

ETRC Upcoming Events

Volume XXIII, Issue 6

June 2023



MARK YOUR CALENDARS NOW FOR ETRC'S UPCOMING EVENTS!

1. June 6-7, 2023: Midweek Master Only, Brian Caldwell's. Entries open: Wednesday, May 17, 2023 7:00 PM CT, Workers/Amateur Set Aside open: Tuesday, May 16, 2023 7:00 PM CT
2. Sunday, September 17, 2023: Club Trial with LIVE FLIERS, picnic, general business meeting. Cory Smith's farm in Niota. Free club trial entries for club members. More details to come,
3. September 30-October 1: Fall Hunt Test, Lucky 7 Ranch, Sweetwater (tentative) — all levels.
4. November 14-15, 2023: Midweek Master Only, Brian Caldwell's
5. February 24, 2024, Saturday: Awards Banquet, Elections, General Meeting: Bearden Banquet Hall, 6:00 p.m.

Photo of the Month



Alan and Cyn Bruhin, Jeff and Charlie Rader, all successful at the Master Amateur Invitational Hunt Test in Giddings, Texas

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Report: ETRC's May Mid-Week MH AKC Hunt Test

Brian Caldwell's Farm, May 16-17, 2023

Our third hunt test of 2023 was held on May 16-17, a single flight of Master dogs at Brian Caldwell's training grounds. 57 dogs signed up, 5 scratched, 52 came to the line, and 23 of those passed. This was a fun but quite difficult test. Each series had a triple and blinds, and there was a strange diversion shot while the dog stood in the blind on leash.... Each series was relatively lengthy, and the third series took an average of about 8 minutes per dog. The weather was pretty fine, no rain and reasonable temperatures. We have lucked out on weather so far this year!

The entries included one Chessie, three Golden Retrievers, two Boykin Spaniels and a Poodle (who was awesome). The rest were a variety of Labradors in different colors.

Judges were Matt Griffiths and William Skeels. We used professional bird technicians — thanks so much to member Bob Smith who works with Brian Caldwell, and also to Ryan Stamey's two bird technicians. They were pretty amazing, hand throwing the birds with super consistency both days. Thanks also to Brian for the use of his land again, and to members Michele Fletcher, Mike Evans, Mike Smith, Donna Smith, Alan Bruhin, Peter Torok, Cory Smith, Jim Pearce and Karen Edwards for providing test support on a variety of tasks including test setup and tear down, judges' hospitality, duck procurement and handling, lunch preparation, equipment maintenance, etc. If I missed anyone, it's because of faulty memory and not because of the value of your contribution! It was also great that several new members came to watch and find out more about the sport! We enjoyed meeting you and hope to see you participating soon in various club events.

Congratulations to the following members whose dogs qualified at this difficult test:

- ◆ Andy Buck, owner and handler of Coosawatte Backwater Drake;
- ◆ Donna Smith, owner (along with Mike) and handler of Blythe Ferry's Indy Dos;
- ◆ Brian Caldwell, owner and handler of Ringtail Headhunter;
- ◆ Alan Bruhin, breeder, owner, and handler of Tennessee Cinnamon fireball;
- ◆ Mike Vencille, owner (along with Lisa) and handler of Lick Creek On The Money.

Brian also handled another client-owned dog to a pass.

To all the rest of us members who gave it a shot, better luck next time! It was fun, anyway, right?



Upcoming: ETRC Midweek Master Hunt Test June 6-7, 2023

Our last hunt test of the spring season is another single flight of Master dogs at Brian Caldwell's place. This test opened Wednesday, May 17 at 7:00 p.m. Central time and closed May 29. At the time of publication, there are 56 dogs entered in this test.

We will be using professional bird technicians, and club members will be providing test support. If you are a new member, these midweek tests are a wonderful way to come out and actually SEE what dogs are asked to do at the master level and learn a lot more about our sport. These tests are fairly relaxed, and other club members will have time to sit with you, answer questions, and explain what is going on. So, if your schedule permits you to attend a midweek event, there's no better way for a good, solid introduction.

These tests are fairly low-key in terms of workers needed, but we do need people to help set up and tear down tests, and on occasion rotate in an out of blinds throwing birds. Because this is a no-live ammunition property, there will be no live flyers at this test as approved by AKC.

The judges for this test are Mary Harding and Patricia Jagoda.



Brian & friend at his property, waiting to go to the line for the March Master-Only Midweek Test. Picture courtesy of Donna Smith.

How to get to Brian's Farm:

The address is 1810 State Highway 58 South, Georgetown, TN, near Cleveland and Decatur and not far from Dayton, TN. If you don't have a GPS, here are some more detailed instructions:

- ◆ From Interstate 75, take exit 49 for TN-30 towards Decatur.
- ◆ Follow TN-30W for 9.3 miles into the stop light in Decatur
- ◆ Turn left onto TN-58S. Stay on this road for 15 miles and turn left into Brian's property. This is just after going up a hill, so be prepared to turn in a hurry as you approach the hill.

Proposed New Format for the Master National

The Master National Retriever Club has been dealing with a serious problem over the last 5 or 6 years — namely, too much success! The Master National Invitational Hunt Test has grown to the point where it is almost impossible to run because of the high number of dogs — can't find grounds, can't find enough judges, can't get enough workers, and it drags on for a long time each year and costs a fortune.

Last year, the MNRC sent out several proposals for change, and all of them were roundly voted down by the member clubs. AKC has now stepped in and has told the MNRC that they have to fix the problems or AKC will no longer recognize the event, so something needs to be quickly.

A new draft proposal, which has the blessing of AKC already but is still not completely supported by the entire MNRC Board, is now out for discussion with the retriever community. It calls for a two-step qualifying process:

- ◆ First, a dog must first pass 6 master hunt tests within a 12-month period.
- ◆ Second, a dog that has passed 6 regular tests becomes eligible to enter a regional-level MN Qualifier test — but only one during a calendar year — and if he passes that test, he will be qualified for the Master National. These qualifying tests would be held on a weekend, from Friday through Sunday, possibly in conjunction with another regular weekend hunt test (or in addition to it). A dog does not have to attend a test in his or her region, but can only attempt one each year. Entries would be unlimited, with flights of up to 100 dogs per flight. And, if you pass the Qualifying test, it counts towards one of your needed passes the next year; plus, if you pass the Master National it would count as another one, so a successful contestant through all 6 tests would only need to pass 4 more MH regular tests and another qualifier for the next year.

The National level test may have a reduced number of series. The new rules would call for 'three or more' series, much like the language for current weekend master tests. However, a telephone discussion between Karen Edwards and Matt Griffiths (who called on behalf of the MNRC to answer questions and seek any input) explained that the goal is still to have 6 series if at all possible. Each series will be at the highest level of the requirements for master tests — i.e., much harder. For example, each series must have a triple and two blinds, live flyers are required, and land series will use pheasants instead of ducks. MNRC is hoping these changes would result in around 600 dogs at the National level test, and that it could be completed within a week.

The MNRC believes this will be more attractive to Amateurs than the current test, that it will reduce costs, and that it will make it possible to run the tests more efficiently. They are asking for clubs to volunteer to run the MN Qualifier tests instead of or in addition to their regular hunt tests, and the MNRC will pay for the judges, cost of renting the land, etc. Running a Qualifier test will not count against the local club's allotment from AKC for Master tests. However, Matt Griffiths also said that the entry fees for the qualifier test is likely to be in the \$175 range, and the current plans are to keep the entry fees for the National test the same at \$500. Because the qualifiers have unlimited entries, this would mean that a club would need to be prepared and have judges and grounds suitable for running possibly around 200 dogs in total over a three day period, with 100 dog flights.

If you want the full details of this proposal, which goes into more depth on all the points above plus transition issues and how to qualify if you are already an MNH by virtue of passing several previous MNs, email me and I will forward the entire package on to you — edwardskc@gmail.com. The MNRC Board is currently modifying the proposal based on comments to date, and hopes at some point in the next month or so to present a formal proposal for an approval vote. The ETRC Board is seeking your input, comments, etc. both to pass on to the MNRC, and to consider whether or not to support the finalized proposal. According to the MNRC, their aim is to "find a plan which will present testing to the maximum standard and identify the best of the best at that particular event. And is acceptable by majority of the people we work for."

Some questions to consider in making your comments:

- ◆ Do these changes make it more or less likely that you would strive to qualify and attend a Master National test?
- ◆ What impact do you see from these changes on your anticipated costs of qualifying and attending the MN?
- ◆ Do you think this will make it harder for local clubs to run regular weekend hunt tests in prime spring and fall dates? Will this push more tests to midweek, or to marginal dates like early spring, hot summer, or late fall?
- ◆ Would you have any interest in seeing ETRC try to run one of the regional qualifying tests? We would need a lot more help than we usually have for our regular tests, plus we would need access to grounds that are suitable for running two or three concurrent Master flights. If you are interested in seeing ETRC run such a test, we would need commitments for helpers beyond the usual group that helps at tests.
- ◆ Any other comments, suggestions, or thoughts about this proposed format and its impact on both Amateurs and Pros?

We would welcome your thoughts as the Board considers whether to vote FOR or AGAINST this proposal or a similar one. Remember though, that if there isn't some change made quickly, the hunt test community stands the possibility of losing a national event at all, so be constructive in your comments and bear in mind that status quo is not an option.

Upcoming Open Training Days at the Retriever Retreat

Lois Luthenauer is hosting free training days at the Retriever retreat on May 9, 10, and 11; (Tuesday, Wednesday and Thursday), May 13 (Saturday), and May 23, 24, 25 (Tuesday, Wednesday, and Thursday). All levels of training will be included on the midweek sessions, and thawed ducks will be available. Drills in the morning, set ups in the afternoon. 9:00 a.m. Central time to 4:30 p.m. Central time. The training day on May 13th will focus on Master marks and blinds in advance of ETRC's Master test the following week.

You must call ahead if you want to attend any or all days — 865-803-1187 — so Lois knows how many to expect. Pack a lunch and drinks / water for your dogs, plus any training equipment you want to bring along. There will be a bucket for voluntary donations to help cover the cost of ducks.



The Retriever Retreat is located at **3058 Martha Washington Road, Clarkrange, TN**. GPS gives good directions to this location about 15 miles north of Crossville. There is a small semi-technical pond on the property for water work, and nice land for marks and blinds. A pavilion is available for eating lunch, as well as a bathhouse with toilets.

Hope to see some of you out there!

Jeff Rader and Alan Bruhin's Report on the Master Amateur

Alan Bruhin and Jeff Rader traveled to Giddings, Texas for the Master Amateur Invitational Hunt Test April 22 – April 27, 2023. We left on Tuesday, April 18th to train for a couple of days in Texas near the test grounds. We had a great time and met new friends. We also traveled with Dennis Wilcox and Dave Coffey. Dennis is from Middle Tennessee and Dave is from Danville, Virginia. We took a total of five dogs. Dennis had two dogs that qualified. The rest of us each had one dog to run. Four of the five dogs passed.

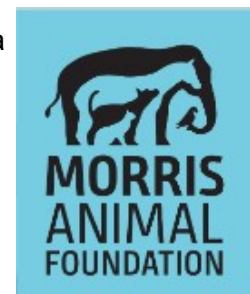
Both Cin (Alan's dog) and Charley (Jeff's dog) passed after six days of testing. There were 178 dogs running in two flights, and each flight ran a total of six series. 87 dogs passed, for a 49% pass rate overall.

The tests were challenging but fair. The actual video of each test, and pictures/diagrams of the set-ups, are available on the MAI website for anyone who is interested. Alan has been to many national tests and has judged numerous times at that level. This was Alan and Cin's second trip to the MAI after successfully competing in Sedalia last year — only one more to go till the MAH title and entry into the Hunt Test Hall of Fame! This was Jeff's first year at the national level. It was a great experience but it made for a busy week.



Pet Cancer Prevention Tips from the Morris Animal Foundation

- ◆ **AVOID SECOND-HAND SMOKE.** Does your pet live in a household with smokers? Evidence suggests that cancer risk is increased in pets exposed to environmental tobacco. Keep your home a smoke-free zone.
- ◆ **MONITOR YOUR PET'S WEIGHT.** Research suggests that obesity is a risk factor for cancer. Feeding a poor quality or imbalanced diet also may be linked to an increase in cancer risk.
- ◆ **BECOME AN EXPERT ON YOUR PET'S BREED(S).** Did you know that certain breeds of dogs and cats are prone to different diseases, including cancer? Become an expert on the diseases that are common in your pet's breed.
- ◆ **HAVE REGULAR VETERINARY CHECKUPS.** Would you see your doctor once every five years for a checkup? Skipping a yearly checkup with your pet would be similar. Regular checkups allow your veterinarian to perform a complete physical examination, which can identify abnormalities as well as establish a baseline that can be used for later comparisons.
- ◆ **AVOID LONG-TERM EXPOSURE TO SUNLIGHT.** As in people, light skin pigmentation combined with lots of time outside, can increase the risk for some cancers. Make sure your pet can get out of the sun, and avoid prolonged exposure to sunlight when it is strongest, around midday.
- ◆ **AVOID EXPOSURE TO ASBESTOS.** Just like people, there are reports of cancer related to asbestos exposure in animals. If removing this product from a home, keep pets away from the area for the duration of the process.
- ◆ **ADD VEGETABLES TO THEIR DIET.** At least one provocative study has suggested that adding vegetables may help decrease cancer risk.
- ◆ **EXAMINE YOUR PET ONCE A MONTH.** Look in your pet's mouth and ears, run your hands along their body and note any changes once a month; early detection is the best way to treat many diseases, including cancer.
- ◆ **AVOID EXPOSURE TO LAWN CHEMICALS.** Keep your pet away from applied lawn products when possible. There is some evidence for an increased cancer risk in pets exposed to applied lawn chemicals.
- ◆ **EXERCISE YOUR PET REGULARLY.** Get them moving. Regular exercise will keep your pet mentally stimulated, in shape and helps lower their risk of health problems.
- ◆ **AVOID EXPOSURE TO PAINTS & SOLVENTS.** One recently published study suggests a possible association between exposure to these chemicals and cancer. Try to keep your pets outside or in another room when using these substances.
- ◆ **GET TO KNOW YOUR PET.** Behavior changes are often a signal that a pet isn't feeling well. Watch your pet, learn their likes and dislikes, and their sleeping and eating habits. A change in routine or demeanor could be an early sign of disease.



Training Corner

Pre-Snap Checklist for Blinds — Pat Burns

This checklist is from Pat Burns "Line Mechanics For Success" digital course, and is part of a longer article on breaking down blinds into thirds, with videos, that is available online at <https://www.eliteretrievers.com/post/breaking-down-a-blind-retrieve> . Pat has lots of excellent free info available on his website — check it out!

This checklist will help you prepare and ensure you are ready to tackle any blind with confidence. Here are the key steps:

- ◆ Know the predicted wind direction: Understanding the wind can help you make strategic decisions during the blind.
- ◆ Have access to Google Earth photos of the site: Familiarize yourself with the terrain and layout before arriving at the location.
- ◆ Orient yourself after arriving on the property: Determine the cardinal directions (N, S, E, W) to assist with your navigation.
- ◆ Check the current wind direction: Confirm that the actual wind matches the predicted wind to make necessary adjustments.
- ◆ Analyze the factors: Consider the terrain, wind, cover, water, and visibility to develop a strategic approach.
- ◆ Review test instructions: Ensure you fully understand the test requirements and any specific rules or challenges.
- ◆ Have a plan for exiting the holding blind and approaching the line: Visualize your dog's path from the blind to the line to ensure a smooth transition.
- ◆ Be aware of your dog's attitude prior to getting to the line: Take note of your dog's mindset and adjust your handling accordingly.
- ◆ Where do I want to be on the mat and what side do I want to heel on?
- ◆ Assess changes in the test: Consider any changes in wind direction, visibility, or developing trails.
- ◆ Visualize success and proper execution: Create a mental image of what a successful blind looks like for you and your dog, focusing on the precise handling and desired outcome.
- ◆ Focus and don't allow yourself to be distracted: Stay mentally present during the entire blind, blocking out any external distractions or self-doubt.
- ◆ Watch the test dog: Pay close attention to the judge's reactions and instructions to the test dog, as it can provide valuable insights for your own handling approach.
- ◆ Study the return: you will learn more about key areas by closely observing the dog's return path.
- ◆ Have multiple references to the blind location: Don't solely rely on the intended marker; identify other landmarks or cues to ensure you have a clear picture of the blind's location.



Pat Burns, Elite Retrievers

- ◆ Ask yourself these questions:
 - ◆ How well you can see your dog?
 - ◆ How well they can see you?
 - ◆ How well they can hear you?
- ◆ Develop a plan:
 - ◆ Break down the blind into thirds
 - ◆ Handle to objective points
 - ◆ Setup “with the wind casts” when tackling hazards
 - ◆ Consider how to approach the trouble zones (out of sight or trouble hearing areas
 - ◆ Where NOT to be: “DEATH ZONE”
 - ◆ Be flexible: have a backup plan (Plan B) in case things don't go as expected, allowing you to adapt and make quick adjustments during the blind.
- ◆ Watch patterns develop: Observe how the blind unfolds for other handlers and their dogs and learn from their strategies and adjustments.
- ◆ Pay close attention to seasoned handlers: Take note of the adjustments and decisions made by experienced handlers.
- ◆ Re-evaluate the line if possible after watching dogs run.
- ◆ Remind yourself which way your dog turns: Keep in mind your dog's natural turning direction to anticipate the handling required at different points of the blind.
- ◆ Identify the "Red Zone": Determine critical areas where things can go wrong.
- ◆ Psyche yourself up, not out: Maintain a passionate and positive attitude, building confidence in yourself and your dog. Embrace a "Never Give Up" mindset, even in the face of difficulties.

By following this comprehensive pre-snap checklist, you'll be equipped with the necessary knowledge, strategy, and mindset to tackle blinds with confidence and precision. Remember, breaking down the blind into manageable chunks and staying focused throughout the entire process will lead you to success. Trust your training, trust your instincts, and trust your bond with your dog. Now go out there and conquer those blinds!

In conclusion, tackling a challenging blind in a hunt test or field trial competition may initially seem daunting, but with the right approach and mindset, it becomes a manageable task. By breaking down the blind into smaller sections and staying focused throughout the process, you can navigate the complexities with confidence and precision. Remember to trust your training, rely on your instincts, and maintain a positive "Never Give Up" attitude. With patience, practice, and perseverance, you and your canine partner can excel in the world of retriever training and achieve success at all levels of competition. Embrace the journey, learn from each experience, and enjoy the thrill of working as a team to overcome challenges and reach your goals..



Dispersal Sale — Big Dog Training Stuff

Former ETRC President and Hunt Test Secretary Carol McCorkle (previously Stone) is moving to a retirement community in North Carolina and is selling all her 'big dog' stuff. Carol was active not only in hunt testing, but in obedience and scent work. She ran Standard Poodles, and all the items she is selling are appropriate for dogs in the 60 pound range.

All items must go by mid-June when the moving vans come! If you are interested in any of the variety of items Carol has for sale, please contact her on her cell phone at 210-264-4663 or email packerlady8@gmail.com. She lives in Seymour. She also has quite a bit of nice agility equipment for sale — ask her, if you are interested!



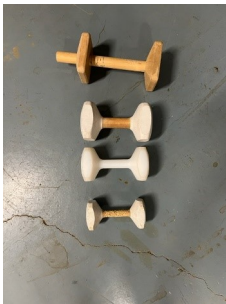
3 big-dog soft-sided crates



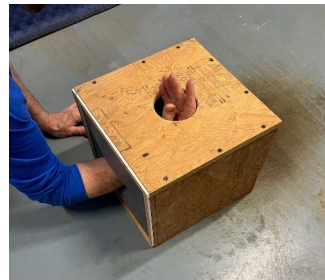
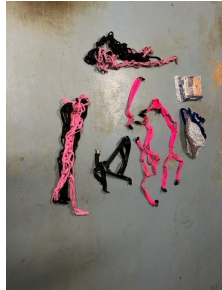
*Above: 2 camo gear bags
Left: bumpers, dokkens, whistles, blind sticks, etc.*



Two rows: obedience scent articles, buckets, booties, leashes, collars, other as-sorted dog equipment



Below: 4 boxes for teaching scent work



Youth Program



2022 Award Recipient, Bella Martin

The Luthenauer Young Handler program was established as a memorial to ETRC member Kevin Luthenauer. The program is supported by generous contributions from family and friends to encourage youth participation in retriever sports. Kids who are interested in applying are encouraged to join; check out the website for rules and an application form at http://www.etrclub.org/etrclub_youth_program.htm.

There is no application fee; if the applicant is not already part of a family membership, their membership fee will be paid for by the Luthenauer fund. The program will reimburse AKC Hunt test fees and any fees for other ETRC events such as club trials.

Yearly awards include a perpetual trophy along with a plaque to keep, and participation awards for everyone in the program.

ETRC Membership Information

Membership in ETRC is a bargain! The cost is \$25 for a single person or a family (one vote). Both new member and renewal forms are available online at <http://www.etrclub.org/join.htm> — just cut and paste the link, print it off, and send it along with your check to:

Karen Edwards, Secretary /Treasurer, 254 Babbs Road, Lenoir City, TN 37771.

Membership includes electronic copies of the newsletter, special announcements, eligibility to attend all ETRC Sponsored events, and consideration for end of the year awards. Don't miss out on the opportunity to make friends with like-minded dog people and learn more about our favorite sport. We are one of the most active Retriever clubs in the country — and have another great year ongoing in 2023 with 6 AKC hunt tests, club trials, seminars, training days, and more.

The membership year runs from March 1 to February 28/29th; people who join after November 1 are also paid up for the following year.

Newsletter Info

The ETRC newsletter is published monthly, as close to the 1st of the month as we can get it together. Send us your test results, new titles, litter info, new dogs, dog-related jobs and services, death notices, interesting articles, and any brags you care to share, along with pictures! Deadline is the 26th of the month but we can sometimes sneak something in a little late.... Send items to: Karen Edwards (edwardskc@gmail.com).

Numbering System: When I first took over the newsletter, I just continued on with the volume # from the last issue, then upped it by one every year. But, it makes no sense, and doesn't reflect how many years of newsletters we have anyway. So beginning with the January 2020 issue, the volume number is the last two digits of the year, in Roman numeral format — so this is now Volume XXIII (for 2023).