

# Minutes from the General Meeting, Sunday, September 21, 2025

## Lucky 7 Ranch, Sweetwater, TN

**Present from the Board:** J. Michael Evans, Alan Bruhin, Mike Smith, Karen Edwards, Michele Fletcher, Jim Pearce, & Bob Smith,

**Absent, Excused:** Jeff Rader, Travel; Nathan Lamping, no reason given; Luke McCoy, travel; Kyle Griffin, other event.

**Others Members Present:** Dick & Jolynn Lamping; Donna Smith, Zach and Tyra Pry; Steve Cumbie, Lois Luthenauer, Bob Houston.

A quorum is 20% of the voting membership. 13 memberships were represented, and the current membership stands at 66 (20% would be 13). Therefore, a quorum was present.

Meeting called to order at 208 p.m. following our third club trial of the season, and a picnic pizza lunch provided by the Club.

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

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

- J. Michael welcomed everyone who came, and mentioned that we had put on several other club trials this year and a lot of hunt tests. Our last hunt test is coming up at Lucky 7 on October 18-19, and will open up for Amateurs and worker codes this coming Tuesday. It will be a double Junior, double Senior, and single flight of Master. He thanked everyone who had helped us with all our events this year – property owners who let us use their property including Ken Campbell, Brian Caldwell, and Cory Smith, as well as all the members who judged, worked, helped and/or participated in any of our events during the year.
- **New equipment:** We purchased two new 5-shot Thunder launchers this year so we don't have to have so many people out working in the fields during our club tests and other group training activities. We now have two 10-shot launchers and two 5-shot launchers. Anything more that we need before the end of the year? Nothing was mentioned at the meeting, but see the addendum at the end of these minutes for a last-minute overnight motion for more equipment.

#### ***Secretary/Treasurer's Report.*** Karen Edwards.

- **Minutes:** Last meeting was 4/6/25. Minutes were approved by a majority of Board members and sent to the club website. Alan moved that we dispense with reading the minutes out loud, and vote formal approval. Mike Smith seconded the motion which passed unanimously.
- **Membership:** Membership at the end of December 2025 was 67. Membership today is 66, with 12 who didn't renew from last year, and 11 new members since the beginning of the year.
- **Correspondence:** Our accountant completed and sent off our tax return for 2024, fee of \$850. Various correspondence from the Master National concerning proposed bylaws changes – more on this later.

- **Treasurer's Report:** Current balance is \$40,236.64. Upcoming expenses include the portapotties for our test 9/10-11, expenses and receipts for this trial today, and for our final hunt test. We are in excellent financial shape but are not making as much money on our tests this year and our tests have not all been filling, which is a slight concern. A year ago, at the same point in our events year, our balance was \$45,713.60. We need to take care and carefully examine our costs to make sure that we don't spend down our reserves.

**AKC Delegate's Report:** Michele Fletcher reported that AKC is planning to send out event packets only once a year, to the club President. However, it seems like they are also being sent to past presidents, officers, etc. If any of our past or present officers get one, please get them to Michele as Hunt Test Secretary. These packets include a variety of things including rules, misconduct regulations, and various judges' sheet changes and other paperwork associated with AKC.

There are some new regulations on the horizon that will impact hunt testing. These have gone through various levels of consideration already, and were up for final approval at the September 19-20 AKC board meeting. We do not yet have word whether any of these were not approved. If approved,

- As of October 1, 2025, judges must rate all 4 abilities with a number score. Some judges just draw lines indicating that all scores are the same as the one that the line descends from; others leave some of the scores unrated altogether.
- As of October 1, 2025, three standards are being added to provide more clarity and consistency in the description of retrieves at the Master level –
  - A Master dog should have one clean triple marking series in a three series weekend test;
  - A Master dog that is out of the area of the fall gets scored zero if running at length with no results;
  - A Master dog should make continuous progress towards a blind retrieve.
- Staff has recommended a Rulebook change to the number of years, from seven to four, that a judge must have handled a qualifying dog in advance of a judging assignment.
- Staff has recommended a change to the Hunt Test Rulebook, to be effective November 1, 2025, to allow clubs the option to award qualifying ribbons at the end of each dog's run rather than at a ribbon ceremony at the end of the test.
- The Board has voted to approve a recommendation to count a disqualification given by a judge in Retriever Hunting Trials or Field trials as one disqualification across both sports. This would also apply to Pointing Breed, Spaniel and Beagle Hunt Tests and Field Trials. Note that it is the JUDGE that can file paperwork to disqualify a dog (for dangerous behavior etc.) and not the hunt test committee.

## Old Business

### **Election of New Members:**

1. **New Members:** two for final vote into membership:
  - Rickey Peebles, Project Controls, 905 Belltown Road, Tellico Plains, TN 37385. [RLPPeebles@gmail.com](mailto:RLPPeebles@gmail.com), cell 803-602-2378. Volunteers for 'whatever is needed,' hunt test set-up, and photography. Has two flatcoats, one 8 years one 3 years; older one is a MH, younger one is SH. Interested in hunt tests and dog training. Sponsors are Nate Lamping & Mike Smith.
  - Ronnie & Paige Cowan, Wildlife Biologist, UT. 317 Ashley Drive, Seymour, TN 37865. [RC@UTK.edu](mailto:RC@UTK.edu), 865-214-2167. Volunteers for duck wrangler/assistant, hunt

test set-up, Board of Directors, bird tech and/or coordinator, gunner, and interested in judging at club trials and being a hunt test chairman. Has a 1 year old chocolate Lab. Interested in hunt tests, field trials, hunter's safety course, dog training, club trials, judging/judging clinics. He is a DU member and a certified Hunters Safety Instructor. Sponsors are Alan Bruhin and J. Michael Evans.

Lois moved that we accept all these people into full membership in ETRC. Alan seconded the motion which then passed unanimously.

2. **First Reading of Provisional New members:** J. Michael Evans. We have 7 new members who are coming before the membership tonight for first reading and assignment of sponsors.

- Steve / Robin Cumbie, joined 9/16/25. Swimming pool builder, 353 Raccoon Valley Road, Powell, TN 37849, [RSteveCumbie@gmail.com](mailto:RSteveCumbie@gmail.com), 865-389-2700. Volunteers for whatever is needed, has a 6 month old Golden, interested in dog training. Jim Pearce and Karen Edwards volunteered to be sponsors.
- Nicole Pizzo "Nikki" (works with Mike and Lisa Vencille), joined 9/8/25, requests Michele Fletcher & Mike Smith as sponsors. 454 Lick Creek Road, Ceres, VA 24318, [nicole.pizzo@yahoo.com](mailto:nicole.pizzo@yahoo.com) 276-252-0506m, has a yellow lab, volunteers for bird tech, interested in hunt tests, dog training, DU member. Michele and Mike S have agreed to be sponsors.
- Samuel / Alexandra Hartsell, joined 5/18/25. Finance / debt financing, 2521 Woodrow Drive, Knoxville, TN 37418, [samuelhartsell@gmail.com](mailto:samuelhartsell@gmail.com), 704-425-5580. Has a yellow English lab, 11 months. Brand new to competition but trains his lab for hunting. Interested in field trials, hunt tests, club trials, judging clinics, DU member. Brent Naveiro and Alan Bruhin have volunteered to be sponsors.
- Scott Corum, joined 5/18/25. Engineer, 12424 Ooltewah Georgetown Rd, Georgetown, TN 37363, [corum.scott@yahoo.com](mailto:corum.scott@yahoo.com), 423-779-6351. Volunteers for whater is needed, hunt test set-up, gunner, food prep/supplies.Has a 4 year old black lab. Interested in hunt tests, field trials, club trials, is an NRA and DU member. Bob Smith and J. Michael have agreed to be sponsors.
- Colton /Tiffany Cross, joined 5/18/25. Gas Company, 582-Hughes Lake Road, Cleveland, TN 37323, [cmcross303@gmail.com](mailto:cmcross303@gmail.com), 423-716-7646. Volunteers for food prep/supplies, training supplies. Has a 3 year black lab. Interested in Hunt Tests and dog training. Mike Smith and Bob Smith have agreed to be sponsors.
- Kenny McCormick, joined 5/18/25. Ocoee Steel Manager, 338 Charles Circle, Cleveland, TNH 37323, [KMAC2323@hotmail.com](mailto:KMAC2323@hotmail.com), 423-650-8425, volunteers for whatever is needed. Has a 5 year BLack lab Master Hunter, interested in hunt tests, field trials, hunter's safety course, dog training, club trials, judging clinics, breeding and is a DU member. J. Michael and Alan Bruhin agreed to be sponsors.
- Gay / Bob Coffin, joined 5//8/25. Retired, 4567 Signal Forest Drive, Signal Mountain, TN 37377, [Jcoffin121@gmail.com](mailto:Jcoffin121@gmail.com), 203-981-4522 (Gay), volunteers for marshalling. Have 2 flatcoats, one 9 (SH, WCX), one 6 (JH WC). Belong to 5 flat coat or HRC clubs, interested in hunt tests and dog training. . Bob Smith and Jim Pearce agreed to be sponsors

Lois moved that we accept all these people into provisional membership in ETRC. Alan seconded the motion, which passed unanimously.

### **New Business:**

- 1. Update on Master National Stuff:** J. Michael gave the following summary of where we stand now with proposed updates and changes to the Master National:
  - a. The MNRC Board has announced that in 2026, the MN test will be limited to approximately 840 dogs. Each entrant with more than one dog will prioritize them; all the 1<sup>st</sup> priority dogs will be entered, then all the second priority dogs will be entered, and so on until there are approximately 840 dogs (all dogs at the same priority level will be accommodated, they won't cut it off at exactly 840 if there are some more dogs at the same priority level). Currently there are over 1200 dogs that are entered to run this year, were over 1100 last year, and the test committee is having a tough time finding enough judges and test grounds that can accommodate that many dogs.
  - b. Two clubs have presented Bylaws changes to prevent this from happening. They both want to continue to have all dogs that qualify able to enter and run the MN test without limitations. As a club, we have been asked to vote Yay or Nay on these proposals.
    - i. The North Alabama club has proposed a simple and straightforward amendment that will simply require the MNR Committee to find land that will accommodate all qualifiers and allow a quality, master level test.
    - ii. The Missouri Valley club has proposed two things:
      1. That the entire half of the country from Kansas to the Pacific coast and Alaska be combined into a single region. No rationale for this is given in the documents provided along with the proposal.
      2. An amendment to require the test to be held at a site that will accommodate all qualifiers in that region. The way this is worded, with the 'in that region' after the 'accommodate all qualifiers' instead of before it, does not match the stated intent, that all qualifiers from all regions must be accommodated without limitation. A wording change would be necessary to accurately reflect their stated intent.
  - c. There is also an unrelated proposal that would allow Pro trainers to judge the Master National. At the present time, only Amateurs can judge.

Alan Bruhin elaborated on some of the background for this issue. The MNRC board, of which he is a member, is not unified in their thoughts about how to move forward with the yearly national test. Earlier efforts a few years ago to try to deal with the large number of dogs and difficulties in finding adequate grounds were all defeated – this included proposals to have 4 national tests, one in each region; have four regional qualifying tests which dogs would have to pass AFTER passing 6 weekend tests, in order to qualify for the Master National; various methods of increasing the difficulty of qualifying such as passing 8 tests instead of 6, or having to pass 6 tests out of 8, etc. The current decision by the board to limit the numbers by requiring handlers to rank their dogs instead of taking all who qualify

was not unanimous, and a recent Board proposal to cancel their stated plans for 2026 also failed.

There was some discussion on how ETRC should vote, recognizing that it is only a small minority of club members who are interested in the Master National competition. The general consensus of those present was that all qualifiers should be able to attend, if they wanted to. There was also discussion about the difficulties this prioritization process to limit entries would place on pros, telling some of their clients that their dogs were not good enough to be prioritized high enough to actually be able to attend.

With regard to the Missouri Valley Club's proposal to combine Regions 3 and 4 into one geographically enormous region, Alan was not sure of the rationale -- but the results would mean that tests in the combined region would be scheduled once every three years instead of once every two years as under the current bylaws, perhaps making it easier to find suitable land in the combined region. It would also make it easier for people in Regions 1 and 2 to be able to attend more years since 2 out of 3 tests would be in the Eastern half of the country. On the flip side, it would possibly mean that the Pacific Coasters always would have a 14-18 hour drive or more to be able to attend, since large tracts of land on the coast are hard to come by. Another side effect, possibly unintended, would be to reduce the representation on the Board from the western half of the country.

Alan moved that we vote AYE on both of these proposals, since a Bylaws change requires 2/3 ayes to pass, and picking one of the two proposals would make it more likely that neither of them would get enough votes to pass. This was seconded by Jim Pearce.

Alan was asked how, if both proposals passed, would the language from the two proposals be reconciled in the Bylaws. Would we then be asked to vote again, and just pick one? Alan thought this was unlikely, that it would probably be that someone on the board would rewrite the bylaws in a way to attempt to reconcile the two passing resolutions and this would just be done internally as a board action.

The question was called, and the motion passed with all ayes except for one dissenting vote, because of the inclusion of the Missouri Valley proposal along with the North Alabama one.

Next, Alan moved that we vote to approve the amendment that would allow pro judges to judge the Master National. This was seconded by Brent Naveiro. Discussion focused on the fact that any pro judges would probably come from regions of the country where driving with a truckload of dogs to that particular event would probably be too far to be feasible. There was some speculation about pro judges possibly being more lenient to other pro handlers (professional courtesy), but it was also noted that all of this depended on the quality of the judge, whether pro or not. The vote was called and the motion passed unanimously.

Karen Edwards will fill out the ballots reflecting ETRC's AYE vote on all of these proposed amendments, and will return them to the MNRC Secretary, Dede Patterson. [Update 9/25/25: the ballot specifically calls for the Club President or MNRC Delegate to cast the vote. J. Michael fills both these roles so he is the one who will complete and send in the ballot.]

2. **Nominating Committee:** J. Michael Evans. We need to have one board member and 2 regular members for this committee; we are also supposed to have two non-board alternates. The committee has to have a meeting (virtual, emails, phone or in person) before November 15, and must report to the Secretary (Karen) their nominations before November 24. If you agree to serve, Karen will send you the full details of what is involved and which positions are to be filled. Jim Pearce agreed to be the Board member, and Brent Naveiro and Zach Pry agreed to be the two non-board members.

***Any other new business?***

**Adjourn:** There being no other new business Lois moved that we adjourn. Jim Pearce seconded the motion which then passed unanimously. The meeting was adjourned at 3:30 p.m.

Respectfully Submitted,



Karen Edwards  
ETRC Secretary/Treasurer

**Changes:**

1. Michele Fletcher; change to wording about mis-sent Event Packages from AKC 9/25/25
2. Karen Edwards, addition that J. Michael as President will be filling out and returning the MNRC ballot, as required by the ballot itself. 9/25/25

**Approvals:**

1. Alan Bruhin 9/24/25
2. Mike Smith 9/24/25
3. Michele Fletcher 9/25/25
4. Kyle Griffin 9/25/25
5. Jim Pearce 9/25/25
6. Karen Edwards 9/25/25