

# *The Gun Dog Supreme*

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## **Memories in the Making**

**Abaco's Northern Star of Dakota Prairie & Jane Cleaves McKenna had a hunt that they won't soon forget. See "Pipeline Partridge" inside. . .**

**Photo by Gene McKenna**

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## **LETTER FROM THE EDITOR**

The first snow flakes of winter are whizzing by my window, and a hunting season that hardly got started seems almost all over. I'll make one more foray into North Dakota, hoping to beat the blizzards and bag a few birds. So far, the snows are light, and we may just get to squeeze in a few days grouse hunting here in the U.P. to boot. Hope you and your griff are getting quality time in bird cover.

My season, so far, hasn't been the greatest, but I can't whine about that now—not after reviewing a great story "Pipeline Partridge" by Gene McKenna that's featured on the cover. Goes to show that you just can't keep a good griffoner down, at least not for long.

Maybe you're a typical male shopper like me, who waits until the last minute to do my holiday shopping, so even though it's probably mid-December when you get this issue, there might just be enough time to follow Jon Coil's suggestions for Christmas shopping.

Charles Dahlstrom has provided some great advice on dealing with your non-hunter associates. Maybe his advice won't bring us peace on earth, but at least we'll all have full bellies! According to an article I read recently in the *New York Times*, the term for us folks who shoot and eat stuff that lives around us is "Locavores." We might also qualify as "foodies." Check it out at:

<http://www.nytimes.com/2009/11/25/dining/25hunt.html>

Many who have had the experience of raising a litter of griffon puppies or who are contemplating the prospect, wonder about keeping one of their pups. Kurt Soneson relates his experience doing just that with Burdock of Bogan's Point.

So there's a variety of topics covered in this issue; hopefully it will make you informed and entertained on these long winter nights. But do try to get some hunting in while you can. And, oh yes, Mr. Seibel Treasurer of the WPGCA wishes to remind you that membership dues for 2010 are due January 1st. See the notice on page 12 for details.

*Rem DeJong*

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## To Keep or Not To Keep

by  
Kurt Soneson



**Aptly Named**—Burdock of Bogan's Point, or "Lucky" as he is known, is definitely stuck to mom, Merry Meeting's Bogan.

Photo by Kurt Soneson

Through the years, I have been asked about the problems encountered with keeping a pup from my female Bogan's second litter. The following ramblings are purely my thoughts and only mine. I have no scientific data or expert opinions from which I am drawing my conclusions. If you are raising a litter and contemplating keeping a pup, you'll want to discuss the idea with the WPGCA Breeding Committee, but this was my experience.

Late September of 2000 I received a call from club member, Jane McKenna, asking if I would be interested in a seven month-old female pup named Bogan from her litter. Jane

had placed Bogan with a friend of hers, but he was unable to keep her due to some unforeseeable circumstances. Off to Brunswick, ME I headed for a look at a Bogan. A long story short —Bogan headed north with me that day.

Never having taken an older dog before, I had reservations on bonding and bad habits so I was thankful for advice from various club members, and especially for Jane, who played a key role in Bogan's development. Jane stopped by frequently to pick up Bogan and run her with her own dogs. Young bird dogs left in kennels don't tend to learn much in the ways of the woods. Thank you Jane for your time and effort!!!

Woodcock season in Maine opened Oct 3rd that year and I had pretty much written the season off as just a time for Bogan and I to get acquainted and run the woods together. I had quite a bit of October off, so Bogan was with me constantly. We headed out opening day with a friend of mine to try to find some birds for Bogan to chase. Jane had told me that Bogan had pointed once or twice. Was I hoping for a solid point? Sure. Did I think it was going to happen? Not really. Ten minutes into the first cover Bogan was quartering nicely, checking on me, and looking pretty happy going about her work. She was a pleasure to watch. Then wham into a solid point! I told my friend, Tom, she's not gun shy so if the bird is there and goes up we'd best knock it down. The woodcock was there and it did fly. Two shots ensued and a wing tipped bird dropped about 40 yards out. I was so excited about the point I didn't notice Bogan already had the live bird in her mouth and was headed back. Fifteen yards out she stopped and pointed again. Tom said, "How can she point a bird on the ground with a live one in her mouth?" About that time the second woodcock launched. No shots were fired, just stupid looks. So began a very wonderful relationship.

Bogan's first litter was from an artificial breeding. She delivered two pups, one was stillborn. The survivor, Augustus [Gus] of Bogan's Point was the cleanest puppy ever whelped. He was washed constantly by mom. Being the only pup, he got plenty of attention. Gus went to Ted Coon of Wisconsin. We couldn't have asked for a better home. Sadly Gus had medical problems and his life ended at a young age.

One year later Bogan was bred again this time to Nate Newman's dog, Arlo of Valley House. The honeymoon took place at our house because Nate was in a small apartment at the time. April 6, 2004 was Puppy Day. Bogan had her first pup at 11:00 a.m. Our daughter, Molly, was kept home from school to witness the event. Molly recorded times, weights, assigned names, and drew pictures of each pup so we could tell them apart. Things went smoothly for the first 6 pups. Number 7 was born limp and lifeless. My wife, Peggy, was determined not to lose him so she started rubbing him vigorously; the little male sputtered once but no good. She worked him over again and like an old outboard sputtering, he came to life and headed for mom. I said he was lucky to be alive, thus our Lucky number seven. By 9:00 p.m. that night, Bogan was done—4 females and 5 males.

Early-on, we decided that we wanted to keep a pup because of the blood from the two parents. It would be 4 years difference in age, which would be close but it was a deci-





**That's my boy! I taught him all he knows!**  
**Merrymeeting's Bogan** poses proudly with her son, "Lucky" (left) and owner Kurt Soneson at the end of a successful bird outing.

Photo by Kurt Soneson

sion we never regretted. What a decision to make! We were very fortunate that it was our litter and we had the opportunity to watch them grow and develop. When the weather warmed, the pups had free range of the barn during the day. We enjoyed many puppy hours in the barn and afield but it was getting to be time to make a choice. They all had similar traits. Everyone has their own method of picking a pup and so did we. The girls went for the cute one, and I voted for the guy who used to climb up and sit next to me on the hay bale when his brothers and sisters were tearing the place up. The eventual winner was Lucky Number Seven. He's never left the farm nor lost his nickname, "Lucky" though I tried.

Week 10 rolled around—local dogs were picked up and the puppy train left the station in Maine at 11pm headed for PA to meet Jim Seibel with 5 pups on-board headed as far west as Washington State. Back home, Lucky was tickled pink to have mom all to himself. Bogan gave her full attention to keeping him

the cleanest dog this side of the divide. No more kennel box. He bunked with mom from day one and has done so his entire life. There is a huge bond between these two that is always present.

So here are some questions people have frequently asked me about keeping a pup.

### **Question 1. Did you run them together?**

Lucky was a good little hunter from the start. He was curious and not afraid to venture from mom's side. He was not dependent on mom. If he had stuck by mom constantly, I would have run him separately.

### **Question 2. Did you use Bogan to teach Lucky the fine art of pointing?**

Yes. I am blessed with some decent covers which hold native woodcock in the summer.

Bogan was my bird locator. She would find a bird, point it and I would attempt to steer Lucky in the general direction. Lucky would stumble along, trip over the bird and off it would go with him wondering what the heck just happened. Bogan would look at him as if to say: Let's try again, JR. We kept repeating this drill. Bogan pointed; Lucky busted. Bogan pointed; Lucky wiggled and pounced. Bogan pointed; Lucky hesitated, wiggled and pounced. Bogan pointed; Lucky age 4 1/2 months held like a rock. From then on, I ran Lucky alone until hunting season. He figured the pointing game out quickly.

**Question 3. Do they honor points?**

Yes. Naturally, without any training from me.

**Question 4. Do you hunt them together?**

Always. Our seasons are short; we hunt from approximately 8:30 a.m. to 1:00 p.m. each time out. They're both on the ground at the same time. They hunt in tandem very well, covering ground but not following each other. I use just bells on their collars. Sometimes I lose a dog that's on point; usually the other will help me locate the pointing dog.

**Question 5. Are they competitive?**

Yes—mainly on the retrieve. Lucky would attempt to steal the bird from mom's mouth. It took awhile, but we worked that out.

**Question 6. Did Bogan teach Lucky to swim?**

We tried. The YMCA couldn't teach Lucky to swim. We spent hours at the water, wading, throwing ducks, etc. However, last summer a big bullfrog caught his eye at the lake. I had three great bullfrog retrieves in deep water, so who knows?

**Question 7. Any regrets?**

None. These guys eat, sleep, hunt, and play together. Mom is the Alpha, and that will never change. Lucky keeps Bogan in shape. My only worry is that the day Bogan is gone, Lucky will be heartbroken, but then, that will make two of us.

**Question 8. Would you do it again?**

IN A HEARTBEAT!!!

## **Help for Fund Raisers, DU, QU, PF etc.**

If you need some items to sell for your fund raisers for Pheasants Forever, Quail Unlimited, Ducks Unlimited, Rocky Mountain Elk Foundation and others, here's an offer from Joan Bailey. You can give them her email contact: joanbailey@swanvalleypress.com. Tell them to email me (or write: 9601 NW Leahy Rd, #209, Portland, OR 97229) and I will send a few books for their chapter's fund raiser.

—Joan Bailey

# Merry Christmas



## Christmas Gift Ideas

by

**Jon Coil**

As all WPGCA members know, if you have a griffon, it's Christmas all year long and you couldn't wish for more. However, to help the struggling economy we have come up with a few ideas for griffon lovers that might just add a little icing to the cake. Hopefully, this issue has arrived before Santa and you still have twenty-four hours to get your shopping done!

We know how lucky we are to own one of these superb dogs, and most of us probably have a friend or family member riding the fence, just waiting for a nudge to join our group. How

about getting them a WPGCA Membership so they can learn more about our dogs and organization? It's time to renew your membership anyway, so you can just include the gift request when you send in your own dues. Do you have a long-term member to shop for who seems to have just about everything? Perhaps a gift contribution in their name to the WPGCA E & RF fund would be especially meaningful. Or perhaps a donation in memory of a departed griffon companion would be welcomed. Contact WPGCA Treasurer Jim Seibel for details or see our web site [www.wpgca.org](http://www.wpgca.org).

Joan Bailey has three great books, *How to Help Gun Dogs Help Themselves*, *How to Have the Best Trained Gun Dog*, and *Griffon: Gun Dog Supreme*. Any or all of these would be great for a current or prospective owner. Visit her website at: <http://www.swanvalleypress.com/>

How about a classy travel mug or very sharp WPGCA Cap from the North East Chapter? Ordering information for all the above ideas are on the WPGCA web site.

I am not a big consumer but I still have more toys than I will ever need so in our family's gift exchange I have been asking for a gift membership in one of the many needy conservation organizations.

Shooting a bird pointed by your buddy is a priceless memory but a picture of your griffon on point during that special hunting trip would be a lasting reminder for the wall. A digital camera to carry in your hunting vest would seem to be a must. You can find them small enough to fit in your shirt pocket or a little larger.

Do you enjoy hunting game more than eating it? Are you happy with your grouse recipe but brought back a bunch of South Dakota pheasants and don't know how to prepare

them? A good wild game cookbook will let you enjoy the eating as much as the hunting and give more variety in recipes. There are multitudes of wild game cookbooks on the market. I have had good reports from *Wild Feasts: Game and Fish Cookbook* from Ducks Unlimited and The L.L. Bean Game and Fish Cookbook is an old classic.

Rem has an article posted on the WPGCA web site on skijoring for those of you that live in the snow-belt. It looks like a marvelous way to keep you and your griffon in shape through the winter. If I can avoid a lump of coal maybe Santa will give me a set of harness so Bartos of Marsh Stream can stay in shape and I won't become more dimensionally challenged over the winter. Here are a couple websites where you can get the gear:

<http://www.UltraPaws.com/Skijoring>

<http://www.nooksackracing.com/skijoring.html>

Merry Christmas

### Duck and Black-Eyed Pea Cassoulet

3 slices smoked bacon	½ cup finely chopped celery
2 duck breasts, skinned	¼ cup finely chopped carrot
3 cups fat free chicken broth	¼ tsp. salt
3 cups frozen or canned (drained and rinsed) black eyed peas	¼ tsp. pepper
½ cup finely chopped yellow onion	1 TBS. fresh thyme (1/2 tsp. dry)
5-7 cloves of garlic, chopped	1 TBS. fresh flat leaf parsley (1/2 tsp. dry)
¾ cup chopped mushrooms	

Cook bacon in a large Dutch oven over medium heat until crisp. Remove bacon and set aside. Drain off excess bacon grease from pan. Cut duck breasts into bite size pieces and cook in remaining bacon drippings until browned. Remove from pan and set aside. Add onion, garlic, celery, carrots, onions and salt and pepper to pan and sauté for 5 minutes. Stir in broth, black-eyed peas, thyme and parsley and the cooked duck meat. Bring to a boil, reduce heat and simmer for an hour, stirring occasionally. When the liquid has diminished and the mixture is as thick as desired stir in the reserved bacon and serve.

This recipe came from *Cooking Light* December 08. We halved the original recipe and eliminated some of the steps that seemed unnecessary and we cut back the amount of salt. One could also use white beans, instead of the black eyed peas, as in the original French type of Cassoulet and any other type of meat. It is good served with rice or couscous or by itself. Complementary side dishes we have enjoyed include carrot raisin salad and sweet/sour red cabbage. This is a very filling dish, good for winter meals.

Recipe provided by Tawna Skinner and Anita Andrus



## Pipeline Partridge

by

Eugene R. McKenna

We arrived at our remote log cabin camp after the 100 mile drive from our home on the coast at 9:00 A.M. on a brilliant fall day. I was glad that Jane was beside me in the truck as she recently suffered a debilitating fall at our home, which put her in the Critical Care Unit at Maine Medical Center in Portland. Jane has made a remarkable recovery but was still wearing her “boot cast” which protects her broken right foot; however it severely limits her mobility. Jane has worked diligently for nearly two years training our youngest Griffon, Abbe, and Jane was really looking forward to this season to see first-hand the fruits of her labor. Despite the multiple injuries, she remained undeterred in her efforts to be part of our annual upland hunts. Under doctors orders, Jane cannot shoot a long gun due to her broken scapula, which is still healing. Fortunately the “doc” never mentioned any specific prohibition against firing handguns, and Jane was game to try anything to be part of the hunt.



**Abaco's Northern Star of Dakota Prairie** inspects the “Pipeline Partridge” with owner Gene McKenna.

Photo by Jane Cleaves-McKenna

With all that as a backdrop, Jane got out of the truck at our Trout Pond Cover armed with a Thompson Center .410/45 ACP single shot Contender pistol and a pocket full of 3 inch 7 ½'s. The swamp maples and brown ash trees had already shed their leaves providing better sight lines to flushed birds, but the poplar, beech, larch, sugar maple and yellow birch still added spectacular splashes of yellow and orange to Maine's conifer-studded mountain landscape. The skidder trail that we planned to hunt was littered with fresh moose tracks of various sizes, clearly visible in between the mud puddles left from a recent rain storm. We were both hopeful that the storm might have brought a flight of woodcock into the cover which is always a special treat. The Trout Pond cover is typical of the western Maine industrial forest. It is a bowl surrounded by steep hardwood ridges with a pond at its center with its outlet stream cutting through alder/spruce/poplar thickets. Most of the cover was clear cut about twenty years ago and the regenerating succession growth now provides ideal grouse and woodcock habitat. It has been a “go to” spot for us for several years now, consistently producing action.

We split up with Jane walking the road with Del, our older griff, while I took Abbe into the cover to the left. Abbe immediately got birdy, but I realized we were just 10 feet from a massive drumming log complete with a spring's worth of grouse droppings. Mr. Drummer was unfortunately not in residence that day. We had not gone far from the truck before Jane spotted a partridge on the side of the skidder trail. Hobbling on her protective boot, she carefully closed the distance and then gave the bird a dose of 7½'s. Jane called to Abbe and me to retrieve the dead bird from the thick underbrush. I cut back to the trail, then waded into the spruce and fir thicket and quickly found breast feathers but no dead bird. Abbe was coursing further on in the thicket, acting very birdy but coming up empty. I dropped my hat to mark the spot and started looking carefully in a 360 degree arc around the feathers. I finally noticed something twitch under a moss-covered dead fall. The partridge had evidently taken refuge under the log, but its tail feathers were sticking out. I grabbed the feathers and gave a pull which succeeded only in separating all the tail feathers from the bird's rump. The bird took offense to this rude treatment and quickly scrambled away in the direction of an old log road culvert pipe. I gave chase knowing that the situation was deteriorating rapidly, but I was not quick enough to intercept the fleeing bird. The tailless grouse made it into the pipe and stopped about 10 feet in, where it hunkered down squarely amidships of the pipe.

Jane, who had been unable to leave the trail itself due to the "boot", called for a time out. We regrouped to formulate a hasty battle plan. It was agreed that I would take the pistol and go to one end of the pipe while Jane would redirect the dogs to the other end. I would attempt to coax the bird to the far end of the pipe and into the grasp of the waiting dogs. My initial attempts at coaxing failed miserably. The bird never budged off dead center. Finally, the dogs got bored and left the opposite end. The partridge saw a chance to escape and started to move that way, stopping short of the pipe's far end. I took the opportunity to give it the *coup de grâce* with the .410. The resulting noise was deafening. Dazed, I lumbered up and over the trail to the far end of the pipe, only to realize that the bird, now dead, was not within reach. I picked up a birch sapling and attempted to reach the bird but the sapling was rotten and crumbled in my hand. I went off down the trail looking for a long, sturdy sapling to finish the job while Jane coaxed Abbe into action at the pipe. Abbe was initially skittish about entering the pipe, making several false starts but with gentle urging from Jane she finally decided to do an army style "low crawl" into the pipe! After what seemed to be an eternity, Abbe emerged, backing out with the bird firmly in her mouth, then brought it triumphantly to Jane's hand.

We have hunted over three different griffons over a span of almost twenty years. Each one has amazed us with their unique versatility—pointing numerous grouse, woodcock, pheasants, turkeys and chukkas; retrieving ducks; rooting a black bear from its den and many red squirrels out of wood piles, but this is the first "Pipeline Partridge" that the dogs have ever taken on. That day Abbe went on to hold solid points on seven woodcock and two more partridge before finally curling up in front of the camp wood stove for a well deserved rest. Jane's training lessons have paid handsome dividends indeed! She should be proud.

## Tending Our Fences

by  
Charles Dahlstrom



Fuzz-faced Ambassadors of Hunting, **TJ of Plum Creek** (right) and **Berkano of the Hundgaard** (center) pose with owner Charles Dahlstrom.

Photo by Charles Dahlstrom

Mothers used to counsel their daughters: "The way to a man's heart is through his stomach." Heck, some moms may still dispense that bit of sage advice. As a liberated man, I have to say that I've encouraged my son to develop his culinary skills. Growing up in small-town Minnesota, I learned early on that good food was essential for good relationships. When my mother had to restore peace with a neighbor over some errant behavior by my brothers (Ok, and occasionally by me), she would lead with her trump card: hamburger-macaroni hot-dish. Come to think of it, I'll bet a couple tons of that hearty meal would go a long way to quieting the ills of the Middle East. Somehow a full stomach just makes folks more agreeable and capable of reason.

As hunters and dog handlers, we often find ourselves at odds with people who take a dim view of our outdoor interests and passions. And some of those hunting opponents are pretty passionate about that dim view. As hunters, we have a varied arsenal with which to respond. We can talk of the joys of "just being out in nature" with our Grif-fons; we can reason that the hunt is a conduit for family traditions; we can claim the essential role that hunting plays in conservation efforts; we can take a physiological stance and argue that humans have eyes mounted in the front of their heads and sport canine and incisor teeth for very good reason: we are predators...by our very nature we

are born to hunt. Oh yeah...we can also rely on that age-old, middle-finger, obscene gesture to get our point across, although I doubt this strategy does much to promote our interests. Most of us have probably used variations of these tactics to meet the anti-hunting challenge. But let's not forget the incredible power of mother's hot-dish.

I spend a great deal of my non-sporting hours working in a university. It's no secret that the hallowed halls of higher education are not exactly deer camp. But I learned the lessons of my youth well, especially those taught by my mother. Each year my wife (whom incidentally wouldn't pick up a gun if it was made of pure gold) and I reach out to our non-hunting and anti-hunting neighbors and co-workers with a peace-offering: The Annual Wild Game Feed and Celebration of the Hunt.

Our first event was four years ago. We started small and informal. We simply extended a verbal invitation to our co-workers and next door neighbors. The responses varied widely, but did include a few offended comments like: "Wild game...do you mean...like deer? Did you actually kill poor little Bambi? Ah, no. We don't believe in killing animals for sport...we certainly wouldn't eat them."

Well, we persevered in our efforts, thanked these folks for considering our invitation and told them we'd miss their company at the party. The fare that first year was pretty simple: venison chili and a casserole of pheasant, wild rice and mushrooms in cream of chicken soup mix. The entertainment for that first affair was also easy, but extremely effective. **TJ of Plum Creek** roamed among the party-goers and charmed one and all with her whiskered chin and warm amber eyes.

The second year we kicked it up a bit. To the first year's menu we added grilled mallard breasts and venison backstrap. TJ again worked the crowd while a laptop on the coffee table played a photo slide show of picturesque sunsets on the Kansas Flint Hills, dogs in training (academic-types are real suckers for anything that hints of education), and a few pictures of TJ posed with tastefully displayed bagged birds. Outcome? A good time was had by all. And we started to hear whisperings among non-attending friends and co-workers: "heard you had a party...gee...golly...sounds like everyone really enjoyed the evening."

We could hear the longing in their voices. That sound was similar to the whining of a somewhat hesitant Griffon puppy being introduced to water. As the pup's siblings splash about in the pond our nervous neophyte paces the shoreline moaning, until her fears are overcome by excitement and enthusiasm of the group and she just dives in. An invitation to our annual party had become a "hot ticket" item.

We recently had our Sixth Annual Feed and lo and behold it even included the self proclaimed protector of the world's Bambis; and we had a Vegan in attendance this year. She did bring her own food, but she made a very nice contribution to our Celebration program (more about this later). Our menu has become quite a bit more extravagant and this year included seven wild game selections. Because most of our guests are unfamiliar with the various game birds and animals on the menu, our invitation includes an entertaining description. For example:

*Woodcock: this migratory member of the snipe family is hunted in the northern states and southern Canada where it loafs in new growth timber and probes the soil for worms with its long bill. The “timberdoodle” is famous for its uncanny ability to anticipate the hunter’s shot and for making the necessary evasive right angle midflight turns. Some disgruntled woodcock hunters swear that the birds’ flight pattern is responsible for more damage to trees from errant shotgun pellet than the damage done to the trees by acid rain; other defeated hunters simply swear at the tricky little bird. Today’s fare (along with a possession limit of tree limbs and bark) were bagged on a northern Minnesota hunt. Breasts and thighs of the elusive woodcock will be steeped in an Caribbean Jerk Marinade, shish-kabobbed with peppers and onions, and grilled to medium rare.*

The menu favorite this year was “Rosemary’s Pronghorn” (recipe: marinade an antelope tenderloin overnight in a mix of fresh chopped rosemary and Dijon mustard. Sear the roast in olive oil and grill to 145 degrees. Baste the roast in a reduction sauce of orange marmalade and premium beer during the last 20 minutes on the grill; substitute any big game meat).

We now have two Griffons (**TJ of Plum Creek and Berkano of Hundgaard**) who team up to entertain the guests. Who could resist their charms? The program has developed over these years and is included here to give a flavor of the evening’s activities:

### **The Program**

*“In some traditional hunting societies, the Celebration of the Hunt includes the ritual of story-telling. The bravery and skills of the huntress or hunter are regaled and at times even embellished. The admittedly biased view of your hosts is that the forward-orientation of our eyes in our heads means that we are predatory by nature. Following this logic we need conclude that all engage in The Hunt. The only questions are the degree to which each individual endorses the role of hunter, actively cultivates that primitive instinct, and intentionally practices his/her skills.*

*Some of us spend nearly as much time hunting as we do working during the fall season. For some The Hunt means a once-in-a-lifetime encounter with a majestic stag. For others, The Hunt takes the form of the annual week in deer camp where knowledge of the wilderness, its animals, and family traditions are passed along to the next generation. Some of us hunt with camera and film (or digit), concealing ourselves in ambush or stalking close to “capture” a special image. Some hunt by setting rodent traps in the garage. Others participate in The Hunt vicariously by keenly observing the family tabby as it stalks the cloth mouse stuffed with catnip. Still others hunt by strategically descending upon the Wal-Mart “After-Holiday” sale and bagging for themselves or their families the very best of bargains.*

*Thus as we prepare for the Celebration of the Hunt we ask that you spend a few reflective moments in which you don the mantle of the hunter or huntress and consider your own personal experience of, and connection to this ancient and essential human endeavor. Be prepared, if called upon by your fellow celebrants, to tell your tale and honor this aspect of our very natures.*



Embellishments allowed. **Hell... Boastful exaggeration will be roundly applauded."**

One of the highlights at this year's party was a tale told by our Vegan friend, who by the way, is also a dedicated dog owner. She described being out for a walk with her dogs (**Jasper of Wandered into the Yard** and **Mia of the Local Pound**). Apparently the two dogs teamed up to retrieve a large dead possum. Our friend described her understanding that the dogs were delivering the "kill" to the pack leader so she could eat first. She said: "I never thought I'd be part of a hunting party...Charles, I think I caught a glimpse of what you enjoy about hunting with your dogs." She added that she accepted the retrieve and thanked Jasper and Mia profusely for their gift. After the dogs had wandered off, she laid the possum in the ditch and walked on. She said she was feeling a little dismayed that the animal had died or may have even been killed by her dogs. Then she realized: "possum" and she quickly returned to the site to find the dead possum had had already waddled off. She laughed as she said: "Jasper, Mia and I discovered catch and release possum hunting...it was really fun."

So the next time you encounter an outspoken critic of our great sport and are considering either making a well-reasoned argument or flipping a quick, obscene gesture, think again. Don't overlook the lessons of our mothers: a plate of good food is great for tending or mending our fences with our neighbors. And you can catch more flies with honey than with vinegar...but that's quite a different story.



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**Above:** Bob Rock and **Betsy of Dakota Prairie** start the season off right.

Photo by Bob Rock

**Below:** Learning the Ropes of Retrieving. Glenn Lehrer's new pup **Breely of the Midnight Sun**

Photo by Brook Merrow



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**Attention! This is not a test! This is the real hunt. Don't miss!**  
Annabelle of Two Rivers Crossing (left) and Beka or Nichol's Creek (Annabelle's mom) lock up on a rooster for Andy Yeast.

Photo by Hank Carriger



**Allagash of Coyote Hills reminds you:**

**Pay your  
dues!  
PLEASE!**