

The 34th Annual HWA Airedale Field Nationals

September 20-22, 2019



This year's **HWA Airedale Field Nationals**, held for the seventh consecutive year at Holly Hills Game Preserve near Chillicothe, OH, included such a collection of memorable moments, Airedales, and owners packed into three days that it will take more than a few paragraphs to recollect them all.

Star achiever was **Reeva**, owned/handled by Michael Sites, who aced all three of her Senior tests to win her a nameplate on the **Joan Shea Gordon Memorial Trophy**, making her one of only three dogs to do so in recent years. Also impressive was Gus, a 7 year old Airedale who is the practical hunting companion of Jack Watts. Jack and his daughter Amy Watts came up from North Carolina for a first-time look-see at the Nationals. Without any prior hunt test experience, Gus qualified in his Junior Upland and Retriever tests, and in addition won the Gunners' Choice Trophy for being picked by the Upland Test gunners as the dog they'd most like to hunt over. Also notable was Mitchell Stewart, who drove 3, 658 miles from Denver, CO with his 7 month old Airedale Max just to experience all the sights and sounds the Nationals offers.

But ribbons and recognition aren't the main thing for those who participate in the HWA Nationals. With the Beginners' Upland Workshop, Hunting Instinct Test for pups, and Fur, Upland, and Retriever Tests offered on Junior, Senior and Master levels, there was a niche for every dog and owner, as well as time to enjoy the company of those who like their Airedales active and outdoorsy. Here's how the weekend went ...

Thursday, September 19

By tradition, we start our Nationals with a Hospitality Evening at our host hotel, the Quality Inn in Chillicothe. This year's complimentary supper was sponsored by Stuart and Mary Eavenson, Tom and Chris Halvorson, Kate and Joe Ostrowski, and Donna and John Noland. The gathering gives us a chance to meet up with old friends and meet and greet some newcomers. Its always a relaxing way to kick off what will be a busy weekend.

Friday, September 20

Starting a 8 am at Holly Hills, the ATCA Fur Test was the main test event on an overcast Friday morning. Chief Fur Test judge Dale Burrier had laid a challenging trail through the woods, starting with the 100 yard track for four Junior Test entries. The one Junior qualifier, Elliott, owned/handled by Kim Zaborniak, ran the trail quickly, passed the raccoon



The Joan Shea Gordon Memorial Trophy



Reeva, owned/handled by Michael Sites, proudly holds her duck upon completing the final requirement of the final test that put her name on the Joan Shea Gordon Memorial Trophy.

cage hidden in a tree, but quickly caught the scent and hooked back through heavy bushes to follow the scent to the tree. Lots of leaping and barking ensued. In a similar way, Reeva, owned/handled by Michael Sites, ran her 200 yard Senior track quickly and worked the wind to locate the raccoon. Reeva worked so well that she finished with an almost-perfect score. Later in the day it was Lawrence Alexander's pleasure to award Reeva his Priscilla Cree Memorial Award for the highest-scoring dog in the Fur Test. This was the second year in a row that Reeva took home that award.

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Brent LeMaster talks about introducing birds in his Beginners' Upland Workshop.

Meanwhile, in another field, professional spaniel trainer Brent LeMaster started the first session of his **Beginners' Upland Workshop**. Brent is a longtime supporter/encourager of HWA and Airedales in the field, so he's got the touch for getting dogs and owners started with birds and a plan for what's needed to continue the earliest lessons.

The morning's activities wrapped up with enough time to hold the **Barkathon** before lunch. In this just-for-fun event, Airedales and owners gather around a tree with a suspended, safely caged raccoon. Each dog takes a turn to go up to the tree and bark and leap for one minute. While new dogs and pups are may well be cautious and tentative when meeting a live raccoon up close for the first time, it's a crazy kind of Airedale fun for dogs who get into it. This year's winner was Kim Zaborniak's Elliott, who barked 117 barks in one minute. We think this might be an all-time record.



Elliott in the Barkathon

After lunch, the **Hunting Instinct Test** with chief puppy evaluator Sherri Glass convened on a shady hillside lawn. This was a nice spot for a gallery of spectators, whether looking to see what bloodlines are producing good pups or maybe just being entertained by puppy antics. This year we had only four pups/new dogs to be evaluated, so Sherri and her assistants had plenty of time to have each one go through a series of exercises to test prey drive, retrieving aptitude, and reactions to finding birds and a live raccoon, as well as the sound of a nearby gunshot.

The spectator gallery included three 14 week old puppies bred by Linda and Ben Potter, with the Potters bringing their L'il Bit and Trouble, and Judy and Dave Snyder bringing their puppy called Chaos. Since time allowed, the pups were invited to play through the test exercises, just to see what they'd do even though they were too young for official evaluation. The pups took their antics seriously, to the amusement of all. We ended with the final exercise of taking all the dogs to the pond to test their willingness to go into the water. The warm afternoon and exercise made it inviting for most of the dogs to wade right in.



Max, a 7 month old pup owned/handled by Mitchell Stewart, shows his willingness to try a water retrieve in the Hunting Instinct Test.

Friday afternoon concluded with **HWA's Annual Meeting**, an formality that gives everyone a chance to see a bit more of the club's inner workings, such as election of the 2020 Board, financial reports, and committee actions and ATCA Fur Test Awards. In addition, Dale Burrier introduced the Winston and Randy Cooley Master Hunter Versatile Memorial Trophy, offered by Sandi Cooley for Airedales who complete a Master Hunter Versatile [MHV] title. Two dogs -- Kira, owned/handled by Michael Sites, and Bruce, owned/handled by Chris Halvorson -- who earned their MHV titles in 2017 had nameplates added to the trophy. Dale presented the owners with beautiful "keeper" plaques to mark their dog's accomplishments. The conclusion of this meeting meant our adjournment for the day, with a welcome evening to rest and recharge.

Saturday, September 21

Cloudy skies and a light drizzle gave us a cool start for the **HWA Upland Test land series**. AKC-licensed judges John Dudash and Kate Ostrowski had a good group of 5 Junior dogs, followed by 5 Seniors and 2 Master entries. The rain made for less than ideal conditions as the Junior dogs started off, with a pause in the test as we waited for distant lightening and thunder to clear. Then the rain stopped, making conditions a little better for the Senior and Master dogs. By the end of the morning, one Junior dog and three Seniors had passed the Upland land series' requirements.

And in another field, the **Beginner Workshop** participants were able to continue their lessons with Brent LeMaster.



Gus, owned/handled by Jack Watts, was a first-time test participant who qualified in both his Junior Upland and Junior Retriever tests.

After a lunchtime rainbow, Saturday afternoon warmed up for the **HWA Retriever Test land series**. AKC-licensed Retriever judges Joe Ricupero and Patricia Rose understood that their entry of 5 Juniors, 6 Seniors and 1 Master dog were running the HWA Retriever Test with its rules newly updated to more closely match AKC Retriever Hunt Test rules. The judges gave a careful briefing to help coach the handlers towards best results. In the end, 2 Junior dogs and 2 Senior dogs passed the land requirements, but all the dogs and handlers came away with a better idea of what to train for next time.

See a complete listing of test qualifiers on page 5 of this report.

Saturday evening's **Banquet and Silent Auction** at the headquarters hotel has us finding a second wind as we were swept up into conversations and shopping. During a pause in the bidding, we took time to honor two longtime HWA participants with Special Service Appreciation Awards for their many years of volunteer service to our club. Ellen Gordon and Barbara Tulanko, friends and neighbors back home, bring their well-established teamwork to HWA's clubhouse duties, including taking care of HWA merchandise sales throughout the weekend.



Ellen Gordon and Barb Tulanko with their awards

Another highlight of the evening was the selection of the winner of this year's Limited Raffle, a larger-than-life size Airedale Butler. Barbara Morrison of West Virginia wasn't in attendance to claim her prize, but Corally Burmaster and Pat Reed managed to arrange delivery (thank you, Patricia Nemeth), just as they have managed and arranged everything about this important fundraising evening for so many years.



Sunday, September 22

Sunny Sunday morning's main task was bring the dogs who had qualified in the Upland and Retriever Test land series yesterday to meet the judges at the pond for the water series portion of their tests. The dogs in the **Upland Test water series** were each required to swim out to retrieve one chukar. The challenge for the Senior dogs is to be "steady," that is sit/stay off leash, as the bird goes into the water until the judge signals that the handler may send the dog off for the retrieve.



Mike, owned/handled by Chris Halvorson, completed his water retrieve with a good shake.

The dogs in the **Retriever Test water series** retrieve ducks, which can be a surprise for dogs who were expecting more chukars. However, this year's group did well with the ducks. Gus and owner/handler Jack Watts may have been first time test participants, but their years of duck hunting together made easy work of their test retrieves. Bruce, owned/handled by Chris Halvorson, came out of retirement to repeat the Junior test even though he'd previously earned a Master Retriever title. Then the Senior dogs, Reeva, owned/handled by Michael Sites and Mike, owned/handled by Chris Halvorson, took their turns at double marked retrieves on the water, followed by a water blind. In previous years, both dogs hadn't made it through this test level, but this time they both completed their requirements.

The Awards Ceremony at the end of a three-day weekend can sometimes seem like a survivors meeting. Though our crowd had thinned out, congratulations were sincere for dogs and owners who had earned ribbons and/or special awards. Notable among those is Kira, owned/handled by Michael Sites. A veteran of many Nationals, Kira won the Brown Bess Memorial Award for the highest scoring dog in the Upland Test. Reeva, also owned/handled by Michael Sites, won the Road Dog Trophy for being the dog that had passed the most AKC Hunt Tests since last year's Nationals. As previously mentioned, Gus took home the Gunners' Choice Award for his owner Jack Watts. And incredibly almost overlooked in the excitement, Reeva won her spot on the Joan Shea Gordon Memorial Trophy for her first-time qualifications in all three of her tests (Senior Fur, Upland and Retriever) at this year's Nationals.

While this report tries to bring to life the Nationals by talking about dogs and handlers who did well in their tests, that doesn't diminish the many dogs and handlers who may have missed a qualifying score by one missed retrieve or a lost track in the Fur Test. They also have their stories to tell. Win or lose, that's part of the fun of field work.

*And so we'll meet again next year at Holly Hills.
See you then!*

Save the Dates

Fun in the Field, April 4-5, 2020

**HWA 35th Airedale Field Nationals,
September 11-13, 2020**

New Headquarters Hotel
for the 2020 Nationals !

Deer Creek Park Lodge
and Conference Center

See <https://www.deercreekparklodge.com>

2019 HWA Nationals Hunt Test Qualifiers

ATCA Fur Test Qualifiers

Junior Fur Test:

- Ch. Donaldmac's Easy on the Eyes, JFT, BN, RN, CGC, TKI, BCAT

Senior Fur Test:

- Stillwaters Reeve Mia, JH (AKC), SHF, SHR, SFT, owned/handled by Michael Sites, Eureka, MO, bred by Sherri Glass.

HWA Upland Test Qualifiers

Junior Upland Test:

- Gustavias Maximus, JHF, JHR, owned/handled by Jack Watts, Fayetteville, NC, bred by Amy Burkhard

Senior Upland Test:

- Stillwaters Reeve Mia, JH (AKC), SHF, SHR, SFT, owned/handled by Michael Sites, Eureka, MO, bred by Sherri Glass
- Coldstream Born in the USA, MH (AKC), MHV, CD, RA, owned/handled by Chris Halvorson, Lockport, NY; bred by Corally Burmaster and Margo Dupre.
- Aircraft Kira Stella Sites, MH, GD, CGC, MHV, owned/handled by Michael Sites; bred by Dale and Kim Burrier and Corally Burmaster

HWA Retriever Test Qualifiers

Junior Retriever Test:

- Gustavias Maximus, JHF, JHR, owned/handled by Jack Watts, Fayetteville, NC; bred by Amy Burkhard
- Coldstream Born in the USA, MH (AKC), MHV, CD, RA, owned/handled by Chris Halvorson, Lockport, NY; bred by Corally Burmaster and Margo Dupre

Senior Retriever Test:

- Coldstream Make My Day, SH (AKC), SHR, MHF, MFT, CD, owned/handled by Chris Halvorson, Lockport, NY; bred by Corally Burmaster
- Stillwaters Reeve Mia, JH (AKC), SHF, SHR, SFT, owned/handled by Michael Sites, Eureka, MO, bred by Sherri Glass

Senior Hunter Versatile (new title)

- Coldstream Make My Day, SH (AKC), SHV, MHF, MFT, CD, owned/handled by Chris Halvorson, Lockport, NY; bred by Corally Burmaster
- Stillwaters Reeve Mia, JH (AKC), SHV, owned/handled by Michael Sites, Eureka, MO, bred by Sherri Glass

Hunting Instinct Test Qualifiers

- McKenzie's Maxwell Bean, owned/handled by Mitchell Stewart, Centennial, CO
- Ice Pond Shenandoah Begarah, owned/handled by Terry Younkens, Moon Township, PA
- Stillwaters My Shepherd Leadeth Destiny, bred/owned/handled by Sherri Glass, Clyde, OH