each event.

Lastly, we have had numerous requests for VHDF hats and T-shirts. We will begin to offer the merchandise later this year. If any of our members have expertise in this area, I would love to hear your recommendations.

This list of goals past, present and future is not all inclusive, but it is my hope that you, our members, will gain some knowledge of where we have been and where we are headed. Further, we need your help to accomplish our goals. We need your ideas, your volunteer labor, and your promotional efforts to ensure the success of VHDF. The lines of communication are always open. Please do not hesitate to phone or email me, or any of the directors, with your suggestions or other contributions.

Director of Testing Report - Submitted by Mike Jansen

As the newly appointed Director of Testing, I would like to introduce myself.

Hunting dogs and hunting have been a large part of my life since I was a boy growing up in Wisconsin, where my wife and I still live. Being in the outdoors with my dogs has been a passion of mine for as long as I can remember. Since my retirement in 2001, I have been lucky enough to spend even more hours doing these things. I have owned and trained many breeds of dogs over the years, including an Irish setter, English pointer, wirehaired pointing griffon, Chesapeake Bay retrievers, Labrador retriever, and, finally,

Pudelpointers. I currently have three Pudelpointers.

I started judging by apprenticing with the Pudelpointer Club of North America (PCNA) in 2002. That same year I began an apprenticeship with NAVHDA. Subsequently, I was approved as a PCNA judge in 2004 and a NAVHDA judge in 2005, and have recently been approved as a VHDF judge. Judging these last years has been a real pleasure for me; not only because of the dogs but because of all the great people I have gotten to know.

Currently I am serving on the PCNA Board of Directors, the Waupaca County Pheasants Forever Board of Directors, in addition to serving on the VHDF Board of Directors.

Federation Tests - Submitted by Chuck Johnson

We have a number of tests scheduled this year. We have also extended our tests out into the Upper Mid-West. In May, Allison Schultz and her Spinone group are having a Federation test. Tim Lintz and Monica Jacobs have organized a test in southeast Michigan in June.

We now have twelve tests scheduled for our second full year. You can see our test schedule and contact information on our web site. If any person, group, or club is interested in holding a Federation test please contact Mike Jansen. The Federation will give you all the help and assistance you need to have a successful test. We also provide the judges free of charge for your first test.

Director of Judges Report - Submitted by Barry Wild

We are fast approaching the beginning of the 2009 testing season and we are in great shape. We have twenty-four Approved Judges and six Apprentice Judges at this time. Congratulations to the seven Apprentice Judges that were approved as Judges at the annual meeting in Phoenix.

It is hard to believe that we are just in our third year of testing and have had this much growth. There are currently twelve testing weekends on our schedule for this year. The judges will be busy. That being said, we need to stick to our guns for quality testing. Deliver quality and fair judgment, and our growth will continue.

There are a number of Judges that need to run a dog to stay current with their judge's requirements. Please do not let this slide. It is a "must do" in order to remain a judge. All updates will be sent via e-mail, so please make sure that Lynda has your correct e-mail address.

Look forward to seeing everyone this spring and to seeing all the new pups.

IT Director's Report - Submitted by Richard Nugen

Accurate and accessible information is paramount to the success of our organization. In fact, the foundational element of VHDF is to provide meaningful information to bird hunters and breeders for the purpose of evaluating individual dogs as well as breeding programs. This information comes in the form of test scores and relevant data regarding the dog tested.

As an organization, we have the opportunity to use technology to provide this information to our membership and the public. Imagine, if you will, having the ability to search, filter, trace scoring lineages, or build lists of dogs

based upon the criteria that is important to you as a potential new dog owner or even as a breeder making selections for your breeding program.

This last fall, VHDF began the development of just such an online Test Management System. A pre-beta version of this system was unveiled at our annual meeting in January and is planned to be in full beta by our May VHDF test in Boise, Idaho. The results of this beta will determine the final release date. Current estimates have the full release scheduled for sometime in July.

Director of Communications Report - Submitted by Chuck Johnson

We have up dated and expanded the website. You can now find information on all aspects of setting up and running a test, including forms.

We had several groups attend the Pheasant Fest in Wisconsin and pass out color brochures about the Federation. This event also hosts the annual meeting of Pheasants Forever. Our thanks to the German longhair pointer group and Ed Erickson and Autumn Breeze Kennels for the help.

Kirsten Fulk, a German shorthair breeder and pro dog trainer, also passed out our brochure at a number of sports shows in Oregon and Washington.

Our newsletter is now going to be published quarterly on the website. Each edition will be archived there also.

The Federation was featured in the January/February issue of the Pointing Dog Journal. Our thanks go out to the editors, Steve and Jake Smith, for giving me the opportunity to tell our story.

Director of Newsletter Report - Submitted by Blanche Johnson

Thank you to all the Directors for submitting your reports on a timely basis. (Timeliness is the bane of all publications!) I also want to thank Ed Bailey for writing such a beautiful obituary for Clem Walton, my predecessor as Director of the Newsletter. I only met Clem once, at the 2008 annual VHDF meeting in Reno. Ed's insight gave me a much greater understanding of the man.

A great big thank you also goes out to Cortney Schaefer. She has been very instrumental in getting the newsletters published in the past, and was gracious in sending me all the documents I needed to take over this task.

Now – for the future. We want to keep this newsletter interesting and useful for our members and for future members. To this aim, we will need help from all VHDF members. We are interested in articles from members as well as photos of your versatile dogs. One great thing about the versatile breeds, they are great subjects for the camera. Who doesn't love to look at photos of dogs, especially in their natural state of hunting, swimming, playing with family members, and of course, those irresistible pictures of puppies!

You don't have to be an accomplished writer to submit an article. We can clean it up and email it back to you for review before publishing it in the newsletter. We would like articles on your experiences with your dog in a VHDF test, an exceptional day hunting with your versatile dog, or just a short piece on why your versatile dog is so special to you. We are also interested in promoting the various breed clubs and would like to have news from your particular club to publish in the newsletter.

Finally, if you don't have an actual article or photo to submit but have an idea for an article, please feel free to call me (406-388-0112 – Ext 14) or email me (blanche@wildadvpres.com) with your idea.

A TRIBUTE TO Clem Walton

Clem was a founding member of VHDF and served as our first Newsletter Editor. We all had a great time getting to know Clem at our 2008 Annual Meeting in Reno. Thanks to Clem for his all his efforts with VHDF, he will be missed. Many thanks to Ed Bailey for the obituary below. — Jeff Funke, Chair VHDF

I saw a play called A Man for All Seasons. A few years later I met the man the play was about. He was Clem Walton, known to the thousands who read his dog wisdom on the Internet, in the dog chat rooms, and in print as CJ. Nearly forty years ago the fledgling dog testing group that was to become NAVHDA was holding a test in Maine. I don't know how he heard about it but Clem and his fisheries biologist friend Steve appeared at the test with their German shorthaired pointers. Clem asked a lot of questions and quickly grasped the whole concept. A forum for evaluating dogs based on their performance became his forte. He attended judging clinics, several times driving from Maine to Batavia, New York. Within a year he became a very capable judge. The next test held in Maine was totally organized by Clem. By the mid-70s, he became one of the early senior judges in the NAVHDA organization. I have a picture in my mind of a very rainy day with Clem in high rubber boots, clip board under his arm, a black umbrella the size of those you would see on a beach pulled down hard around his head, with smoke from his pipe telling him which way the wind was moving so he could evaluate the efficiency of the dog's use of nose.

Clem had a bachelor's degree in aquatic biology and then, fifteen or so years after I first met him, he applied to University of Guelph to study for his master's degree. He became a keen student of animal behavior and applied it to his knowledge of dogs. It was then that I saw another of Clem's facets: He was also a philosopher. He applied this analytical approach to dog testing. Clem regularly came to my house and we spent night into morning discussing all aspects of dogs, the tests, why they worked or didn't work, and what the tests really told us about the dogs. He had a steel trap mind that never lost anything. The picture of him in those days was a man built like two bricks

cemented together, wearing only an unzipped down vest over a t-shirt and blue jeans, hair shorn to three millimeters, no hat, puffing on his pipe, striding across the parking lot behind the zoology building in January with a minus-30 wind chill. Canadian winter? He was from the Maine coast where it got cold.

A few more years and Clem left NAVHDA when its direction changed. But it was about then that the Internet was invented specifically for him; or maybe he invented it. But it was a platform perfectly suited to him. He wrote prolifically on dogs, on dog training, dog problems, on the philosophy of evaluation of performance, on every aspect of hunting dogs, always honest and with witty humor. His nom de plume was CJ and it quickly became known worldwide. A friend from New Zealand asked me to read a piece attached to her email message. I recognized Clem in the first line. There was his favorite word, heuristic, defined as a method of educating in which the student proceeds along empirical lines, using rules of thumb to find answers or solutions. He thought heuristically; it was his philosophy.

He had a Griffon pup at one time which had to get exposure to water for a spring test. Maine temperatures are not conducive to winter water exposure. Clem, undaunted, put a few inches of cool water in his bathtub, and then gradually increased the depth. The dog got a 4 for its water work in the test. All one needs do is use rules of thumb to get the solution. Problems are to be solved. That is what made him "A Man For All Seasons". He died on the morning of February 2, 2009 of congestive heart failure. Dogs and dog people lost a champion for the cause. He was planning the first VHDF test for the East. — Ed Bailey

Distinguished Service Awards - Submitted by Lynda Kieres

At the 2009 annual meeting the Board of Directors voted to recognize several individuals for their distinguished service to VHDF. Each of these dedicated individuals has donated countless hours of their personal time in service to VHDF.

Joe Schmutz, former Vice-Chair. Joe has been with VHDF from the start and has contributed countless hours to our testing and judging program. He served on the Testing Committee during the very laborious period of development of our testing system and the test rules. He has been instrumental in the design of the overall structure of VHDF. He also organized and facilitated several VHDF tests near Saskatoon, Saskatchewan, as well as donating countless hours and dollars traveling to judge other tests. If that wasn't enough, he had to take the charge of several roles within VHDF while Bodo was incapacitated due to his stroke. Now, Joe has taken on the chairmanship of the Testing Committee. The Testing Committee is currently faced with the daunting task of developing and implementing an education curriculum for our Judges and Apprentice Judges, as well as continually reviewing and updating our test rules. Thank you Joe Schmutz.

Dennis Carlson, Director of Records. Dennis has also been with VHDF from the start. He probably did not have any idea of what he was getting into when he attended that first meeting in December of 2006 in Boise, Idaho. Dennis has spent untold hours developing our testing database. This database is comprehensive and it contains everything one would want to know about a dog that has been tested in VHDF. Dennis is not a database expert. He learned this skill in order to assist VHDF with our longer term goal of having a web-based searchable database. Dennis has also volunteered his time as Judge, traveling to Vale and Centralia among other places as well as making it to all meetings in Reno and Phoenix. Thank you Dennis Carlson.

Chuck Johnson, Director of Promotions and Communications. Chuck joined VHDF in our second year and we are fortunate that he came along when he did. It was during our second year that we actually started to implement programs and grow our membership and our testing program. He is responsible for the design and maintenance of our website. He has designed and printed our scorebooks at his own cost. Chuck has also recently designed and printed a very nice color brochure which is handed out at sportsman's shows such as the recent Pheasant Fest in Wisconsin. He fields numerous phone calls on behalf of VHDF, and has donated many hours and dollars judging in the U.S. and Canada. Thank you Chuck Johnson.

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