

The 35th Annual HWA Airedale Field Nationals

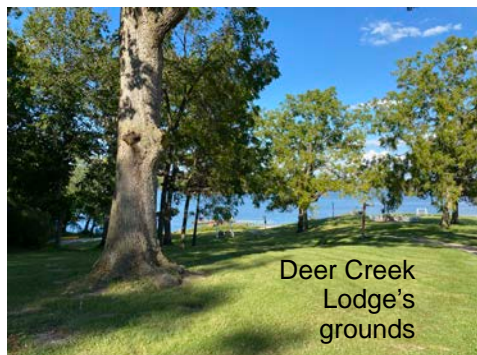
September 10-12, 2021

A Weekend to Remember



As the world attempts to return to almost-normal following a pandemic year off, it was a pleasure for **Hunting Working Airedales** to return to Holly Hills Game Preserve, near Chillicothe OH, for our eighth Nationals at that site. This year we had fewer first-time attendees than usual, but the regulars who returned to run their dogs in the HWA hunt tests had been doing some training during their time off in 2020. By the end of the weekend, there were a number of qualifiers with ribbons to take home. If there were an award for the owner/handler with the broadest smile, that would have gone to Ben Potter. Ben's 2-year old homebred Airedale named **Trouble** started the weekend by winning the Priscilla Cree Memorial Award for having a nearly-perfect high score in the ATCA Junior Fur Test on Friday. Trouble then went to qualify in his Junior Upland Test and Junior Retriever test. Qualifying in all three hunt tests at one Nationals is a difficult achievement awarded by a nameplate for the dog on the **Joan Shea Gordon Memorial Trophy**. This honor was earned by only eleven prior Airedales since the award was inaugurated in 1989. Trouble's accomplishment was a highlight of the weekend.

We started the Nationals weekend at **Deer Creek Lodge**, our headquarters hotel on the grounds of Deer Creek State Park in Mt. Sterling, OH. The resort atmosphere, complete with a lake, hiking trails, and expansive lawns made it a perfect place to spend some leisure time with our Airedales. Our "soft opening" started with a Hospitality pizza party at Deer Creek on Thursday evening. This was our chance to re-connect with old friends and meet some newcomers.



Trouble, owned and handled by Ben Potter and joined by Linda Potter, shows off his awards: The Joan Shea Gordon Memorial Trophy for qualifying in all three tests and the Priscilla Cree Award Upland judges Kate Ostrowski (left) and Mark Gebert (right) add their congratulations.

Friday, Sept. 10th.

The Nationals officially started with Friday morning's **ATCA Fur Test**. This test requires Airedales to do off-leash tracking of a raccoon-scented track through the woods to find a live caged raccoon safely hidden up in a tree. Junior, Senior, and Master tracks are 100, 200 and 300 yards respectively, with the handler and judge following behind on a path off to the side so as not to influence the dog's performance. This summer's heavy rain promoted such dense underbrush that the woods were almost impenetrable for 2-legged walkers, such as Fur Test judges Dale Burrier and Jim Middaugh. On prep day, Holly Hills owner Dean Hatfield made it possible for the handlers and judge to follow the dogs by bush-whacking a path through the overgrowth. Subsequently several Airedales could then show off their tenacity and determination as well as their good noses by tracking through the woods to qualify in their tests.

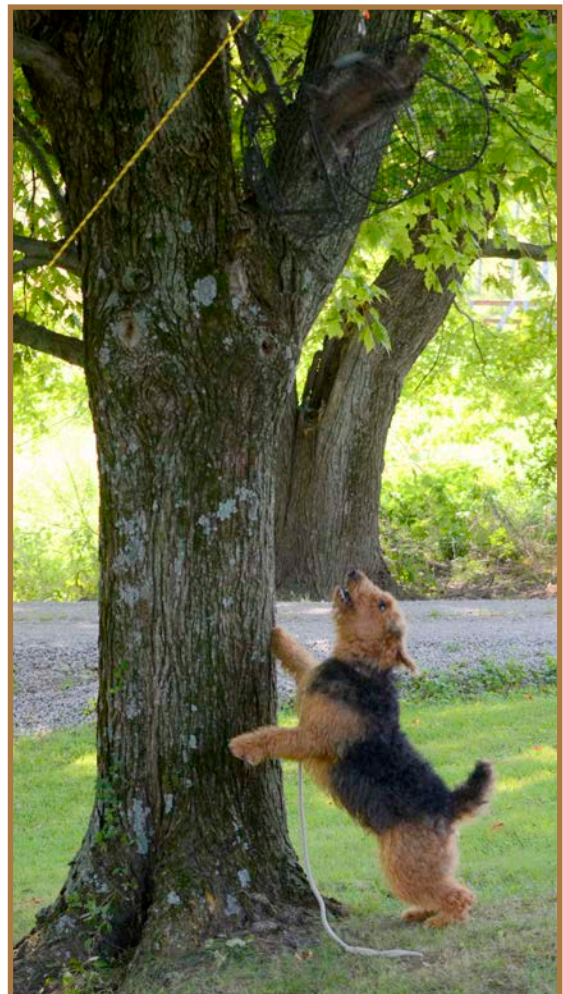
See a complete list of qualifiers following this report.



Pro trainer Duane Menges (center) works with participants in the Beginners' Workshop. At left, Mabel, owned/handed by George Koussogloug tries out a place board while Wren, owned/handled by Sherri Glass (at right) awaits further instructions.

Meanwhile, in a more user-friendly part of the grounds, professional spaniel trainer **Duane Menges** of Chaseline Kennels began the first session of the **Beginners' Workshop** for a small group of those just getting started. From basics such as learning to sit/stay on a place board to quartering skills, the Airedale pups and their owners had time for a lot of personal coaching as well as demonstrations from Duane's own dogs.

With the Fur Test and Workshop completed that morning, we took time out for the **Barkathon**. This is a just-for-fun contest in which Airedales take turns barking and leaping at a live raccoon safely caged out of reach up in a tree. The test has two divisions, one for dogs who have already earned a Fur Test title, and one for novice dogs who do not yet have a Fur title. This year's overall winner from the experienced division was **Diggs**, owned/handled by Stuart Eavenson, for barking 96 barks in one minute. Coming in second place was **Duncan**, owned/handled by Steve Behun. Duncan was in the novice division and had never done this before, but he managed to bark 93 barks in one minute, making it a very close second place.



At right, Duncan sounds off in the Barkathon.

After lunch we attempted a group photo. Though not every dog and handler made it into the photo, we managed to arrange the majority of us. Its not easy to get this many Airedales, including several intact males, to pay attention and behave. Thanks and kudos to newcomer **Liz Pinkney** for her photography skill.



Friday afternoon's main event was the **Hunting Instinct Test** for pups and older dogs without field training. This year's entries went from 5 month old littermate pups Lilac and Wren, owned respectively by Priscilla Mumea and Sherri Glass, on up to 9 year Winnie, owned by Angela Dobbins. Mabel, owned/handled by George Koussogloug, was the perfect age for the test at about one year old.

The Hunting Instinct Test is an informal evaluation of untrained Airedales in skills needed in hunting. Prey drive, retrieving inclinations, following scented trails to find live game birds and a live raccoon, reaction to gunfire and willingness to go into a pond are exercises scored on a scale of 1-10. A dog that earns a score of 70 or more "qualifies" and receives a certificate, but since its all done in a spirit of adventure there's also a good deal of entertainment in it for the spectators. You never know what the pups will do, but in this case, all of those entered qualified and had a good time doing it.

Following the Hunting Instinct Test, we held **HWA's Annual Meeting**, which is our chance to talk about the current state and the future of our club. Holding the meeting on a tree-shaded lawn at Holly Hills made it painless to attend, and we appreciate all who participated. Afterwards, we headed back to Deer Creek Lodge and grounds to enjoy an evening of leisure time.



Lilac, a 5-month old puppy owned/handled by Priscilla Mumea, shows off her retrieving aptitude in the Hunting Instinct Test.

Saturday, Sept 11th

The big red sun was rising Saturday morning as we made our way to Holly Hills for an 8 am start to the land series of the **HWA Upland Test**. We soon found that the same abundant summer rain that made the woods so dense for the Fur Test had also super-charged the growth of the grass in the hunting fields. While over-the-knee-high cover (grass) is typical for most flushing tests, this time we had fields with shoulder-high grass – that’s human shoulder-high, not Airedale shoulder-high. However, those who have been in various AKC Upland tests have occasionally had to run in such tall grass, and we knew the dogs’ noses would find the pheasants even if we couldn’t see them. Our AKC-licensed judges Mark Gebert and HWA-member Kate Ostrowski had a good slate of Junior dogs, followed by one Senior entrant and one Master dog.

The goal of the land portion of the Upland Test is for a dog to find, flush and retrieve two birds. Though it was difficult for spectators in the gallery to see the action in the field, by the late-morning end of this land series, several dogs had successfully completed their runs. Those who qualified would advance to the water series to complete their tests on Sunday morning.



Tuck, with owner/handler Diane Maxwell, gets ready for their Junior Upland Test.

Saturday afternoon was time for the land series of the **HWA Retriever Test**. Our judges Patricia Rose and Jim Middaugh had the responsibility of setting up a fair but challenging test scenario. Fortunately, they could use a field that had been previously mowed so that the grass was tall enough to conceal the fallen birds without hiding the working dogs.

The main skills of a retriever test are *marking*, that is, the dog must watch the bird thrown high in the air and take note of where it falls, perhaps some 60 or more yards away; and *memory*, meaning the dog should remember where the bird landed and go directly to the fall in order to retrieve the bird promptly. Senior and Master dogs have multiple consecutive marks and more self-control on the line. Complications and points off the score happen if a dog isn’t sure exactly where the bird fell and has to hunt for it or be directed to it by the handler. Several of the Junior dogs and the Senior Dog successfully completed this land portion of the Retriever Test and would advance to the water series of the Retriever test on Sunday morning.



Hershey, owned/handled by Susan Hogsette, did well in her Junior Retriever Test.

We took a welcome break from the field action with our traditional **Saturday evening Banquet** back at Deer Creek Lodge. Our Master of Ceremony John Glass started with an invocation remembrance of September 11th that had occurred 20 years ago from this day.

Following that John picked up our spirits by asking someone who had not bought a ticket for the HWA Limited Raffle to come up and pull the winning ticket. The prize was a bronze statue of Airedales hunting a bear, and tickets had sold out quickly. With a funny twist of fate, the winning ticket had the name of John’s wife, Sherri Glass, who was sitting next to him at the table [cue the laughter and good-natured joking]. The tone was set for a relaxing evening with plenty of dog-talk as our common interest.

Sunday, Sept. 12th

Sunday morning is reserved for the **water series of the Upland and Retriever hunt tests**. Holly Hills offers several choices of ponds, so the Upland water judges choose a large pond that most of the dogs and handlers weren't familiar with. The task of the Junior Upland water series is one retrieve of a bird thrown into the pond, with the dog swimming out to pick it up and bring it back to the handler on the bank. Though the gallery of spectators couldn't see much of the action, they could share congratulations when dogs who successfully completed this portion of the test returned to their cars.

Once the Upland dogs had completed their water work, the dogs and gallery of spectators proceeded to a second pond for the Retriever Test water series. In this case, the gallery had a great hillside viewing spot for watching the action. One of the most notable dog/handler teams to watch was the Senior Test entry, **Tanner**, owned/handled by Scott Lichty. Tanner, just over two years old, was trained from puppyhood in retriever skills as Scott worked with friends in his local retriever clubs. Scott is the chair of the Airedale Terrier Club of America (ATCA) Hunting and Field Committee, so he has some years of experience with training and hunt tests.

As AKC hunt tests resumed after the pandemic, Tanner with Scott earned an AKC Junior Retriever title and an AKC Senior Upland title. At this HWA National, Tanner and Scott showed the gallery and judges how to do a successful Senior Retriever Test. Working with calm precision, Tanner and Scott watched two ducks flung in the pond before Tanner was allowed to retrieve one, then the other, for a successful double. The water blind, in which Scott must send Tanner across the pond to retrieve a duck that had been placed on the bank without Tanner's seeing it, was the next challenge. Scott lined up Tanner in the direction of the hidden duck and sent him into the pond with one hand signal. Tanner went directly into the water, straight to the duck, and swam straight back with the duck to Scott. They gave us a good demonstration of an Airedale's ability to do this work.



Tanner, owned/handled by Scott Lichty, brings in his duck in the Senior Retriever Test.

The **Awards Ceremony** followed the third-day-in-a-row excellent lunch catered for HWA by Marsha Hatfield of Holly Hills [thank you, Marcia!]. There were ribbons and applause for the qualifiers, plus some annual special HWA awards.

- **Hershey**, owned/handled by Susan Hogsette, won the **Brown Bess Memorial Award** for the Airedale with the highest score in the Upland Hunt Test. This award is continued by Dale and Kim Burrier in memory of Henry H. Johnson and his Brown Bess.
- **Tex**, owned/handled by Joyce Contofalsky, was awarded the **Gunners' Choice Award**, which is supposed to go to the dog the Upland Test gunners chose as the dog they'd most like to hunt over. Sherri and John Glass, Stillwaters Airedales, sponsored the award this year.
- **Tanner** and owner/handler Scott Lichty won a nameplate on the **Road Dog Trophy** for having the most weekends with qualifying passes at AKC hunt tests since the last Nationals. They surpassed the competition by having 11 weekends with passing scores at AKC hunt tests since the Sept. 2019 HWA Nationals.



Hershey, with owner/handler Susan Hogsette, joined by Rob Hogsette with ribbons and Brown Bess Award, flanked by Upland judges Mark Gebert and Kate Ostrowski.



Tex, with owner/handler Joyce Contofalsky and their Jr. Upland ribbon and the Gunners' Choice Award.



Tanner, with owner/handler Scott Lichty, with their Sr. Retriever ribbon and the Road Dog Trophy.

And last but not least, **Trouble**, owned/handled by Ben Potter, earned his place on the **Joan Shea Gordon Memorial Trophy** by qualifying in all three HWA hunt tests –Fur, Upland and Retriever – at one HWA Nationals. Trouble was Ben’s choice pup out of a litter of 14 puppies out of their Sassy, who is a Master Fur Tracker title holder. That litter was sired by Chris Halvorson’s Mike (Coldstream Make My Day) who is also a Master Fur Tracker and who earned his spot on the Joan Shea Gordon Memorial Trophy in 2017. Trouble clearly had the genes for hunting ability, and Ben developed that talent by training with a pro retriever trainer who could teach both Ben and his dog the skills they would need for successful hunting and hunt tests. That paid off this weekend as Trouble earned his Junior Hunter Versatile [JHV] title for qualifying in all three tests in one weekend.

See more photos from the Nationals in links posted in the Photo section of www.huntingworkingairedales.com

As the 35th HWA Nationals weekend came to a close, many of those present reflected on the value of this club in starting, mentoring, and launching Airedales and their people into the wider world of AKC hunt tests and practical hunting.

Long may Hunting Working Airedales continue!



Here comes
Trouble.

35th Annual HWA Airedale Field Nationals Qualifiers

ATCA Fur Test Qualifiers

Junior Fur Test

Hoot n Holler Here Comes Trouble, JHV, owned and bred by Ben and Linda Potter/handled by Ben Potter, Georgetown, IL

Stillwaters Duncan Magnus, JFT, owned by Steve Behun and Liz Pinkey/handled by Steve Behun, Tamaqua, PA

Senior Fur Test

Heritage Viking Silverado, SFT, owned/handled by Stuart Eavenson, Troy, MI

Master Fur Test

Ch. Donaldmac's Easy on the Eyes, MFT, RI, TKE, CD, BN, owned/handled by Kim Zaborniak, Millersport, OH

HWA Upland Hunt Test Qualifiers

Junior Upland Test

Stillwaters Lindsey York Hershey, JHF, JHR, owned/handled by Susan Hogsette, Lexington, OH

Aircraft At 6 Texan, JHF, owned/handled by Joyce Contofalsky, Wadsworth, OH

Hoot n Holler Here Comes Trouble, JHV, owned and bred by Ben and Linda Potter/handled by Ben Potter, Georgetown, IL

HWA Retriever Hunt Test Qualifiers

Junior Retriever Test

Hoot n Holler Here Comes Trouble, JHV, owned and bred by Ben and Linda Potter/handled by Ben Potter, Georgetown, IL

Stillwaters Lindsey York Hershey, JHF, JHR, owned/handled by Susan Hogsette, Lexington, OH

Senior Retriever Test

Pipestone's Fine Tanned Leather, SHR (HWA), JHR (AKC), SHU (AKC), owned/handled by Scott Lichty, Bloomington, MN

Hunting Instinct Test Qualifiers

Stillwaters Forever Wren, owned, bred and handled by Sherri Glass, Clyde OH

James River Mabel, owned/handled by George Koussogloug, Richmond, VA

Stillwaters Glorious Lilac Prism, owned/handled by Priscilla Mumea, Akron, OH

Coldstream Go Winnie Go, owned/handled by Angela Dobbins, Philadelphia, PA