



PLATTE VALLEY HUNTING RETRIEVER CLUB NEWSLETTER

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“SIT!” “STAY!” “READ!”

President:

Don Williams
450 N. County Road 23 E
Loveland, CO 80537
970-663-7325
willid@lpbroadband.net

Vice President:

Mike Brockman
1109 Princeton Drive
Longmont, CO 80503
303-651-9589
msbrockman@msn.com

Treasurer:

Justin Skoda
10785 Miller Court
Westminster, CO 80021
720-887-5947
skoda10@yahoo.com

Secretary/Newsletter :

Tom Vanderpool
7200 S. Grant St.
Centennial, CO 80122
303-627-4996
Vanderpooltom@msn.com

Board Members:

Dan Feighert 303-235-4737

Dave Palmstein 720-746-0576

Mike Schwan 970-663-0892

Tom Waskosky 303 227-9815

Dennis Long 303-464-0738

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Membership Chairperson:

Joe Olson
4010 Honeysuckle Way
Longmont, CO 80503
970-232-4104
joeolson@yahoo.com

Webmaster:

Lee Ann Heldt
33681 County Road 13
Windsor, CO 80550
970-686-2788
heldt@mesanetworks.net

Calendar of Events

**Monthly Meeting
September 15, 2008
7 p.m.
Front Range
Community College in
Westminster**

**August 23, 2008
Annual Picnic
3 p.m. to 7 p.m. at
Berthoud Gun Club-
Nelson Lake**

Table of Contents:

**Message From the
President.....2**

**July-Board Meeting
Minutes.....2**

**Pups: Thinking Finished
From The Very
Beginning-by Rich
Carpenter.....3-4**

Editor's Letter.....4&5

Pictures.....5

Thoughts from Our President

I am filling in Don's thoughts this month for him as he ran out of time to get something written. Thanks, Chris Vanderpool

Don finally got official permission to hold the picnic at the Berthoud Gun Club Nelson Lake. This is the same place as last year. Directions are on the PVHRC web site. It will be **August 23 from 3:00 p.m. to 7:00 p.m.** There will be hamburgers, hot dogs and brats provided by the club. **Each family should bring a dish to share.** We will have dog games and of course our fund raiser auction. Members should bring items to donate. Used or new hunting and sporting equipment is best but really anything goes. We have another exclusive hand-made call by Rich Carpenter.

It is hard to believe, the 2008 hunt test season is winding down already. Just as a reminder, Roadrunner HRC down in New Mexico will hold a hunt in September.

Minutes-July 2008 Board Meeting

President Don Williams called the meeting to order at 7:00 p.m. The meeting was held at the Front Range Community College Library in Westminster, Colorado.

In attendance were: Don Williams, President; Mike Brockman, Vice President; Justin Skoda, Treasurer; Tom Vanderpool, Secretary; Board Member; Dennis Long, Board Member; and Mike Schwan, Board Member; Tom Waskowsky, Board Member; and Dave Palmstein.

Finance Report: Justin reported that there was \$5,500 in the bank as of July 21, 2008. He reported that money was made on the May Hunt Test.

Don said the Club should purchase several winger screens and gun stands after the August Hunt Test.

Don mentioned that there needed to be more training with new members and their dogs.

Hunt Test Update: Mike reported that all was in order for the test. There was a discussion about prizes for the raffle. The Board agreed to spend \$200 on prizes.

Mike handed out a sheet on different scenarios for reimbursing the judges. The Board agreed to option 4- \$75 or 1-way mileage.

Annual Picnic Update: The picnic will be held on August 23 later in the afternoon so that those doing outreach work at Bass Pro Shop can attend the fun. Mike will get the meat for the picnic and members should bring a side dish to share and a drink.

Don will confirm a place for the picnic and get the word out.

There being no further business to talk about, the meeting adjourned at 8 p.m.

Helpful Hints on Training a Pup:

Pups: Thinking Finished From The Very Beginning.

Rich Carpenter

I asked Rich if he would do up a little article regarding his journey of training his new pup and he so graciously agreed. – Thanks Rich.

Since I'm starting another pup and have trained several dogs to the Finished level, Tom Vanderpool asked me if I'd put a few thoughts together for the Platte Valley Newsletter for a few issues, since early training can be so important to realizing the maximum potential of a retriever. This is not a "how-to" for training a Finished dog. There are several very good programs out there to help you do that. I have a program I follow, but it's different from how many do it, and I'm not trying to lay my program on others. Pick your program based on your beliefs, use of collar, correction philosophy, etc.

If you have struggled previously trying to get a dog performing adequate advanced work, you probably have some motivation to try some things differently. If you are new to training to and advanced level, erasing your lack of knowledge will be the first agenda item. Regardless of what training program you use, get familiar with it and from start to end. Particularly, try to have a clear picture of the final objectives. Then try to see how the various steps contribute to that and how some of them completely build on previous steps and others are more parallel. From 40 years of owning and training Retrievers and watching others train them, one thing is clear. Training without a plan followed carefully will probably not result in much success. Training with a carefully followed plan you understand, stacks the odds in favor of success.

Mothers have been known to admonish their youngsters with, "You only have once chance to make a first impression." For those of you new to this, I'll admonish you with the warning that if you don't start right from early on, you will never come close to realizing your pup's potential. Sure, we can correct some of our errors and strengthen weak areas, but we cannot wipe the training slate clean. Bad habits thought extinct will rear their ugly heads. Ways learned early never

completely change. Dogs learning short hunt-'em-up blind retrieves will very unlikely ever learn to happily and directly line to the horizon. As the twig is bent, so grows the tree. Lots of platitudes but believe them. Those of us who have tried it both ways don't want the frustration of not getting a good start.

Right now I'm mostly putting Band-Aids on the tooth holes from Din's sharp puppy teeth and dreaming of when he's grown up and running Finished. Not actually, but very early with a pup there is not much real training going on, but some important teaching is beginning.

Whether I'll be able to teach him to pick hamburger up off the kitchen floor or become a Finished retriever remains to be seen, but I'm optimistic.

Probably more of my young-dog training time is spent without the dog than with the dog. I like to think of things I'll do, places that lend themselves to those things and figuring how to make things flow. Ways I can introduce things will little or no chance of adverse results. If I can teach something in play that can later be used in training, great. What concepts can I introduce early that will later speed up development in the field? More importantly, I want to look at how I interact with the pup and not be teaching something that later I have to unteach, or break. For me, that includes restraining the pup from as soon as it shows an interest in retrieving, unless given a fun bumper release verbal cue. Again, many don't do it this way, but it just fits my thinking with a pup that has the breeding I'd want to own.

I like to do a lot of early play teaching. There is some excellent material in the older Tri-Tronics RETRIEVER TRAINING by Jim and Phyllis Dobbs, with Alice Woodyard. I do a lot of play on that table, *ala Dobbs*, starting after the pup has been home a week. Before the pup is ready for FF it will be doing left and right casting with hand or voice signals, as well as left and right back casts. It wouldn't be ready in

the field, but the seeds of the concept are planted in play and repetition. Jackie Merten's SOUND BEGINNINGS retriever puppy video is excellent and provides a lot more early teaching information in that vein. As soon as the pup has been through the trained retrieve (Force Fetch) and is steady, I'll introduce Finished suction concepts in what I call Flannel Board Drills. More on that later.

Little things that are done very early can be important in the later training of a pup. For example, Din comes into a home that already has Roux. He needs to learn to coexist with him and will train with him and then with other dogs. The pup needs to learn wait his turn and wait quietly. Din gets his food after Roux gets his. He learns not to interfere. The old trick of spitting and tossing food pieces at a dog to get them to focus on you and face you has a lot of merit, I think for handling on blind retrieves later on. It's amazing how quickly Din or most pups, without any physical action will learn to sit quietly while a piece of apple is tossed to Roux, and then really focus as he expects the next piece will be his. Later he will be out training with other dogs and finally honoring. So, while he's too small to understand sit or stay in a trained way, or to even be told to do that, he can be secured with the leash while Roux gets his dummies. And he needs to be quiet. His current honor is not by choice, but hopefully it will build a habit that makes trained honoring much easier for him. Just little things that are part of being a good puppy citizen, but more importantly, are very specifically focused on later regimens that will be trained and enforced to a high standard.

Right now, mostly we are doing a lot of environmental enrichment, socialization and helping him understand "Come," "Sit," "Stay," and "Quiet" and some very rudimentary fun retrieving. Patience and not getting in too big a rush is hard for me, and from what I've seen over the years, hard for a lot of folks.

That's it for this issue. I'll try to share a few other thoughts as time goes along, and before long Din will be old enough to get to the point of doing actual training. I consider training to be making reliable, those skills that have been taught previously, as well as extending and generalizing those behaviors.

Letter from the Editor:

Thank you Mike Brockman and all who helped to put on another successful hunt test. It was a great time and things seemed to go smoothly.

It is nice to see everyone working together to make another hunt test a memorable experience. It was really fun and special that we all had the opportunity to add to Andy's memories and be a part of his huge success.

Chris, Major and I are excited about this year's picnic. It will be a time to get together with members of the Club to share memories of the past training season and talk about our hopes and dream of the upcoming hunting season. This will also be a time to help build the Club fiscally. If you know of anyone interested in joining the Club, bring them along. This is a great opportunity to expose interested individuals to the Club.

Each family should bring a dish to share. We will have dog games and of course our fund raiser auction. Members should bring items to donate. Used or new hunting and sporting equipment is best but really anything goes. We will have another exclusive hand-made call by Rich Carpenter.

Again, if you have anything you would like to see in this year's newsletters, please let me know. If you have any

helpful tips about working with your dog(s) you would like to share, please send them to me. If you have hunting equipment for sale that you would like to post in the newsletter, send me the information. My e-mail is vanderpooltom@msn.com.

