

ETRC Board Meeting, Tuesday, 8/25/26 254 Babbs Road, Lenoir City, TN

Present from the Board: Alan Bruhin, J. Michael Evans, Karen Edwards, Michele Fletcher (via phone), Jim Pearce, Luke McCoy, Nathan Lamping, Bob Smith, Kyle Griffin, Lois Luthenauer

Absent, Excused: Brent Naveiro

Others Members Present: Luke's baby daughter, who was good as gold!

A quorum is 50% of the Board. Therefore, a quorum of the Board was met with 10 people present. The meeting was called to order at 6:40 p.m.

Officer's and AKC Delegate's Reports

President's Report:

Secretary's Report. Karen Edwards.

- **Minutes:** Last meeting was June 10, 2026. Minutes were approved by a majority of Board members and included in the July Newsletter. J. Michael moved that we dispense with reading the minutes out loud, and vote formal approval. Luke seconded the motion which passed unanimously
- **Membership:** Membership at the end of December 2025 was 67. Current membership is 63, with 9 already pending final approval at the picnic meeting, and 2 for first reading today. 14 people did not renew from 2025. As we decided last time, I have not removed one long-time member who had a serious accident earlier this year from the mailing list for the newsletter. Alan reported that he is doing much better!
- **Correspondence:** Several requests for donations including the Knox County 4H and the Gideon Bible society. We agreed not to send donations now, with a caveat that keeping contact with the 4H group might be a good idea if our relationship with the wildlife society and Cleveland State Community College for bird techs ever ends.
- **Treasurer's Report:**
 - **Calendar Year Finances:** Balance on January 1 was \$40,241.71. Current bank balance is \$34,999.33. We are down \$5,242.48 so far this year due to costs of banquet and losses on our first two hunt tests and the judges seminar.

AKC Delegate's report: Michele, with additional info from Alan: nothing significant to report. There was a recent death of a Golden at a conformation show; the dog died while on a grooming table while the owner/handler was in the ring with another dog. Unclear if the dog strangled on the cord tying it to the table, or if it was a heart issue. AKC is investigating to determine if this should fall under the recent new rules regarding health issues with unattended dogs at AKC events.

Old Business

1. Judges' Seminar, July 18, 2026.

- a. Full attendance; 22 signed up and 20 actually showed up. Success!
- b. Financials: we lost \$706.98 on this seminar, but hopefully gained some more future judges and improved other attendees' understanding of the hunt test program.
- c. We do not expect to make money on these seminars, but they are an important educational event and with the good attendance we lost less money that we had expected.

2. Club Trial/picnic/ business meeting 9/6/26

- a. Liase with Osteen / Shuler about this: Alan has had several discussions with the Osteens about this, they are looking forward to having us there.
- b. Trailer: we do need to bring the small trailer over (and back) from Brian Caldwell's and make sure it has at least 2 or 3 pop-ups for rain or shade, a table for signups (better two, with one for the pizza boxes), dokkens, etc. J. Michael will be responsible for this.
- c. We decided to use dokkens and bumpers for blinds, and the bumper launchers for the tests rather than ducks and wingers.
- d. After some discussion, and at the suggestion of Jim Pearce, we decided to have two different setups this time. First up will be the Singles Classic, followed on that same location with Junior and Advanced Junior, then the puppy stakes. Lois will be in charge of running the young dog events with assistance from others as needed. That site will also have about 6 thawed/frozen ducks to be used in a session afterwards of training young dogs who haven't had experience with ducks before.
- e. The second setup will be a Senior / Master stake. We anticipate more dogs in these two stakes so having the junior dogs at a different set-up should speed up the process. We need to do our best to finish with the club trial part by noon so we can eat pizza and have our meeting before people start leaving for home.
- f. It will be important for people to swap out judging so judges can also run their dogs.
- g. Food – Karen and Jim will get pizzas.
- h. 2 free entries per member? Nice way to encourage attendance, and this is the one event where we get good attendance from new members and a chance to make dedicated converts. After a brief discussion of whether to go down to one free entry, we decided to keep it at two this time and after all our events are done, revisit what we need to do next year if anything to stop the losses.
- i. Ribbons OK but very low. We will need to make an order before next year for Club Trial ribbons and may want to discuss cheaper alternatives at the end of the year. Can mix and match colors and writing, don't have to order 100 of each.
- j. Alan will need to appoint a nominating committee at this meeting, with two non-board members and a board member. They must report a new slate to the Secretary before Thanksgiving.

3. September Midweek Master, Brian Caldwell's, 9/15-16

- a. Entries: The test opened for amateurs and workers just after the meeting closed. At the time the minutes were being written up on the morning of 9/26 (before the test opens at 8:00 Eastern for everyone else), we were up to 26 entries already. Hopefully we will fill with a full 66 entries.
- b. Ducks on order: J. Michael has ordered ducks from Andrew Goddard, that will be delivered direct to Brian's the day before the test. If anyone wants to order any ducks for their own personal use, they need to notify J. Michael no later than the day the test closes (Monday, September 7) and he will make arrangements with them to pay him directly before the ducks are received.

- c. Judges still OK – so far. J. Michael is making reservations at the Dayton Best Western for them, and wants a notice in the newsletter that anyone who wants to reserve a room there must tell the person taking the reservation that they are with ETRC at the time of making the reservation, in order to get the discounted rate.
- d. Lunches – Lois volunteered to do grilled hotdogs, and Karen will assist with the balance of the food (chips, snacks, cookies, wet wipes, bags etc.).
- e. Ribbons inventoried and OK for this test. We currently have 138 MH ribbons, 98 SH ribbons, 133 JH ribbons, and 70 title ribbons with lots of tabs.
- f. Alan has contact the Wildlife Club sponsor and has requested 4 bird techs for this test and 12 for the October test. The club was having a meeting last night and asking for signups so hopefully we will get enough.
- g. Karen needs to write letters to the judges in the next week with details about the arrangements. Alan and J. Michael agreed that we don't need the judges before 3:00 p.m. on the Monday before the test, and that we should tell them to come to the test grounds first and to the motel later. All other items in the standard letter will be the same.

4. *October Fall Test, L7, October 18-19*

- a. Judges are OK. No decision yet on which motel we will use. J. Michael will let Karen know once the reservations are made so that the letters can go out.
- b. Lunches: Karen and Jim should be able to do this. Given the extra cost of the hotdogs and the logistical issues of ferrying food to three test sites, we decided to go with bagged sandwich lunches rather than hot dogs for this test, which should be a fair bit larger than the midweek test.
- c. Bird Techs: Alan will keep in touch with the Wildlife Society coordinator to see how many we have.
- d. Ribbons: OK for this test.

5. *Winter Awards Banquet:*

- a. Reservations have been made for Saturday: Feb 20, 2027 at Bearden Banquet Hall.
- b. Speaker: Still looking for suggestions for a speaker.

New Business:

- 1. ***New Members:*** 2 for first reading and assignment of sponsors:
 - a. Rob / Lori Chasse, retired, 16 Northridge Terrace, Crossville, TN 38558, chassetn77@gmail.com, 612-401-5777, email chassetn77@gmail.com. Volunteers for whatever is needed. Joined 7/10. Has a 9 mo. Black lab puppy, interested in hunt tests, field trials, dog training and is an NRA member. Lois has already had contact with Rob and agreed to be one of his sponsors. Nate volunteered to be the other.
 - b. Gregory Grant, produce broker, 1260 Spencer Mill Rd., Burns, TN 37029. 615-943-5443, gscottgrant@gmail.com. Volunteers as a gunner. Has 2 black labs, one HRCH 9.5 years, one 4 mo puppy. Member of MTARC, interested in Hunt tests & dog training. Requests Bobby Stogner to be one of his sponsors; he is Bobby's training partner & Bobby paid his dues. Lois agreed to be the second sponsor.

We have 9 people already who are waiting final vote at the picnic meeting. Karen asked sponsors to commit to contacting these two new people ASAP and let us know if there are any concerns, so we can go ahead and vote on them as well. Also, if anyone has concerns about any of the other people they are sponsoring, please let Karen know before the meeting. Karen also requested that all sponsors contact the people they are sponsoring and give them a special invite to the club trial, picnic and meeting.

2. **MNRC Stuff:** Alan & Michele:

- a. We have yet more amendments to their Bylaws to consider, and votes for officers. .
- b. Officers: We need a motion to approve or disapprove the nominated officers: David Coffey as VP for Region 1 and Alan Bruhin as Director for Region 2. After some glowing recommendations for David Coffey from several board members, Jim recommended we vote YES on his nomination, J. Michael seconded, and the vote was unanimous. After some jokes about Alan, J. Michael moved and Lois Seconded that we vote to elect Alan as our region's director. The vote was almost unanimous ... Alan thought about voting no, but as President he can't vote anyway!
- c. Amendments: The amendments are intended to allow for voting to be conducted electronically ONLY, rather than in person or by mail, both for future amendments and for election of officers. Votes are to be received BEFORE the annual meeting, and within guidelines provided for other, specially called meetings. Stated reason is to eliminate possibility of miscounted ballots, following an embarrassing incident that initially appeared to kill region 4 last year, but when the vote was recounted, the amendment failed. This does not explain why mail ballots received by whatever deadline is provided are not acceptable, and there is an issue that there are still a number of people within the hunt test community may not have a computer or be particularly computer savvy. However, J, Michael moved we accept the proposed amendment as written, Jim seconded, and the motion for approval passed.
- d. Minutes from last MNRC meeting. Karen noted that changes had been made to reflect the recount, and that the amendment eliminating region 4 failed, but the minutes were not amended to take out the 'new language' that would be in the bylaws that cancels the existence of Region 4. Alan said he would take this up with the powers that be.
- e. Casting our vote: because the amendments are not yet approved, this upcoming meeting will allow in person voting on the day of the meeting, but in the morning before the meeting. Either J. Michael or I (as contact and delegate) can cast the vote electronically, or we can vote to appoint Alan as the proxy since he will actually be going to the MN this year in Oregon, and attach that as a letter to the ballot which he would have to cast early in the morning on October 1. We discussed the fact that the way things are set up, the ballot is sent electronically to both of us, and if we wanted to, there is nothing that would preclude us from voting however we wanted to (before bringing it to a vote of the board) and that if we did that, there would be no way that this could be undone. This is a flaw in the system. However, we agreed that Karen (as contact) would fill out the ballot and email it back to the secretary within the timeframes required.

- f. Alan announced that the 2027 test will be in our back door in Cheraw, SC. This will be an enormous test, being held sometime in the fall, which will likely mean any tests we try to schedule next fall will be sparsely attended.
- g. The test in Oregon coming up in 5 weeks is still having troubles locating land. As a result, the club has requested AKC for an exception to have 3 land tests and 3 water tests (some including land marks) instead of have 2 land, 2 water, and 2 land and water. This request is pending. Only 787 have entered, which is over 500 dogs fewer than the last two MN tests, but suitable land for enormous tests is at a premium in Region 4. There will be 150 dogs were flight (up from 140), and 5 flights instead of 8 or 9.
- h. The 2028 test will be in Region 2, but no location has been identified yet.
- i. There was an interesting general discussion about the difficulties all these national tests put on local clubs scheduling hunt tests. We now have the Master National at varying times in the fall, the Master Amateur at floating times in the spring, and now the new AKC Hunting Champion Dog test that will involve one or more qualifiers during the fall and then another national test sometime in the spring. Several people noted that this latter test is having some start up pains; only 24 dogs have entered the first qualifier this fall, and all of them were entered by just 2 pros. All dogs who qualify in this test, which is warning that it will be judged much harder than most MH tests "at the highest standards in the hunt test regulations," whatever that means, will be eligible for the championship test. This may be a very small number next spring. Possibly this test will just fade away, but if it succeeds it has the potential to put enormous additional pressure on local tests.

Also, the UKC HR Grand test in the fall puts some more pressure on local hunt tests, especially since so many of the pros now train and compete in both AKC and UKC events.

The combined effect of all these national tests is reduced entries in local tests during the spring and fall. First of all, most of the pros and many of the best amateur handlers are at some national event during these pleasant seasons. This, combined with greater competition between local clubs for remaining dates and more overlapping test dates between relatively local clubs, means these local tests are more likely to be money losers for the sponsoring clubs. Obviously, this quickly becomes untenable. This, plus the pressure from pros and advanced amateurs for large numbers of local tests in order to qualify for the national tests, is resulting in many local tests now being scheduled in times of the year that are not healthy for the dogs and are uncomfortable for the handlers. While a July hunt test in New York State might not be so bad, there are now quite a few even in the deep south during the summer months, which can pose real health issues for the dogs and require curtailing the tests to lessen the risks. Likewise, more and more tests are being scheduled in November and March, even in locations where water temperatures may be extremely low. Alan mentioned that AKC is now considering eliminating midweek tests as well, which will put even more pressure on local clubs scheduling tests.

Up until the last year or two, the national test(s) have had a positive impact on the number of entries at local shows. Dogs continue to test locally at the MH level long after earning their titles, in order to qualify for the national tests. However, the

number and popularity of the national tests is now making it much harder for local events to schedule and make money on local tests, a situation which is unsustainable.

3. ***Any Other New Business?*** None.

Adjourn: There being no other new business, Luke moved that we adjourn. J. Michael seconded the motion which then passed unanimously. The meeting was adjourned at 8:00 p.m.

Respectfully Submitted,



Karen Edwards
ETRC Secretary/Treasurer

Changes:

1. Karen Edwards 8/27/26: eliminated section on finances which we did not discuss. This will be discussed at a meeting at the end of the year. Also fixed 2 typos.

Approvals:

1. J. Michael Evans 8/26/26
2. Luke McCoy 8/26/26
3. Brent Naveiro 8/26/26
4. Kyle Griffin 8/26/26
5. Michele Fletcher 8/26/26
6. Nate Lamping 8/26/26
7. Jim Pearce 8/26/26
8. Karen Edwards 8/27/26