

The Gun Dog Supreme

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A TRULY VERSATILE BREED



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A LETTER FROM THE EDITOR

In putting together this issue I looked back at the April 2000 issue, and what a difference a year makes! At this time last year people were walking and roller-blading along the lake front while Badger and I were hunting pure white snowshoe hares over bare ground. It was so warm I remember hunting in a light shirt! That definitely wasn't the case this winter.

While it seemed like we had an abnormal amount of snowfall this winter, in reality it was normal. It was the previous 3 winters that were abnormal, being warm and dry. All of our snow put an early end to the grouse hunting along with any thoughts I had had about late winter hare hunting. While I did manage to take the dogs out on the last day of our grouse season, it was more for exercise than hunting. In the hour and a half of walking through knee deep snow, ducking into cedar and spruce stands along the springs and creeks, we never did see one grouse let alone a song bird, or even tracks! It might as well have been Antarctica we were walking through.

While we never did see anything that day we sure had fun and EXERCISE. It is only now that I can look back and see how important that latter activity is to me and especially our dogs. You see, we came very close to losing Badger in February. Through a combination of things, he didn't get as much exercise as he is accustomed to. While he has always had a tendency to eat things, like the time he ate \$120 in cash (that is another story), it tends to manifest itself when he is bored. There was a three week period in which I was out of town. During that time Badger ate half of a one gallon ice cream bucket lid. Kathi watched Badger very close and when I got back home things were not improving. Badger went off his food, struggled to eliminate, and was losing weight. Kathi took Badger in to work and had the veterinarian run x-rays and barium tests. It showed Badger had a blockage leading into the colon.

After exhausting every other procedure, surgery was the only thing left. [since Kathi works at the veterinary clinic, and it was after hours, she had to assist in the surgery. Kathi has assisted in many surgeries, but never on one of our own dogs. Through it all she did a great job.] The first words out of our vet's mouth were "Oh sh\$!" after he made the initial incision. That is when Kathi knew it was very serious. It turned out Badger had not one but 3 blockages in the intestine and one section was dark purple, indicating it could possibly be dead. Badger not only ate the plastic lid, but he had been eating the yarn from his blanket. This yarn had tightened up causing the intestine to twist on itself. Fortunately everything ended on a positive note and Badger was back home in 36 hours. It was only after 24 hours had passed and Badger was improving steadily that our vet told us he didn't think Badger was going to make it through surgery, let alone the first day of recovery. We have Badger's fitness to thank for that and we have thrown out all the dog's yarn blankets.

In this issue Joan takes another look at the hunting test and breeding statistics from *The Griffon Database* which appeared in the February issue. It is finally spring and that could mean only one thing...PUPPIES! I have put together some puppy photos that I have received over the years and included the latest information on the planned breedings for this year. A puppy issue is something I hope to continue and I urge everyone to keep sending their photos in. Between our web site and the GDS we can always use photos.

Mike Laskowski

COVER PHOTO: BRISBY OF ALDERBROOK (Chyt ze Zaplav x Bailey of Ocean House) and owner Andy Goode Proudly pose with a snowshoe hare they got during the winter of 1999 in Maine. Andy noted: "great point—better retrieve and that the snowshoe was huge." (Photo by: Unknown)

A FURTHER LOOK AT THE STATISTICAL ANALYSIS

By: Joan Bailey

Columns of numbers and graphs are helpful in understanding raw data, but they don't tell us the entire story. Get your February. GDS so that you have it handy for reference. Look first at the list of sires that we have used since the Fousek injection. Let's take two of our dogs, **DAN** and **BOSS**. We were able to use **DAN** much more than we were **BOSS**, so we had a much smaller sample of testing for **BOSS**, which gave **BOSS** less opportunity to produce pups—either good or bad. **DAN** has actually been used more than any of our males—producing 12 litters, while **BOSS** was used only for two litters (which we have regretted heartily in hindsight).

Another important factor, which can not be shown statistically, or at least not in a simplified way that I know of, is which females a male has been bred to. The importance of this is most notably with **DAN** and **ERIK**, and to some degree also **BOSS**. With these early dogs, *there were very few, if any, really good, solid females to use for breeding. So the statistical results of the early males are skewed because of the below-quality of most of the females we had to use.* The males coming along after these three generally had higher quality females to be bred to. These males would be primarily **CHYT** and **BARTON**.

BREW is a unique case. He was used twice—to the same female, and never used with any other female. And as we all know now, there were many risks in using him, and we just plain lucked out. What he would have produced with a different female; no one knows.

Another point that breeding committees (or anyone in charge of a breeding program based on results of objective testing) must look to as one of the most important factors in breeding is the results of sires and dams in the F2, F3, F4 and more generations. These numbers refer to how far back the dog being studied is in the pedigree; or put more simply I think, is *when we consistently produce the animals we are striving for, that is when we are reaching our goal, it is just as important to look beyond the sire and dam, and look BACK to the 2nd, 3rd, 4th and beyond generations. This is where, in our program, we see the great importance that **ERIK** and **DAN** brought to the dogs we have today.* **ERIK** brought the superb nose and strong desire to cooperate with master. **DAN** gave us a stability, a level headedness, and strong desire for game. Both males gave us improved physical structure, which is evident in the fluid movement we see in the field, resulting in more stamina in almost all the dogs we produce now. Gone is bumpy, choppy gate of the old Griffons we saw for decades.

Although the statistical analysis shows us that some males produced more qualifying dogs than others, it would be a mistake to think that we should not have used the males with a lower percentage of qualifying offspring. Over time we are able to see that every male we used brought uniqueness into the gene pool. We needed each one of them to get us to today. And these males will be with us—I guess I could say forever. For as long as we have Griffons on this earth, these seven males will have been a crucial part and we will have the joy of seeing them for all time.

So this is just a small example to show you what statistics are, and how we must use them—very carefully. One must go back to HOW the numbers got there; and from that one must figure out what the numbers are really telling us, if they are to be of any use to us. And as we *ALL* know now, the test results are extremely important in any good breeding program, and specifically in *OUR* program. It isn't just the breeding committee, or the board of directors, or the judges, but it is *ALL* of us who know how important our test results are to us. It is from them that each and every one of us ends up with a good dog. Breeding versatile hunting dogs is not an exact science. This is not to say that we don't or can't use scientific tools such as our own statistical analysis. We can and do use such information as one of our tools in making breeding decisions.

What makes the numbers—statistics—a little less than scientific is HOW we get the numbers. There are three factors that affect the objectiveness of the numbers:

1. **How the litter is raised:** Many, many variables here—did the breeder keep the pups until they were 10 weeks old? How did they interact with the pups on a daily basis? Did the puppies have a lot of outside exposure, i.e., taken for drives, taken to the fields, were they taken to water? So many variables here, although within our program we do require pups be kept until 10 weeks, and we give guidelines to help the breeders raise the pups. But it's all variable.
2. **The next variable is probably the most critical of the three—how and what happens once the pup leaves the breeder and goes to its new owner.** No two owners are going to give the exact same exposure, conditioning and training to a dog. So when that dog comes to its NAT a year later, it is much like a piece of clay that has been molded to accommodate the owner. This, in fact, is THE largest problem in breeding our dogs—to find the owners who are going to make the commitment to expose and condition the young dog so that his natural abilities are brought to the fore, and therefore seen by the judges. And this is not just our problem; it is worldwide wherever versatile dogs are bred.
3. **The last variable for the statistical numbers are the judges.** In our case we believe strongly that we have good, objective judges who do a very good job. But we also know that **judging is not a science**. Still we know that our judges have a high degree of accuracy, and this piece of our success is in large part responsible for the success of our program. And we know what we do is a learned art. But we also know that we have a high degree of objectivity within a subjective endeavor!

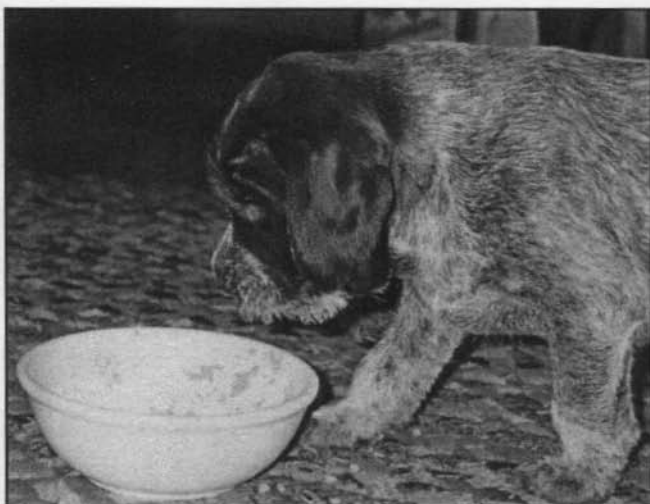


*ELIZA OF DUTCHMAN'S HOLLOW (Barton de los Altos x Callaj of Dutchman's Hollow)
On a staunch point....of a Squirrel! (Photo by: Phil Bennet)*

Puppy Time!



AUGUSTINE OF AGASSIZ LOWLANDS (Chyt ze Zaplav x Berta of Show-Me-Borealis). (Photo by: Judy Coil)



Spring has slowly made its way north bringing with it signs that warm weather is here to stay.... for a while anyway. Red wing black birds sing away as they stake their territory over cattail beds. Kestrels can be found perched on electric wires waiting for unsuspecting mice to come out and woodcock can be glimpsed fluttering against a sunset backdrop. Just about everyone can relate the sights, sounds and smells of springs arrival, but if you are a bird hunter and a hunting dog owner nothing says spring more than the arrival of puppies.

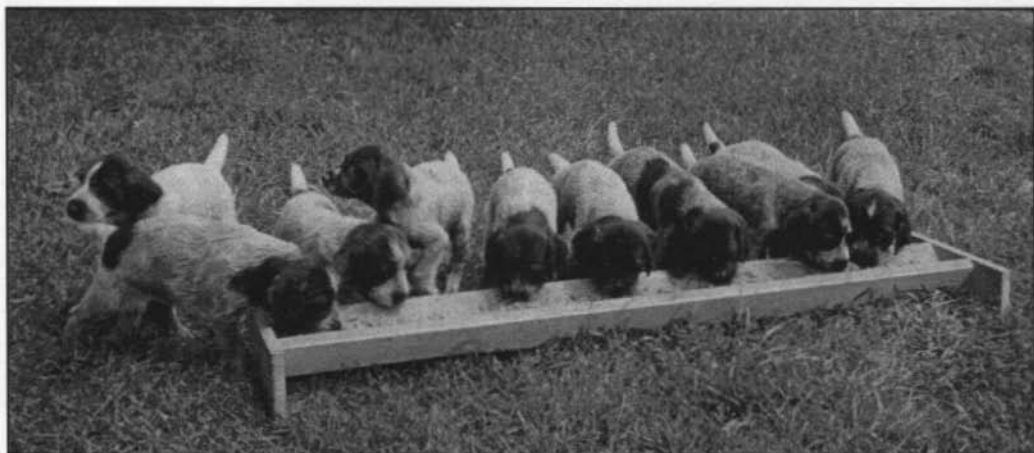
*Chowing down! **AUGER OF ALDERBROOK** (Chyt ze Zaplav x Prairie Storm's Alder) at 5 weeks of age. (photo by: Ralph Stuart)*

BECK (laying down) and **BUFF CHICO OF AGASSIZ LOWLANDS** (Chyt ze Zaplav x Berta of Show-Me-Borealis), 8 weeks old, pose for the camera. (Photo by: Judy Coil, summer 2000)



2001 Breeding update

SIRE	DAM	STATE	DUE DATE
Barton de los Altos	Binti of Cloudy Skies	Alberta, CA	3 born in mid January
Chipper de los Altos	Avery of Mountain House	NY	10 pups 7 wks. old 3/11
Chipper de los Altos	Bristol of Ocean House	ME	due early April
<i>Chyt Ze Zaplav</i>	<i>Babine of the High Country</i>	OR	<i>Did not take</i>
Elmo of Auger Falls	Adeline of Sandhill (repeat)	WI	due early to mid April
Elmo of Auger Falls	Brea of Truman's Pride	WI	due late March



"E" OF DUTCHMAN'S HOLLOW litter (*Barton de los Altos* x *Callaj of Dutchman's Hollow*), at 6 weeks of age.
(Photo by: John Pitlo, summer 1996)

Letter to the editor

Last season I was thinking of switching from a multi-tool to forceps for cactus and porcupine quill removal when my wife and I watched our dog **BIJO** hit a coyote snare at 3/4 speed. The snare cinched around her waist so tight we could not trip the toggle to release the snare, even after removing the snare from it's anchor. A Leatherman multi-tool made short work of the snare, minimizing the stress on the frantic dog and its owners.

Needle nose pliers would work if they had good cutters, but are not as compact. If a snare cinched around a dogs neck and you have no wire cutters the dog would likely be lost.

Mike Vance
Bozeman, MT



BIJO OF THE HIGH DESERT (*Askari Scout of Truman's Pride* x *Elizabeth Ann of Auger Falls*).
(Photo by: Mike Vance)



The MERRYMEETING "A" litter (Chyt ze Zaplav x Prairie Storm's Alder) out for a leisurely drive.
(Photo by: Jane and Gene McKenna)

(Editors note: the following is a letter that club member Dennis Carlson (OR) had sent to fellow member/hunting partner Jeff Dillon)

Jeff,

I've had some great hunts.

John Buckman invited me to go hunting with him and Acer (of Cloudy Skies, whelped 3/95) on a private ranch outside of Pendleton. His friend, who was born and raised in the area and knows all the ranchers, invited us to hunt some exclusive private ground. Together, the three of us shot eighteen chukars and huns. I've never seen such high densities of chukars. I hunted the Anderson's earlier this month and found two coveys of huns and one of chukars in five hours. Last weekend I hunted a public area SE of Heppner and found four coveys of huns in three hours and shot four birds. Czechers (of Iamonia, whelped 5/98) did great, working into a strong wind and pointing cautiously at a safe distance away. Her judgment is improving. Maybe the wind helped. She sure scented them a long ways off before sneaking up closer.



CZECHERS OF IAMONIA (Erik od Jezarek x Flora z Hlozku) stands on the breaks of the Deschutes River canyon in north central Oregon with a nice bunch of chukar. (Photo by: Dennis Carlson.)

I've been doing really well for ducks at Umatilla NWR. The Wednesday before Thanksgiving, my friend Dave and I picked a blind close to the check-in station. It was foggy and when we got to the blind we discovered that the water was frozen about an eighth of an inch thick. We decided to try it anyway. As I was breaking up the ice to set out the decoys, I noticed that it would break up in sheets eight to ten feet wide which I could then slide under the adjacent ice. We opened up a pretty good patch of water this way and put the decks out. Ducks flooded in. We were in front of the only open water in the slough and ended up shooting thirteen ducks, all mallards, except for one pintail and a Gadwall. Some of the ducks fell out on the ice. Ayla (of White-water, whelped 4/89) could walk on the ice for some of the retrieves but would often fall through and then lunge against the ice to break a path to the ducks. The water was only a few feet deep so I was able to get out and help break the ice by kicking it, karate style. Ayla's crotch ended up pretty badly bruised from crashing against the ice so much. Czechers was content to let her older half-sister and Dave's Golden Retriever do most of the work. She did a couple retrieves from open water but seemed concerned about the unfamiliar chunks of floating ice. Her soft temperament sometimes requires a little patience but she's slowly realizing more of her potential.



Fall 2000 Southwest Iowa pheasant hunt. Left to right: **BREA OF IAMONIA** (Dar ze Seletic x Flora z Hlozku) honoring **BELLEAMI (AMI) OF AGASSIZ LOWLAND'S** (Chyt Ze Zaplav x Berta of Show Me Borealis) point while Cody Sobotka tries to bag his 1st bird. (Photo by: John Pitlo)