

The Gun Dog Supreme

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Having fun in the sun!



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A LETTER FROM THE EDITOR

IT is May now as I sit here putting the final touches to this issue. May usually means that spring is here. Flowers should be blossoming, trees should have their leaves and warm weather should be here to stay. So it is with frustration that I must look at ice on Lake Superior. Granted, it is now just an ice floe, but it is ice nonetheless, and there is enough of it to still be a boating hazard. If that wasn't bad enough, our trees are still trying to sprout their leaves and as for the warmer weather...it can't get here fast enough!

Spring for us also means hunting tests, which by the time you read this will have already been run at each of the regional chapters. For those who ran their dog this spring there is probably a sense of achievement and relief that it is all over. If you still have the IHDT to run through, don't worry. You have all summer to get ready for it. Not only that, you have a great opportunity to train with other club members and help others along the way. I am talking about the summer exposure/training sessions that regional chapters started a few years ago. Check out page 5 to find the closest one near you. For those who are new to the club and waiting for a puppy this is an excellent time to help out, learn more about Griffons and the club, and talk with other bird hunters.

On page 3 we have a heart warming story of a northern Wisconsin man and his Griffon and the ordeal they went through this past fall. As bird hunters we often travel many miles to get to our hunting spot and probably a few of us have lost our dogs for a few minutes or more out in the woods. As these minutes ticked by you have probably asked yourself what if? What if it gets dark? What if I have to get back home? This is exactly what John Rawlings went through, but for him and his Griffon Katie, there is a happy ending. Thanks go out to Ben and Sue Niemann for sending the news article in.

Rounding out this issue, Glenn Lehrer has a story of a truly versatile Griffon he had the pleasure of hearing about while hunting in Wyoming last fall. On page 6 Dave Larson has a story of a chukar hunt he had with his hunting partner Gypsy of Auger Falls.

Have a great Summer!

Mike Rackowski

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Include the name of the dog and owner, and who took the photo. If sending a print **DO NOT WRITE ON THE BACK OF THE PHOTO**; attach a sticky note. Include a SASE if you would like the prints back.

Digital photos are welcomed and should be 1024 x 768 pixels in size. You can email them or send them on a disk/CD.

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COVER PHOTO: "A" OF EAGLES POINT (Abel of Nichols Creek x Acacia of the Great Plains) pups having fun running in the field. (Photo by: Sid and Brenda Siefken)

KATIE'S INCREDIBLE JOURNEY**By: Paul Mitchell**

(Editor's note: This article is reprinted, with permission, from the November 13th, 2002 issue of the Sawyer County Record, Hayward, WI.)

Every once in awhile you hear a story that makes you feel good inside. A simple story, one that would never make major headlines or hit the nightly news. Just a story that reminds you that people are good hearted and eager to help one another. And, to take it a step further, some people are also willing to go out of their way to help an animal in distress.

This is one of those stories. In September, John Rawlings of Shell Lake (WI) went on a hunting and fishing trip in Ontario (Canada) with a couple of buddies. They went to a resort that is about 65 miles east of International Falls (MN), the nearest town being Atikokan, Ontario, which is about 25 miles from the resort.

John took his three-year-old hunting dog, a Wirehaired Griffon named Katie, to share in the hunting. The plan was to hunt in the mornings and late afternoons, and to fish during the day.

So, on Saturday, September 14, John and his buddies readied for an afternoon of fishing and locked Katie and another dog in their cabin.

They returned after fishing to find only one dog in the cabin, and the bedroom window lying on the ground.

John said that it appears as if Katie jumped up on the window ledge and the window fell out, taking Katie with it. There were scratch marks on the cabin under the window, evidence that Katie had tried frantically to get back in.

"That really broke my heart," John said.

Several other visitors to the resort told John that they had seen Katie roaming around the resort, playing. Then, a couple of kids told John, it looked like she caught a scent and took off up a hill after it.

Katie was gone.

For the next 5 days John walked an estimated 40 to 45 miles, calling for her and blowing her whistle. John's buddies had to leave on Wednesday, so his son drove up to help him continue the search.

John tried everything he could think of. He

had signs in business windows, ran ads on the radio and in the local newspaper, the Atikokan Progress, and checked with local veterinarians.

He also ran off a batch of fliers and sent them to 1,200 mailing addresses in the Atikokan area.

But on Friday, September 20, John had to head home, leaving Katie behind.

"It's wolf country up there," he said, "and I saw wolf scat all along the railroad tracks. I was sure that she was a dinner somewhere."

John gave up the search, but he couldn't completely give up hope.

Then on Tuesday, September 24 he got a call from a woman in Ontario who had seen a stray on Friday. Here husband had seen the dog again on Sunday, and when they got their mailing on Monday they got John's flier. They were sure the dog was Katie.

This was the first John had heard of Katie since the day she disappeared, so he had reason to continue hope.

Throughout this ordeal, John was deeply touched by the support of the people of Atikokan. He received a half dozen letters from people in Atikokan expressing their support, telling him that they would keep looking and praying for Katie. He also found out that a woman named Shirley Pierce was organizing a rescue crew of high school kids, who were going to band together over the weekend to search about 25 miles of railroad tracks.

John made plans to return to the Atikokan area on Friday, September 27, two weeks after Katie disappeared. But before he could leave that day, his veterinarian office called. A woman in Silver Bay, Minnesota had called the vet's office to say that she had found a dog and located the vet by calling the number on her rabies tag. John got the woman's name and

phone number, and placed a call to Julie Berquist.

"John was pretty happy when he called!" Julie said.

Julie had heard that there was a stray lost in the area from her friend, Terry Rannetsberger, who had seen the dog trotting down Hwy. 61. Terry and several other motorists tried to catch the dog but couldn't. The next day Terry saw the same dog about 30 miles from where she had seen it the day before. She tried to catch Katie but failed again.

Julie was on her way to Duluth when she and her daughter saw Katie at Gooseberry Falls, about 40 miles north of Duluth.

"I thought at first that she was a wolf," Julie said. "She was headed north, down the middle of the highway., although other people who saw her said she had been headed south.

"It was like she was on a mission, not just wandering. She seemed to be heading somewhere. And I was determined to catch her.

Julie stopped the car and her daughter jumped out. Julie pulled the car around and got out as well. Luckily they were able to corner Katie where a fence and a guardrail met at the Gooseberry Bridge.

Katie sneered like she might bite, Julie said, but never snapped.

They put a leash on Katie and put her in the back of their Ford Expedition and continued on to a dentist appointment. Once she got to town, Julie called the veterinarian who relayed the message to John.

Although she seemed scared at first, Katie quickly readjusted to human company.

The first thing Julie did when she got Katie home was give her a bath. After two weeks on the run, she stunk, Julie said.

"She was pretty scared at first to come in the house, but throughout the day she relaxed," according to Julie.

When Julie found out that Katie had been missing for two weeks, she called her veterinarian to ask how she should feed her. She was afraid that Katie would get sick if she ate too much at once. So Julie fed Katie a mixture of hamburger and rice, about a cup every hour.

And as can be expected, once Katie relaxed she fell asleep.

About 7 p.m. John and his wife arrived to pick Katie up.

"When she heard his voice," Julie recalled, "she perked right up. Her butt was a-wigglin'!"

Julie wonders what would have happened to Katie if she hadn't caught her. Would she have made it home on her own?

"It's amazing that she got from Canada to here," Julie said, "and 61 is a busy highway. And it's all woods between here and there. Who knows how she got here."

A grateful John brought Katie home. She looked like a walking skeleton, he said, but other than that seemed fine.

Today Katie seems back to her old self. For the first couple of weeks, John said, she had constant nightmares, twitching and whining in her sleep.

But other than still being a bit thinner than she was, Katie acts as if nothing has happened.

Incredible, given the fact that she covered a couple of hundred miles searching for home.

But the dog isn't the only incredible aspect of this story. John also lost weight-10 pounds, in fact, walking and searching for his dog. He even covered 15 miles of highway on foot carrying a sign asking people to look for Katie.

The people of Atikokan and Silver Bay also proved to be an incredible element of the story. Children searched for Katie on their bicycles. A school group organized a search party. A truck driver delivered John's flyer to an animal shelter in Fort Francis to alert them to the situation. People wrote letters and called with their support.

"That's the kind of people that are up there," a grateful John said.

Like the Disney movie about lost pets making their way home, Katie's journey captivated the hearts of many.

John Rowlings would love to know the whole tale.

"I wish dogs could talk," he said, "because the story she would tell would be incredible."

But since Katie can't talk, we'll just have to do the telling for her.

A REAL UTILITY DOG**By: Glenn Lehrer**

While Pheasant hunting in Sheridan, Wyoming, the first weekend in December last year, a friend and myself learned a lot more about real versatility in a Griffon. Dave Potts and myself were eating a good cowboy breakfast in the Silver Spur Café and talking dogs, of course. Dave had been introduced to bird hunting the year before over Cera (of Dutchman's Hollow) Bonnie (of Agassiz Lowlands), my Griffons.

At the next table in the café were four coal-bed-methane-gas-well roughnecks. Methane well drilling has been going strong in Sheridan for several years now. It has been a boost to the economy, but is a serious environmental issue. Dave and I kept getting sideways glances from one of the roughnecks at the table as we continued talking dogs, birds, and hunting.

Finally one of the roughnecks stopped by our table as his party was leaving the café and introduced himself as Ralph Gravos and said he had overheard us talking about Griffons. Ralph said he had a nine year old Griffon named Griff that he had purchased from a breeder, no longer in the business, in North Dakota. Ralph informed us that he had once been a bird hunter guide in North Dakota with Griff and that the two of them still hunted birds regularly in Wyoming. He also told us that "Griff Gravos", his dog, was now a professional consultant in the coalbed methane drilling and pipe laying industry. We asked Ralph how this could be?

Ralph produced a business card for "Griff Gravos" offering services as a "Leak Sniffin' Dog". Ralph then explained that the laying of thousands of feet of PCV pipe to collect the methane from the wells sometimes results in a leaking pipe. To test the pipelines for integrity, they are pressurized at 100 pounds per square inch (psi) of air for several hours. If the pipes do not hold the pressure at 100 psi or close to it, there is a leak that must be fixed. Understand that these pipes are buried three to five feet underground. In many cases a leak is difficult to detect and find.

This is where "Griff the Leak Sniffin' Dog" is called in to consult. Ralph said that Griff is used about six times a year to accurately pinpoint difficult leaks. Griff is paid for his services.

This is how Griff works. After all other methods of detecting a leak are exhausted, the leaking pipeline is depressurized to atmospheric pressure and the contents of a small bottle of commercially sold pheasant scent is poured in the pipe. The pipe is sealed and repressurized to 100 psi. Ralph and Griff wait for an hour or more for the pheasant scent to permeate the pipe and then the soil around the leak. Ralph then rides Griff in the back of a pickup along the pipeline until Griff gets "birdy", stops, lets Griff out to search until he "points" the leak. Ralph says that Griff has never failed to precisely find the leak for which he has been hired to consult! Talk about a really versatile utility dog!

UPCOMING EXPOSURE DAYS

Be sure to call at least two weeks in advance to reserve your birds.

Northwest Griffon Club -**July 5th & Aug 16th** in Silver Creek, WA. Contact Dennis Carlson at (541) 386-4830 or carlson@gorge.net

Rocky Mountain Griffon Club-**July 19th** in Bozeman, Montana. Contact Glenn Lehrer at (406) 586-0015. There is also another exposure day tentatively set for August 26th

Heartland Griffon Club-**August 2nd-3rd** in Bellevue, Iowa. Contact John Pitlo at (563) 872-5764 or jvpitlo@clinton.net.

Northeast Griffon Club-None planned at the time this issue went to the printer. Watch the club web site for the latest information.

GYPSY OF AUGER FALLS

By: Dave Larson

I've heard it said that the first time a person goes after chukars he does it for sport. The next time he goes for revenge.

"Gyp" (Gypsy of Auger Falls) and I had left my pick-up and climbed about 700 feet or so up a draw to get above some rim rock. We hunt this area a couple of times a year. It's rough walking due to the steepness and scab rock. It's harder still to get back to the road. After about a half an hour of gasping for air, I got to the top and proceeded to walk along it. Gyp was doing his usual exploring maneuvers up and back and around. I had hunted about a quarter-mile when I came to a fence. I crawled under it and looked around for Gyp. I didn't see him. I always worry he will get to messing around the edge of the cliffs and fall, and I was somewhat concerned. I walked a bit further and saw him frozen on point, just above a grassy chute that swept down between the high rim rocks. As I walked towards him about 20 chukars got up, or, should I say, "down." They flew down and disappeared around the rim rocks. I got 3 quick shots off with my Benelli auto as they left. I shot over and behind. I was feeling sorry for myself, as once again I had blown a rise of birds. Gyp must have a sense of humor, since as I embarrass myself quite often shooting at chukars. I didn't realize that Gyp had left. He was gone, and I assumed that he had gone with the birds. Then I looked down and here he comes with a chukar. Bless him! He has a knack for spotting birds that have been hit and following them up.

He brought the bird to hand and we continued on. The cliffs were steeper now and there were little pockets of grass along the edges.

Gyp went on point again. I was afraid birds would start to run on him so I "whoa'd" him. He stopped and waited for me. I released him with an "alright" and he started to creep. He stopped again and I put him on whoa again. I just stepped in front of him when 5 or 6 birds went up then quickly ducked over the cliff. I got a couple of shots off, but to no avail. Chukars are so quick. That was the first time I had used the whoa command with Gyp over birds. He stopped on command, I was really pleased.

We walked another quarter mile or so when we came to an area of fairly high sagebrush. There was lots of sign. I kept trying to get Gyp to hunt the sage a little more carefully, but he kept giving it a "lick and a promise" and then going back to the cliffs. Pretty soon he disappeared from sight and I couldn't find him. The last I had seen of him was about 50 yards up and to my right. I started in that direction. I got to the edge of the rim rock and there he was, locked up on point. I walked almost in front of him when about 10 or 12 chukars broke to my left. I got 2 quick shots when another 4 or 5 broke from the same area but went right. Three more quick shots. On the last shot I saw the last bird tip a little as he disappeared



GYPSY OF AUGER FALLS
and Dave Larson at the
RMGC fall 2001 test weekend.
(Photo by: Andy Rupp)

Continued on the following page

Gypsy of Auger Falls cont'd...

over the edge. Gyp must have seen him as about a minute later he came back with the bird in his mouth. It was getting late and so we had to start back. I took a shortcut over the top of the rim rock and started to slide down hill to the truck. It was rough walking and I was more concerned with just getting down to the road than hunting. After about a half hour I stumbled down to the road, glad to get off the mountain. Just as we reached the bottom I began to hear the birds above me "laughing." If I had just swung a little to my right instead of straight downhill we could have gotten into them again. But I was down and I wasn't going up again so I swallowed my pride and limped back to the truck.

It had been a good afternoon. Anytime I can be out in the desert watching Gyp work is a good time. On top of all that I got a couple of birds.

LETTER TO THE EDITOR

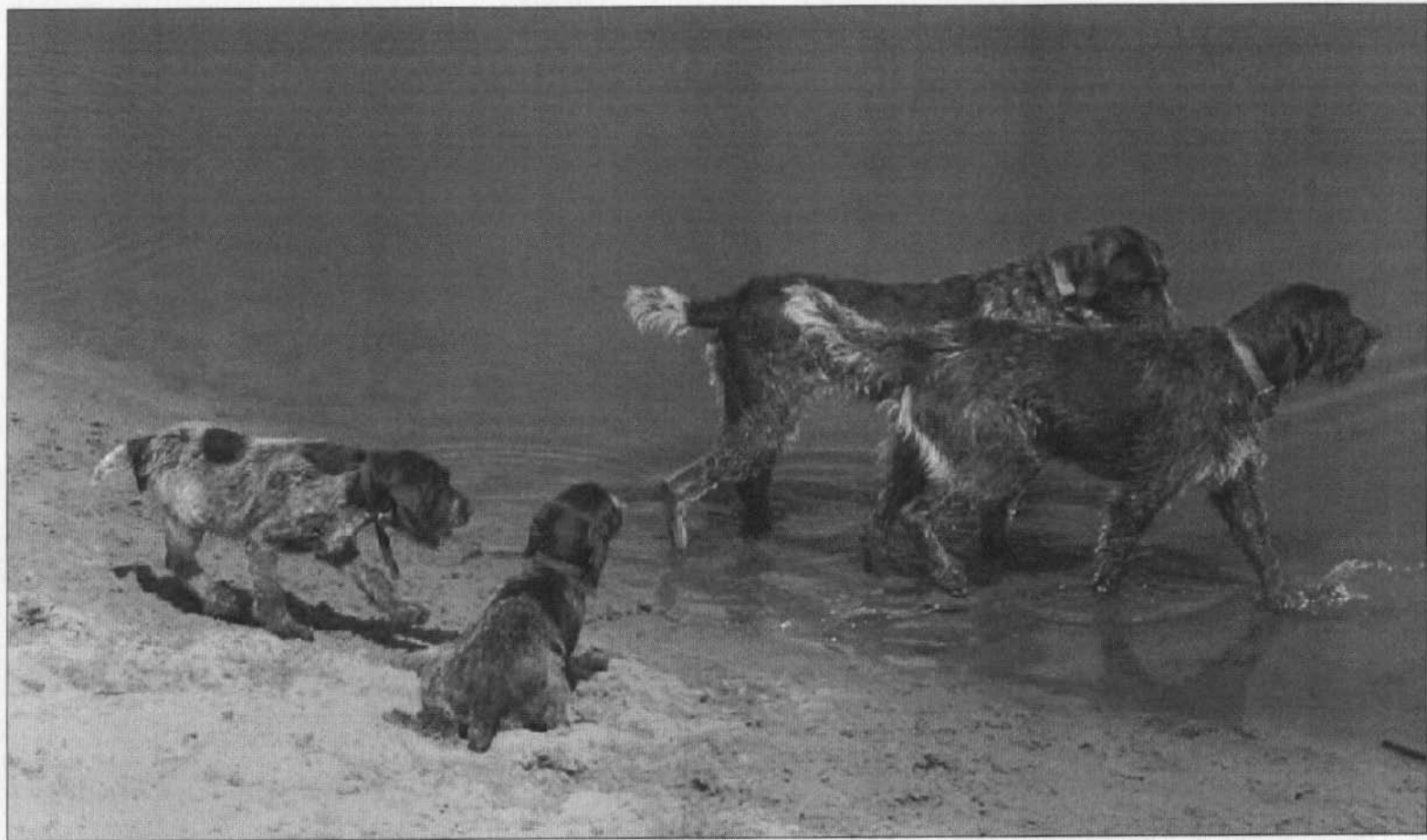
I thought you might enjoy a little anecdote for your news bulletin regarding our Griffon "Abbie" (Merrymeetings Abbie). This year Terry was able to bow-hunt deer near our home in Wolcott, New York. Our dog Abbie is always excited whenever Terry puts on hunting clothes of any kind, regardless of what is to be hunted and when he gets out a gun. She watches out the window as he leaves to walk to his tree stand. Terry got his deer at dusk one evening and the deer ran for 100-200 yards. The brush was thick and, as it was getting dark, he decided to walk home first and get Abbie to help search for the deer. Abbie picked up the scent from the blood that had dripped to the ground and immediately followed that scent directly to where the deer had fallen. She found the deer! Abbie was really excited and Terry was thrilled. This same thing happened a second time when Terry was able to get another deer with the bow. Needless to say, he is proud that Abbie is an all-around hunter for birds and other wildlife. She is excited to please her master.

We extend our deepest appreciation to you for allowing us to be a part of the Griffon owners and for your part in fostering the breed. Abbie is a wonderful addition to our family. She hunts ducks, pheasant, snipe, squirrels, retrieves beautifully, and finds deer when commanded. She is a marvelous family pet who shares her master's bed.

Sincerely,
Sue Charland



ABEN "ABE" OF AGASSIZ LOWLANDS (*Chyt Ze Zaplav x Berta of show me Borealis*)
enjoying water at 15 months - July 2000. (Photo by: Rusty Redfield)



Playing with the big dogs. (Left to right) **ACOMA** and **ABBIE OF INDIAN CREEK**(Abe of Nichol's Creek x Abbie of Valley House) look on as an unidentified dog and Beka of Nichol's Creek walk in the water. (Photo by: Jerry Yeast)