

## **ETRC Board Meeting, Wednesday, 6/23/21 Pegasus Technologies Building, Lenoir City, TN**

**Present from the Board:** Alan Bruhin, J. Michael Evans, Karen Edwards, Luke McCoy, Michele Fletcher, Mike Smith, Jim Pearce, Denise Chambers, Peter Torok (via telephone), Jeff McNutt

**Absent, excused:** Cory Smith

**Others Members Present:** Cheryl McNutt, Lois Luthenauer

A quorum is 50% of the Board. Therefore, a quorum of the Board was present. The meeting was called to order at 6:45 p.m.

### **Officer's and AKC Delegate's Reports**

#### ***President's Report:***

***Secretary's Report.*** Karen Edwards.

- **Minutes:** Last meeting was 3/20/21; minutes approved by a majority of Board members and sent to the club website shortly after the meeting. Luke moved that we dispense with reading the minutes out loud, and vote formal approval. Mike Evans seconded the motion which passed unanimously.
- **Correspondence:**
  - Prepared Annual Report for State of Tennessee & 2020 tax report for IRS. Worry about extra income in 2021 causing tax filing issues next year turned out to be unfounded after research. The easy-to-file postcard return is appropriate for groups which gross on average less than \$50,000 per year over a three year period. Therefore this year's extra income can be balanced against 2020 and 2019 which will keep us well under the average.
  - AKC correspondence about tests and judges panels and completed reports received.
  - Sent in annual Master National Retriever Club membership.
- **Membership:** Current 2021 membership is 55, including 2 waiting first reading later today. 12 haven't renewed so far this year. Most probably won't, were one timers.

***Treasurer's Report:*** Current balance after depositing the June 15 Entry Express check is \$40,678.74. No unpaid bills on hand. See treasurer's report, sent to Board June 22, 2021 showing transactions for the year. We netted approximately \$2,500 on our April Mid-week Master test; \$7,500 on our May Double-Double JH & SH tests; \$8,000 on the big Spring test; and \$2,700 on the June mid-week Master. This gives us lots of opportunities to upgrade equipment and do other things to benefit members.

### **Old Business**

1. ***July Master-Only Hunt Test:*** 100 ducks have been ordered and Mike Evans has made the reservations at the Dayton Best Western for himself and the other judge, Robert Johnson. Karen will get the letter out to Johnson in the next day or so confirming reservations, and will cc J. Michael on the email rather than actually giving him his own letter. We need to talk to Cory about whether he is willing for us to move both trailers back to his big barn after this test, as keeping it under cover will definitely prolong the life of our equipment. J. Michael says he can move the big trailer, and Mike Smith volunteered to move the little trailer, once we get Cory's permission. All

other items under control. The test opened on June 22 for amateurs and workers; June 23 for all else. There were still a couple of problems with Entry Express not tagging 4 entries with either worker codes or Amateur codes, and a couple where the dogs were improperly entered as Amateurs with pro handlers. Those are being worked. As of the close of the meeting, 51 dogs were entered in this test.

2. **August Picnic / Business Meeting / Seminar and Fall club Trial.** August is always a problem because of the heat. Also, because of the number of different local handlers' seminars this summer (Mitch White at Lois's in July, Kevin Cheff at Lois's in August; and a possible Brian Caldwell/Jody Ware seminar in the fall), having another one might not be a big draw for the membership. We talked about maybe combining this meeting with a club trial instead of a seminar, and general agreement was that this was a good idea. Also we discussed moving it to September (the Bylaws don't specify the actual month) in hopes that it would be cooler. Difficulties with that are conflicts with the UT football season. We discussed moving it to Sunday afternoon instead of Saturday to get around that problem. Only issue there is that it will be hard to have a club trial AND a meeting just in a 4-5 hour time frame.

We then discussed different locations, including Brian's farm (problem with enough shade), Lois's place (perfect facilities, out of the way location); Chuck Atchley's place (nice picnic facilities, no water for a club trial); Darryl Miller's farm (perfect for a club trial, no decent shade/picnic facilities), and others. We decided to tentatively plan on Sunday, September 12, time, location, and format TBD, and discuss further at the next meeting.

3. **Regular Fall Test:** Hiwassee not available. We have several other options. Robert Brewer, the professor of wildlife at Cleveland State Community College, has access to grounds very near Hiwassee that would be suitable for Junior and Senior tests with lots of open and rolling land, but not Master (only one small narrow pond). We could run Junior and Senior on that land each day, and then run one flight of Master at Brian's. We also discussed possibly using Brian's for one flight of Master plus a Junior on Saturday and a Senior on Sunday, but the difficulties of having only one pond there pose some serious problems with this scenario, and the second pond in the woods is often dry in the summer and fall. Jeff moved that we look at talking to Robert Brewer and the landowner about the first option – JH/SH on that property each day, with an offer of \$500 to use the land, plus a Master flight at Caldwell's. Dates are October 23-24. J. Michael will look into getting the land approved by AKC; it's not going to be hard since it isn't used in any business enterprise. He will also check with Caldwell about that date for the Master flight.
4. **Other Tests:** We had talked back in March about a late fall test at Brian's. Karen and Jim talked with Jody today and he is interested in having one in early November and says he's sure Brian will agree. Probably will be more interest in that time of year than in July! After some discussion about our general fatigue, the need for Amateurs to still want tests since their qualification year for the Master Amateur runs from March to February, and the general ease in running these mid-week one-flight master tests at Brian's, we decided to see about putting one on. After some discussion about different dates, Luke moved that we ask Brian about having a test there on November 2 – 3. Mike Smith seconded the motion, and the vote was unanimous.
5. **Judges Seminar, possible January / February:** We didn't get the grant from the MNRC to hold this seminar, but this is something we might want to offer to our members. We discussed the difference between the basic seminar (one day, all inside) versus the Advanced seminar (two days, second day mostly outside). None of the current judges in our club seem to need the advanced

seminar and the timing of having it in winter, with the very iffy weather, would be a problem. The costs are not an issue – we only have to pay for a motel conference room, a motel room for the AKC rep who would be the presenter, and provide something simple like donuts for snacking. We can just turn people loose to lunch on their own. Considering that we are doing well with our finances, we discussed making the seminar free for club members, and only charge non-club members some \$30 or so to partially cover the room costs. We could possibly have this as part of our winter seminar/ training series. Consensus was that this was something to seriously consider, but since it was so far off, to table it for now and come back to it in a couple of months.

6. **Equipment.** Three of the four missing thundersticks showed back up again by the time of the June test, so we are only missing one. Our blinds are in sorry shape; Mike Smith reported on the status of the 6 new 4-panel blinds that he ordered over five weeks ago. The blinds are in production, but they are waiting on getting the metal frame powder coated. These blinds are \$160 each, so the total cost is going to be around \$1000 including shipping. We figure we need about 20 blinds to be able to run 4 setups at once as we do for the big spring test. We're not sure how many we have that are good and how many are repairable, but there are a lot of junk blinds in our trailers that need some serious work both on the legs going into the ground and the tops of the fabric where the legs are ripping through them.

J. Michael Evans reported that he had a call from Ken Campbell about buying some equipment that Ken no longer wants, now that he is out of the retriever business. He has a new trailer crammed with stuff, including blinds, shotguns, thundersticks, duck dryers, white coats, signs, poppers, and so forth. He sent J. Michael a list of the equipment along with the new cost of everything – and it's all only been used for three field trials including the trailer – and the total cost was about \$18,000. He said he would be willing to sell it to the club for half price, i.e. \$9,000. Some of it is items that we wouldn't need, but we could always offer it for sale to club members and post any leftovers on Ebay. Luke moved that we send a group of Board members over to look at the equipment, and if it is as advertised, buy it for \$9,000. Jeff seconded the motions. After some discussion of whether we would be able to actually sell the items we don't want, the vote was unanimous. J. Michael, Jim, Mike Smith, and any others who want to go will meet at Pegasus at 1:00 on Sunday afternoon, June 27, and then proceed to Ken's place by 2:00 to do an inventory and assess the condition of the items. Karen will either go along or will send along a check. With this extra equipment, we can keep the best 20 blinds and offer the others to club members for them to fix and repair.

7. **Ribbons:** With all the extra hunt tests, we are going through ribbons at a faster clip than normal. Our current inventory of Hunt Test ribbons is as follows: JH ribbons – only 29. SH ribbons – 129. MH ribbons – 246. Title ribbons – 55. Tabs for title ribbons – plenty. Duckbands – probably around 250 left. With what we have planned out, we need more Junior ribbons and probably another 500 duck bands. With 3 more Master flights of 66 dogs each, we should have enough MH ribbons; with 2 more Senior flights (usually around 30 each), we have enough SH ribbons. We will need to make a sizeable order during the February ribbon sale. Luke moved we authorize Karen to buy 100 more JH ribbons and 500 more duck bands; Jeff seconded and the vote was unanimous.

#### **New Business:**

- i. **New Member:** Two for first reading:

- Todd / Laura Eldridge, HVAC contractor, 193 Fricks Gap Road, Chickamauga, GA 30707. [Toddeesc@gmail.com](mailto:Toddeesc@gmail.com), Home 423-593-4517, cell 423-240-1087. Has a black lab 8 months and an adolescent son, came to one of our club trials.
- Gwen Tidwell, 3104 Easton Avenue, Chattanooga, TN 37415. 423-902-9459, [gwentidwell22@gmail.com](mailto:gwentidwell22@gmail.com). Has 4 year old Golden Retriever, interested in AKC hunt tests and dog training.

J. Michael Evans and Mike Smith volunteered to sponsor the Eldridges; Lois volunteered that she and Sherie Catledge would sponsor Gwen Tidwell. Mike Smith moved we accept these people as provisional members. Jim seconded, and the vote was unanimous. Karen will contact each of the new members telling them names and contact info of their sponsors; sponsors will have access to the new members' contact info through these minutes when completed.

2. ***Fee discussions:***

- a. Michele has completed a survey of 11 tests in our region to see what they are charging, and determined that we are the cheapest. The averages are \$80 for Junior, \$90 for Senior, and \$100 for Master, while our current rates are \$70, \$80 and \$100. There was some discussion about whether we should try to keep our entry fees down, especially since people running JH and SH dogs are paying double for the weekend. Luke noted that tests he has judged that charge the higher fees seem to still have the same number of entries we do, so it isn't like our lower fees are attracting a larger crowd. Michele moved we raise our fees to \$80, \$90, and \$100; the vote was 8 in favor and 1 opposed, so the motion carried. These higher fees will be in place for the Fall (October) test and beyond.
- b. Judges' gifts: Given the difficulty in attracting judges, and the fact that we pay bird techs \$100 a day, there was some discussion about increasing the amount of our judges' gifts. We have done both gifts of various kinds (with various judges bitching about what they got) and more recently, \$100 bills (with some judges complaining about getting money rather than gifts). After more discussion we decided to stick mostly with a cash payment rather than gift cards or debit cards, although from time to time we may find some really neat gifts that we want to do like the duck decoys out of fence posts that we used last fall and our first spring test. Michele proposed increasing the gift to \$250 per judge per event. Mike Smith seconded. Discussion included what was meant by event – should it be per test, in which case JH / SH judges would get \$500 while Master judges only get \$250, or by the day, or by the entire time they are hired for, i.e., the entire event. After some discussion, the motion was amended to reflect that this was PER EVENT, so at our fall test, MH, JH, and SH judges would each get \$250. The vote passed unanimously. This will apply to the July test and others from now on. We hope this may make it easier to attract judges for our events!
- c. Fees for mailing ribbons -- \$5 doesn't quite cover the cost of mailing 1 ribbon. It covers postage, but not cost of envelope. Karen suggested increasing this amount if more than one ribbon is to be mailed. J. Michael moved that we charge \$5 per ribbon, rather than \$5 for all ribbons, and this was seconded by Mike Smith and approved unanimously. There was also some discussion about some ribbons that were supposed to be mailed following the Memorial Day test. One man, who was sent two ribbons, had not yet received them. Karen did send them out on June 8 (had to buy more padded mailing envelopes, had to schedule a trip to the post office). There was some discussion how much longer we should wait before assuming that the ribbons were lost in the mail and send more. [Luckily, Karen checked the receipt after going home from the meeting, and it had a tracking number. The

USPS tracking system said the ribbons made it to the Memphis Regional mail facility on 6/23/21 so this item should be moot, assuming they finally get around to delivering it.] Also, one man paid for his ribbon to be mailed, Karen received the paper and the money, but in the rush to close down the test and all get home on Sunday night, the paper with the name, address and info about the ribbon got lost and hasn't turned up since. Unfortunately, neither Karen, nor J. Michael Evans, who took the money and the information, nor Michele, who was the other person who saw the sheet of paper, has any recollection who the man was. We have his money, and if he contacts us at some point we can get him his ribbon but until then we are dead in the water.

3. *Any other new business?*

- a. Alan noted that our amateur allotment of 25% filled up within 20 minutes. Michele moved that we increase the allotment to 35%, it was seconded by Luke McCoy, and passed unanimously. There is no downside since all spots not filled by Amateurs will be released for anyone the following day at the official opening time. This will be effective with our October test onwards.
- b. Mike Smith wanted clarification on the new rules with respect to Club's responsibilities to ensure that people who go to the line under an Amateur entry are actually amateurs. This could be an issue for the club, who AKC says may be sanctioned for letting pros handle dogs entered under the Amateur entry system. J. Michael reported that he has had several talks with AKC about this, and yes, they are planning to make an example of some pros and potentially some clubs. But, they realize that marshals don't know everyone and we will not be in trouble if we use reasonable efforts to make sure the system isn't being abused. Lois mentioned that her marshaling system, using the whiteboards with the magnetic dog/handler's name on them, do include the letter "A" for people who enter as amateurs. But, the marshal should question a handler who brings 5 dogs up to the line and have him state that he is an amateur.
- c. Brian Caldwell has floated the possibility of the club financing a duck pen for him – a simple 12x24' structure with a sloped concrete floor, outside attached to the new pole barn he is planning to construct this fall, with chain-link dog panels forming the sides and some kind of wire mesh or netting on the top. If we do, Brian would be willing to keep ducks for us between tests and keep them fed. This could potentially save us some shipping costs involved in multiple trips from the duck supplier's farm. Discussion centered around several points:
  - i. Are we going to keep on doing lots of extra tests? If we only do one in the spring and one in the fall, we will get no benefit out of this. General consensus seemed to be that we might be willing to do two extra mid-week tests next year and on a fairly regular basis, but not five.
  - ii. How much would this cost? Willingness to do this for \$1,500 would be a lot higher than willingness to do this for \$3,000.
  - iii. Even if we don't actually use it, through not having extra tests next year or Brian deciding he doesn't want to use his land for this any more, how much do we 'owe' him in gratitude for letting us use his land so much this year?

We decided to table this for now; J. Michael will ask him for an estimate and depending on what the estimate is, we will discuss paying for all or part of it at another meeting.

- d. Alan Bruhin mentioned that Ryan Stamey had given him a vet certificate to scratch two bitches in season back on May 29, and had forgotten all about it until Ryan called a few days ago asking where his check was. We all immediately agreed that the vet cert had been

received timely and that we owed him the money. Karen will send out the check tomorrow.

- e. Alan also mentioned that he thought being able to use Hiwassee for our fall test is probably a thing of the past, and we need to consider other long term options. He said that Brady Collins (pro field trial trainer at Dogtown, not far from Ken Campbell's farm near Sweetwater) has indicated he would be willing to host our fall test, as long as we were willing to sponsor an owner / handler Qualifying field trial on Friday before our test. This is not an unusual thing for clubs to do and we wouldn't be going at it blind – John Broucek and Lisa Styles both have experience in judging and running trials. We agreed to think about this favorably for next year's fall test, and several people indicated it might be a hoot to participate.

**Adjourn:** There being no other new business, Jim moved that we adjourn. Jeff seconded the motion which then passed unanimously. The meeting was adjourned at 9:05 p.m.

Respectfully Submitted

*Karen Edwards*

Karen Edwards, Secretary /Treasurer

Changes:

1. Michele Fletcher: Change average price for Senior hunt tests from \$85 to \$90.

Approvals:

1. Peter Torok 6/24/21
2. J. Michael Evans, 6/24/21
3. Jim Pearce, 6/24/21
4. Luke McCoy 6/24/21
5. Mike Smith 6/24/21
6. Karen Edwards 6/24/21
7. Jeff McNutt 6/24/21
8. Michele Fletcher 6/25/21