

The Gun Dog Supreme

NEWSBULLETIN of the WIREHAIRD POINTING GRIFFON CLUB OF AMERICA
EDUCATION & RESEARCH FOUNDATION

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**The dog days of summer are here...
and what better way to spend them!**



Brisby of Alderbrook keeping cool and having fun retrieving a throw dummy for owner Andy Goode of Vermont. (Photo by: Rick Molt)

A LETTER FROM THE EDITOR

Well, August is nearly over and unfortunately the heat of the summer is still intense and maybe just a bit more than what you care for. If you are like me, you are probably sitting there with a bead of sweat rolling down your forehead, daydreaming of walking through a young aspen stand on a brisk October afternoon with your eager companion searching ahead for the elusive grouse or woodcock. Or perhaps it is a cold November day, and you are walking through a grown-over field with a dusting of snow that lets you know you are in pheasant country. Or just maybe you are sitting in your duck boat on a cold, blustery morning, with a hot thermos of coffee within hands reach, hoping to fool those ducks and geese. More than likely your Griffon is nearby having these same dreams. I keep telling myself "you can't have a fall without a summer", but it doesn't make it any easier. That is why I picked Brisby retrieving a dummy in a pond as our cover photo. It is a nice, cool, relaxing picture.

You probably noticed this month's issue is lighter, but it is filled with informative articles. We unfortunately open by saying goodbye to yet another wonderful dog... Callie. This is followed by a brief write-up about a product some of you probably already have heard of... the Gentle Leader. It is one of many non-choke training aids available that stand to make the choke collar obsolete. Kathi had purchased one of these a while back so that she could still be able to take our dogs for walks as her pregnancy progressed. I must admit I was a skeptic at first, but a simple ten-minute demonstration made me a believer. The feature article, edited by Jane Webb, documents an email discussion between a new puppy owner and two senior judges. Those of you with your first Griffon puppy may be wondering what you should be doing or if you are doing it right, after reading this article things should be clearer. If any of you have questions about exposure and training for NAT, IHDT or UFT please call one of the people listed on page 7. They will be more than happy to answer any questions you may have.

Before I close, I was hoping to have an article written up about the club website and the internet. This is a technology that has already changed the way people communicate, shop, and research and will continue to impact our world as it matures. Unfortunately, summer is a busy time for me, but let me just say for now that our site has had a little over 11,780 hits in just under 2 1/2 years. Between 54 to 57 % of these were first time viewers. The site averages 16 hits a day, so this translates to about 227 - 240 hits from new people a month and they are represented by 41 different countries!

Sincerely,



Mike Rackouski

Fall Test Schedules

HEARTLAND

September 17, 18, & 19

Jon and Judy Coil:

(218) 647-8451

Email: Jcoil@paulbunyan.net

NORTHEAST

September 24, 25, & 26

Jane McKenna:

(207) 666-8260

NORTHWEST

October 1, 2, & 3

Dennis Carlson

(541) 386-4830

Email: carlson@gorge.net

REMEMBER.... The deadline for articles and photos for the October issue GDS is September 1st and must be sent to:

Mike and Kathi Rackouski
1806 East Sixth Street
Ashland, WI 54806

ANOTHER WONDERFUL DOG GONE TOO SOON

By Joan Bailey



CALLAJ OF DUTCHMAN'S HOLLOW and owner John Pitlo after a successful day of hunting, fall of 1998. (Photo by: Ken Hurtig)

CALLAJ "Callie" OF DUTCHMAN'S HOLLOW, owned and bred by John and Vivian Pitlo, contracted a fast growing cancer and died in June. She was only 8 years old. John and Viv did everything possible – special treatment at the vet college in Ames, but it was just too spread throughout her. She was another of our many wonderful dogs we have these days. She produced two litters for us. She was a truly versatile dog. She was General Rogers Award caliber in my book

A KINDER, GENTLER TRAINING AID

By Mike and Kathi Rackouski

The Gentle Leader® Headcollar has been around since the mid 80's but it has only been within the last 3 years that it has gained in popularity. This halter is one of several tools used in positive training, another tool is the clicker training method, which many of you probably have been hearing a lot of lately too. The Gentle Leader® was developed by an animal behaviorist and a dog obedience instructor who wanted to give families fast, humane "fingertip control of their pets.

The most popular types of training collars have been the choke or prong, which date back to World War II techniques for training military animals. These types of collars are "negative reinforcers" meaning the dog receives physical discomfort for doing something wrong. Unfortunately dogs also tend to pull against pressure. This is why your dog keeps pulling forward when you walk him on a leash. With the Gentle Leader® He feels the pressure on his neck and resists, pulling against it, even with a conventional choker, and with the really persistent cases, against the prong collar, too. The Gentle Leaders design puts pressure on the back of the head, and when the dog resists, on the muzzle as well. This mimics pressure points that females use when disciplining pups. Also the pressure the dog feels at the back of his head causes him to "lean back" on the lead, making leash control easier. The great thing about the headcollar set-up is that the handler can be mostly passive, the dog corrects himself by pulling or lunging on the lead. The principle is very similar to that of the horse halter.

The Gentle Leader® is a very good tool for teaching leash manners and obedience, especially in young, rowdy dogs. Its use, however, differs from conventional choke and flat collar training. It's recommended that you receive some form of instruction on the headcollar's use before using it on your dog. For example, you could possibly injure your dog by using a leash correction as you would with a choke collar.

For this reason, many veterinarians and trainers will not sell the Gentle Leader without some form of training. Gentle Leader also has an excellent video available about how to use the headcollar to teach heel, sit, control barking and lunging, and keep your dog from jumping up.

At the present time, the Gentle Leader® is only available through trainers, veterinarians, and select mail-order companies. Later this year it will become available through major pet retailers. If you are interested in the Gentle Leader, you can order one through J&J Pet Supplies, 1-800-642-2050, or check out www.gentleleader.com on the World Wide Web.

DOG TRAINING VIA THE INTERNET?

Edited by: Jane Webb

Sid Seifken, the owner of a new puppy, **ACACIA OF THE GREAT PLAINS**, met a number of experienced club members at a club training weekend in the summer of 1998. In the following email exchanges, Sid, John Pitlo & Jim Siebel engage in Q & A's on puppy exposure. We hope that these "conversations" will be helpful to all the new 1999 puppy owners.

Acacia Afield, After Pheasants

August 28, 1999

Gentlemen: Thanks for your help at last weekend's training session. I was pleased to see Acacia in action behind a real bird. I want to keep her learning and expose her to live birds in the field.

Q - What would you recommend as my next step? When retrieving, she runs around, drops the bumper, then comes looking for me. What should I do to encourage her to bring the bumper in to me?

A - Sid, good to hear from you. I think you have a really nice pup. At this stage, we recommend Exposure!! Exposure!!! Runs in different places, trips to the mall, store, friends' houses to become accustomed to different smells, noises, cars people...all of which will help her become a mentally stable dog. In preparation for guns, get her used to loud noises; bang pots and pans when feeding, then graduate to a 22 as you are running her in the field, finally have a friend fire a 20ga 30 yards behind you with the pup casting ahead of you. If the pup comes back toward you, just keep walking as if nothing has happened. During all these steps, pay attention to how the pup reacts. If the pup reacts as if nothing has happened - go on to the next step. This fall take her hunting - alone at first. The worst thing you can do is go with a group of people who cut loose when a covey of quail get up! Re retrieving: I would not get too excited about this yet. She is just a baby - we believe in letting the pup be a puppy for about a year before beginning table (formal) training. It's OK to teach her No, Come, Sit etc. After all, you do have to live with the dog. One way to encourage her to bring the bumper to you is either meet her right at the water's edge, or as she is coming out of the water, turn and run away from her. More than likely, in excitement, she will follow you with the bumper.
John Pitlo

September 25, 1998

Gentlemen: During the last week or so, Acacia has really begun to use her nose. Typically she is all over the place, searching for birds, finding some AND finding some mice too. This week she found three mice and has eaten two of them! She won't come near me with them. I don't want to punish her for using her nose, yet I don't like the idea of her eating her find.

Q - What should I do in these situations?

A - I would not worry about it. Those mice have a real musty smell, and smell great to a young dog. Just keep walking and pay no attention to her. The more you want the mouse, the more it becomes a game to her. You might try replacing the mouse with a piece of hotdog, a bite sized treat or a favorite bumper - anything to get her mind off the mouse and onto something else. Hope this gives you some help. John

November 2, 1998

Gentlemen: I want to check in with you to cover some issues about exposing **Acacia** to wild pheasants. Last weekend was great - we got into birds and she was having fun. **Acacia** is learning to use her nose on these birds, but is usually flushing them. Sunday, she pointed a crippled bird very well. I went in to try and flush the bird - in very heavy cover. She pointed again, and after no bird could be flushed, she moved in as if she were mousing, and came out with a live bird. After inspecting it, I saw that it had been previously wounded and could not fly.

Q - Is this typical for a young dog? Is there anything I should be doing to help her point? Under the advice of Joan's book, I am only shooting birds that **Acacia** points. Joan stated that it is OK to shoot a wild flush - is this only after a solid point?

A - *Sounds like you are doing things exactly right. A wild flush is a bird that flushes after the dog has pointed it. The bird may have moved or may still be at the same spot - but as long as the dog pointed and you are close enough to the flush - it is OK to shoot the bird. The dog did what any young dog does with a crippled bird - first point and then when there is smell of blood, go in and grabs the bird. However, she may now think it is OK to run in and chase (bust) birds. She has to learn that the only way she gets to retrieve is if she has pointed the bird for YOU. Have patience, she may track, chase, and flush for awhile, but one day she will point a bird for you and when that lesson "I point, I hold, he shoots, I get bird" is imprinted in her brain, she will never forget! Maybe try some quail, especially after a covey has been busted - they tend not to run so much and hold better for a pointing dog. HAVE FUN! John*

November 6, 1998

Today's trip afield was a fun day in a tall grass public hunting field. **Acacia** was quickly tracking a pheasant and pursued it until a quick flash point - one step - and a hen flushed. Later we bumped a rooster. After a short chase, she came back to the area and pointed exactly where the bird had just been. This point was **Solid!** I worked the cover in front of her. She was tight and did not move even after I moved the grass directly under her nose.

Q - What is the correct way to release a dog from point?

A - *I usually use a verbal command - AFTER I have thoroughly searched the area in front of her, paying special attention to the direction of her nose. John*

Q - What if the bird is moving and she points where the bird has just been? Should she remain until I let her go? Should she move and try to relocate the bird again on her own? (When she pointed, she did not want to move until I gave the OK. I want to encourage the correct behavior.)

A - *With more experience, the dog will learn that the bird has moved on and she will begin trailing the bird to re-establish the point. You can encourage that by talking softly with "easy" or "slow" or clip a 20-30 foot rope on her collar to slow her down and encourage her to move forward on the track slowly to re-establish point. The young dog will want to rush forward, tracking fast which will result in a wild flush. This all takes time, Sid. The dog has to learn that if she does not slow down and point, there is no bird to retrieve. I have shot many roosters over **Callie** where she is creeping along very slowly - two-three steps, stop-point, two-three steps, stop-point, continuing for 50-80 yards, then the bird jumps up 30 yards in front of the dog. This is excellent dog cooperation. She is slow enough that I can keep up, and we as a team can harvest the bird. John*

Q - Is there any concern with chasing rabbits? Yesterday she got a good 1/4 mile run in after a jack rabbit. I let her go and did not say a word.

A - *Right response. In time, she will learn that she can't chase them. The chases will become shorter and when she is older, you can hold her in if you want to discourage rabbit chasing -*

but for young dogs, do not discourage any type of game contact. Every dog I have owned wanted to chase rabbits -they must smell wonderful! John

Q - Can we teach the dog to wag her tail from left to right if she is on a bird, and front to back if she is chasing rabbits?

A - Good luck! Let us know your training techniques on that one!!

November 8, 1998

Today, everything came together. Acacia pointed and held a hen 10 minutes into the hunt. She flushed the bird, and both of us were now awake. Later, she put on a nice high-headed point into the wind. I circled around in front so she could see me approach: she rolled her eyes to watch me come in, turned her head in my direction and lowered it a bit. Nervously I took 3 more steps and the rooster flushed right where she was looking. Straight away and slightly rising, the bird took off with the wind to make its escape. Wrong! And Acacia was off to see what fell out of the sky. She got to the bird and caught it. I asked her to bring it in, and after a bit of playing she took a 40-yard dash in my general direction. I moved away and encouraged her to follow me. We came together and had a good time enjoying a great point!



ACACIA OF THE GREAT PLAINS, at six months of age, with her first pointed, heald and shot bird. (Photo by: Sid Siefken)

Thanks again for all your help. This has been a fun summer for Brenda and me. We are off to the fields of Kansas tomorrow. It may be too hot and sunny - however, training a young dog redefines a good hunt:

"One bird, one point, one shot adds up to a successful day afield."

Thanks for the advice and good hunting. Sid

Sid: Congratulations on handling your pup just right. I've been following your conversations with John, knowing that he would give sage advice. The hunting experience Acacia has had this fall has been and should continue to be mostly fun, with little worry about how she does what she does. Her natural ability is coming out strong and will only increase if you keep it fun for this young dog. Don't be in a hurry to start formal training just because she is coming along so well. Only shoot birds thatshe points. She will make the connection quickly. Be patient, stay the course, and Acacia will develop into a great hunting companion who will have a special place in your home. Good luck, Jim Seibel

[Editors note: Everyone by now has either heard of the internet or has used it at some time at home or work. This technology has changed the way we communicate. It allows individuals to correspond from anywhere in the world at a fraction of the cost of a phone call. To take advantage of this technology, we have set up a message board on our web site (www.wpgca.org). This is a great way to get answers to any of your questions. Having problems in training? Looking for a place to bird hunt? Just want to chat with other club members? Then stop by the club's web site and check it out.]

HOW TO GET ANSWERS TO YOUR QUESTIONS*By: Joan Bailey*

Raising and training a hunting dog can be a daunting experience, especially if this is your first. Fortunately, when you purchase a Griffon, through the club, you also have access to a wealth of information. The following people can help you with any questions you may have, or if they don't know, they can give you someone else who can help. These folks can answer questions on problems with your dog, when the next exposure training day will be, when the next test will be, and who to contact for specific information,

Don't hesitate to use your resources. Not receiving your GDS? Call Jim Seibel to find out if your dues are paid up, or if one of us has screwed up. Want to know something about the GDS? Call or email one of the editors: Mike Rackouski, or John Pitlo. If you're heading for a test in

Maine and want to know if the Black Flies are out yet, call Rick Molt. Your pup won't go in the water yet? Call anyone of us. We'll try to help you.

1. Gary Pool, Pres. 208-324-2473 (ID)
2. John Pitlo, V.P. 319-872-5764 (IA)
3. Joan Bailey, Sec. 503-296-6725 (OR)
4. Jim Seibel, Treas. 616-789-1020 (MI)
5. Warren Webster, Dir. 650-961-5195 (CA)
6. Glenn Lehrer, Dir. 406-586-0015 (MT)
7. Tom Whitley, DVM, Dir. 904-386-3625 (FL)
8. Rick Molt, Pres NEG. 207-563-5675 (ME)
9. Ken Hurtig, Pres HGC. 608-356-6481 (WI)
10. Bob Matsuoka, Pres RMGC. 207-733-2990 (ID)
11. Dennis Carlson, Pres NWGC. 541-386-4830 (WA)



This cartoon, drawn by Mike Sundlee of Minnesota, was given to Joan at the Heartland Chapter's Saturday night dinner this past April honoring her as the latest recipient of the chapter's Doo Doo Award. One thing we all learned that weekend was that off-road four wheeling with a 4 door sedan doesn't get you very far.



ACACIA OF THE GREAT PLAINS, at 11 weeks of age, developing skills based on natural instinct that will bring her and her owner years of fun and excitement. (Photo by Sid Siefken, July 15, 1998)