

The Whoa Post

February 2026

February Issue

Inside this issue:

February Issue	1
Thank You, Ken Bruwelheide!	2
What a Dog Knows (E-Collars)	3
Just Hunt	4
Ode de Butch	6
Woodcock Banding	7
UKC News	8
Recipe	9
Photo Gallery	10
UKC Event Calendar	12
Breeders & Stud Dogs	13
Regional Events	14
BSEBGDC Meeting Minutes	15
Membership	16

February is a time for love as evidenced by the commercialized holiday of Valentines Day. Merchants sell flowers and jewelry and inflated prices because the demand is high on February 14th. But love comes in many forms including your love for children, friends and even our pets. When you are feeling low, there is a special felling when you snuggle up to a dog or even a cat. Scientific studies have proven that the presence of an animal aids in both mental and physical health. According to the News In Health, pets lower blood pressure, reduced cortisol (stress hormone) levels, and increased oxytocin. Ownership, especially of dogs, correlates with increased physical activity, improved cardiovascular health, reduced loneliness, and higher life satisfaction. Studies show children, especially those with ADHD, show better focus and social interaction when interacting with animals.

And who doesn't love puppies? But what happens when pup comes home. At your first vet visit, they will talk to you about spay or neuter. Your decision on this matters. Not only for you home environment but also the health of your pup. Before you leap to the knife for your best friend consider the following.

Canines neutered before puberty (18 months) have orthopedic abnormality resulting from the body not receiving the signals from the adult sex hormones to stop growing. The abnormalities result in alterations in body shape and dimensions particularly in the lengths of the long bones in comparison to others. These abnormalities can result in hip dysplasia or have a higher risk of cranial cruciate ligament rupture. In addition to anatomical abnormalities, you can also face incontinence in both male and female dogs, not to mention associated infections of the urinary system. Fixing your dog early can also increase bone cancer risk. The only type of cancer that appears to be reduced is breast cancer on spayed females. Behavior issues including aggression are also more common in fixed canines. (Zinke, 2005) So when making the decision that is best for you, your dog and household. Get all the facts, not just one side to a story.



Sherry Niesar
Whoa Post Editor

Thank You, Ken Bruwelheide!

Ken Bruwelheide has been president of the Big Sky Epagneul Breton Gun Dog Club for as long as I can remember. Our first meeting was at the CEB US National Field Trials in Wilsaw, Montana. He was part of the “on the ground crew”, getting things organized and keeping the events running smoothly for the week. He presented me with a map of the trial grounds, color coded of course!

Throughout the years, we met yearly at field trials at Hyalite Kennels and later in Denton. He attended national CEB events throughout the nation representing the Big Sky Club as the UKC poster child leading the way for local and regional clubs. Under Ken’s tenure, the Whoa Post was established, The Rocky Mountain Cup which became a national draw for field trialers, and when the board members spread across two states, he lead us virtually, learning the in’s and out’s of online meeting platforms.

Ken and his wife, Janis have been supporters of the breed, with Daisy, Cassie, Sally and Dottie. Don’t let the flowery names fool you, these dogs are companions, hunters and trial dogs with blue ribbons in the trophy case.

But all accomplishments aside, Ken is a friend. We will miss him as club president, but will count on phone calls and campfire visits in the summer. Ken will stay on the club board as member at large to provide club with the historical knowledge and provide support.



Photos: 1 - Ken with Dottie and her first pheasant; 2 - Ken with Daisy completing at a field trial; 3 - Ken and Sally with Hon. Judge Peter Wax at a field trial; 4 - Ken with the orange girls, Cassie, Sally and Daisey.

What a Dog Knows (E-collars) By Peter Wax

"Dogs are better than human beings, because they know but do not tell." Emily Dickinson

Dogs know when we are anxious, sick, happy, angry, and excited by body language and scent alone. Dogs can be used to predict earthquakes before the seismic scientist, cancer before the doctor, high or low blood sugar before the diabetic, and seizures before the epileptic. They can be successfully trained and handled by the dumb, deaf and the blind.

Dogs know when they are wearing an electric collar. Discussing the use of an e-collar/tracking collar in a test or trial as a safety net is pertinent, suggesting there is no change in behavior is denying the obvious. Even the most inexperienced handler knows his or her dog behaves differently when wearing an e-collar. If a dog can sense a seismic activity two days before it shows on the seismometers knowing there is an e-collar around its neck is child play.

In American Field (AF) wearing a tracking collar for safety is warranted. In AF dogs are rewarded for casting great distances, sometime over a mile. In these events dogs are followed on horseback for at least 30 minutes and the course length is miles. Championships are 1 to 2 hours in length and the course is sometimes greater than 6 miles. The National Championship at Ames is 3 hours in length and the course is 11 miles long. The AF evaluation rewards extreme independence from the handler which places a substantial risk on these canine athletes as they are well beyond any handler control.

Other venues like UKC Pointing Dog, National Shoot to Retrieve Association, and North American Versatile Hunting Dog Association do not carry much risk. They are tiny in comparison. Runs are 15 to 30 minutes in duration. Dogs are followed on foot and cover 40 to 120 acres. Evaluations reward handler connected cooperative dogs and faults self-hunters. These trials and tests are designed to identify individuals well suited as family hunting dogs. The bidable, connected, bird finding retriever is the working standard.

For breeds and bloodlines that use UKC, NSTRA, and NAVHDA venues for evaluation, being handler connected without electronics ensures the dog is within the proper behavioral standard. Promoting the use of e-collars or a facsimile under the pretense the dog does not know is insincere and gives the self-hunting dog (controlled electronically) an advantage.

Reproducing dogs that require an e-collars to be controlled is breeding to the improper type. It is imperative that only dogs expressing the correct working standard of temperament, range, and handler connectivity are rewarded. To do otherwise will eventually change the temperament of the hunter connected dog into a disconnected self-hunter.



JUST HUNT" Grace age 8 to 12 months"

By Peter Wax

This is the third and final installment of developing Grace. It is her 8th through 12th month. This will cover her first hunting season her wild season. No rules season. During this time, my only responsibility is to give her the opportunity to learn how to find birds. This is accomplished by giving Grace as many opportunities in as many different venues as possible. Here she will learn where to look, how to use the wind, and how to handle wild birds. The goal is to build a bold, self-thinking and solving pup.

The season starts on September 1 in Montana sage country. The game is sage hen, sharptail and Hungarian partridge. The opener is hot. At sunrise already 70 degrees and reaching 100 by noon. This restricted run lengths and location where there is fresh water. Only a few birds encountered but Grace backed, pointed, and held to flush. A few sage hens were bagged. Grace is perplexed by the size of the birds but Blue just scoops them up so she makes the best of it and runs along side hanging onto a wing.

Day two is just as hot as the opener and we move to an area with a creek bordered by small grains. There are many sharptail grouse here and everyone gets points and opportunity for retrieves. Early on Grace finds a wounded sharptail grouse in tall grass. I hustle down to her in an attempt to get it before Blue or Thorn can swipe it. In my haste I stomp on her leg to much howling. This curbs her desire to retrieve sharptail grouse. It is amazing how easily a negative can be taught. Over the next 10 days we hunt Grace only on sharptail grouse. We do not make a big deal about any birds downed but shoot a pile of them. By the 15th of September without doing anything special (also known as not making matters worse) she starts retrieving them.

In the first 4 weeks of Grace's wild season, she has hunted 14 days in two states. She has encountered and had shot for her sage hen, sharptail grouse, and Hungarian partridge. She has also encountered pheasants, cows, deer, coyotes, and at least one porcupine. She is not very hair driven so nothing negative yet.

On September 27th Grace goes duck hunting. She learns that the day starts in the night with a half mile walk to a wetland. At the water I throw unretrievable blocks in and then we just sit around. The puzzle of the new behav-



Continued on page 5

Grace - Continued from page 4



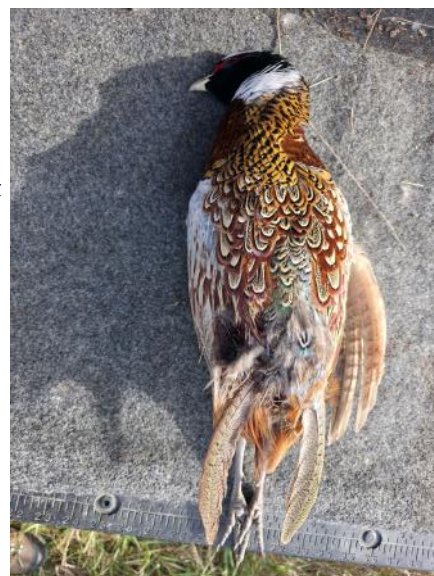
ior is quickly understood when the ducks start flying. Dead ducks are fun to grab, shake, run around with and eventually bring back almost to shore. Cripples are fun to chase, but big ones that do not run or swim away are intimidating. Again, we pretend not to notice and just shoot more ducks. Within a short period of time all ducks are retrieved to knee deep water.

On October 11 the pheasant season opens. A caution on pheasants with a pup, pheasant are spurred demons that can turn-off the most aggressive retriever. Grace has already demonstrated she is smart enough to be cautious when hurt yet bold and bird driven enough to overcome, but pheasants often deal pain into the mouth, nose, lips and eyes. Additionally, they are loud, big and strong. For these reasons initially Grace is run braced with Blue a mature retriever. Only close left and right crossers are shot using number 7½ lead. This combination usually results in both legs being broke, even if it is not a clean kill, reducing the likeliness of Grace getting spurred in the mouth.

On November 22, running solo after hundreds of wild birds Grace makes two important revelations. The first is that "she" finds the bird for the "gun". This is expressed by her holding point for minutes and allowing the gun access to the front with zero human instruction. The second is that she is tougher than the pheasant. That bird looks pretty roughed up, but it did not go quietly into the night. It dealt pain with all the tools at its disposal yet Grace hung in there until I could rescue her.

Over the course of the Graces' Wild Season, she has hunted 72 days. She has solo pointed over a hundred pheasants, partridge and grouse and double as many shared and backed many more. She has retrieved enough birds, both wet and dry that over the last 30 days or so there was no reason to worry about her losing a cripple. She does of course, all dogs do, but it is not common.

On January 4th Grace's first hunting season closed. She is 29 pounds, 18.5" tall and 18" long. She has experienced running in heat, cold, rain, snow, sun, day and night. She has pointed and tasted sage hen, partridge, sharptail grouse, pheasant, duck, merganser, and goose. She has sniffed a jack snipe and a porcupine. She can track a running a rooster for over a half mile and either point, retriever or sit on top of it until rescued. She knows deer and cows are to be ignored. It's been a fun start.



Ode'de Butch

by Colin Johnston

Doggon Dog Gone
Nose to the Breeze
Pointing true through the Grass and Trees
He ran too Far and he ran Alone
Now I'm whistling into the Unknown

Doggon Dog Gone
Keen and Fast
Turned to the West the gone in a Blast
Birds took Flight and He gave Chase
Now there's no Sign not Hair nor a Trace

Doggon Dog Gone
Heavy Boots beat Worry into the Ground
Heart keeping time to Fear Unbound
Cutting through Brush and Cresting each Rise
Searching the Plains with Hopeful Eyes

Doggon Dog Gone
Zest! There he stands on far Fenceline
Carved from Stone frozen in Time
Joy and Pride rise like the Dawn
At last there He be no longer Gone

Woodcock Banding by Denine Ackerbauer

The Minnesota Woodcock Banding Program is permitted by the USGS Bird Banding Laboratory to capture and band woodcock using certified pointing dogs.

Last spring, Raj and I attended the Woodcock Minnesota Banding Clinic at Sandhill Wildlife Area near Babcock, WI. The organization was recently granted permission to band in Wisconsin, too. It was a great weekend working and socializing with wildlife biologists and outdoor enthusiasts, learning about their studies, their projects and their experiences.

The purpose of the Minnesota Woodcock Banding Program is to maintain a trained volunteer base of people to capture and band American woodcock in Minnesota (and now Wisconsin) and help inform natural resource agencies about woodcock ecology and management.

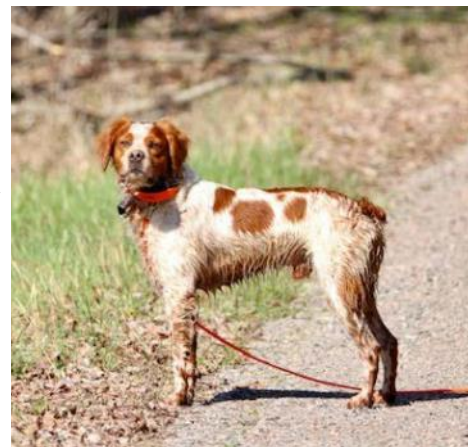
While the aim of the Minnesota Woodcock Banding Program is to band as many woodcock as possible, its primary responsibility is to ensure the health of each individual woodcock one comes in contact with. Do not trade off potential harm to a bird for placing a band on its leg. We are here for the birds; they are not here for us.

At the clinic, banders learn, among other things, banding in appropriate weather conditions (not too hot, too cold, too wet). The hen may not return to the chicks for up to 30 minutes after being released and chicks cannot thermoregulate. Banders also learn the correct way to hold birds, take measurements, determine age, mark GPS locations, use gloves/clean bags to prevent the spread of disease and prevent injury to the birds, and more.

Initially the prospective banding dog must pass a pigeon test: (1) locate, point and stay steady on a bird, (2) stop to flush on a bird and (3) stay steady on a tethered bird simulating a hen luring the dog away from her brood. Then, to become certified, the dog must locate at least one brood and demonstrate steadiness to the satisfaction of the mentor.

Once certified, all banders must still take and pass (100%) the Annual Certification Test (online) each spring to be eligible to receive bands. And banders must also constantly evaluate their dog(s) to make sure they are performing well. If not, go back to training until the dog IS performing well. Never run a dog that you don't trust with a bird's life.

There is no guarantee that when attending a clinic, the weather will cooperate or broods will be located that weekend in order for new banders and dogs to obtain their certification. One may have to make arrangements to go out with a mentor several times. I was able to obtain my certification in 2024. Raj obtained his in 2025.



Raj on lead with bell for locating



Young woodcock chicks are perfectly camouflaged to avoid detection from predators.



Banding chicks under mentor supervision.



Important Reminder: UKC Event Cancellation Requirements

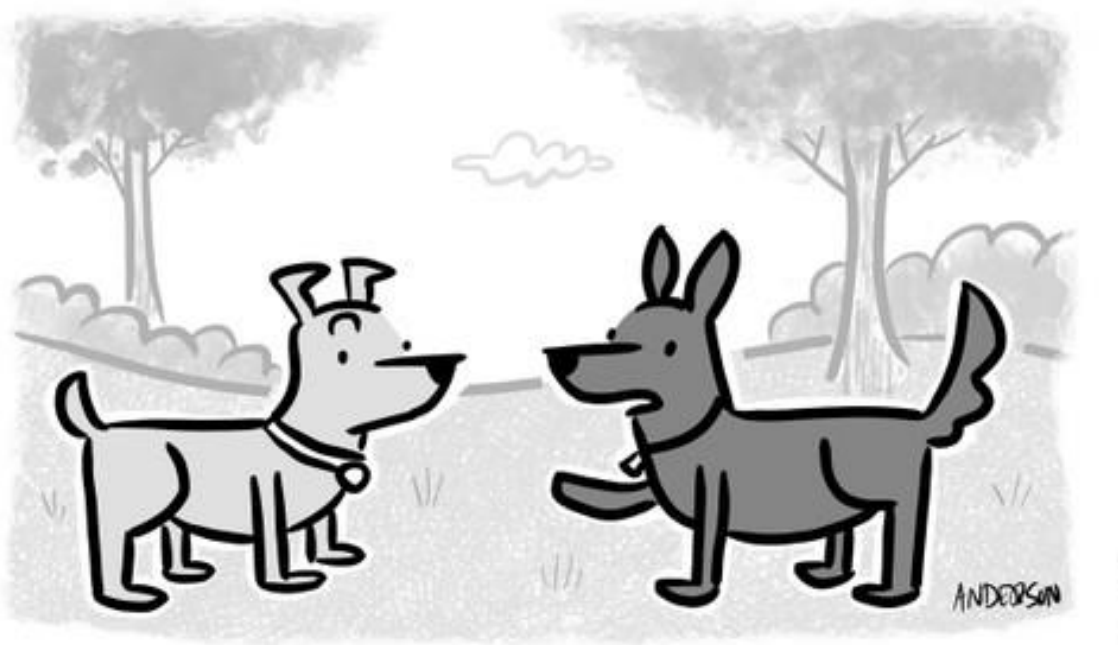
<https://www.ukcdogs.com/pointing-dog-news>

January 28, 2026

United Kennel Club would like to remind all UKC licensed clubs that any event cancellation **must be approved through UKC** before the event is officially canceled and publicly announced.

If circumstances arise that may require canceling an event (weather, facility issues, emergencies, or other unforeseen situations), clubs must contact UKC as soon as possible to request cancellation approval and receive direction on the proper steps to follow. This helps ensure accurate communication to participants, protects the integrity of UKC event records, and allows UKC to assist with rescheduling options when possible.

Clubs should not publicly post or distribute a cancellation notice until approval has been granted by UKC. Thank you for your cooperation and for helping UKC provide clear, consistent communication to exhibitors and hunters.



"OK, you're on a desert island and you can only take one - stick, frisbee, or tennis ball?"



Recipe: Grilled Wild Bird provided by Ric Haulenbeck

Ingredients

- 1/4 cup of water per bird Quarter
- 1 squeeze of lemon per bird
- Quarter stick of butter per bird
- Quarter cup of olive oil, per bird
- Sprinkle each breast with McCormick brown sugar and bourbon spice

Put all contents in an appropriate size Ziploc bag and shake up to mix. Add all birds, but do not recommend mixing species. Use a separate bag for each species. Shake well with birds, marinate, and put in refrigerator. Every so often flip your refrigerator bag upside down. 24 hours of marinating does the trick.



An hour before grilling, take the bag out to adjust to room temperature. *Grill the birds breast plate down for 10 to 15 minutes, depending on the size of the bird. Then grill each side of the breast for about six minutes. Remove and wrap in tinfoil.

* Many people breast out the bird removing the breast plate. I find leaving it intact offers a barrier to allow for a moist internal cooking of the breast without drying everything out. I believe the oil and butter aspect of the marinade seals the bird and seasoning which also helps to keep it moist and flavorful to the palette.

Thanks to Mike Sheffer for the inspiration to even attempt to cook sharp tail, pheasant and Huns on the grill.



Share your recipes with the readers of the Whoa Post.

Email them to thewhoapost@gmail.com



Photo Gallery

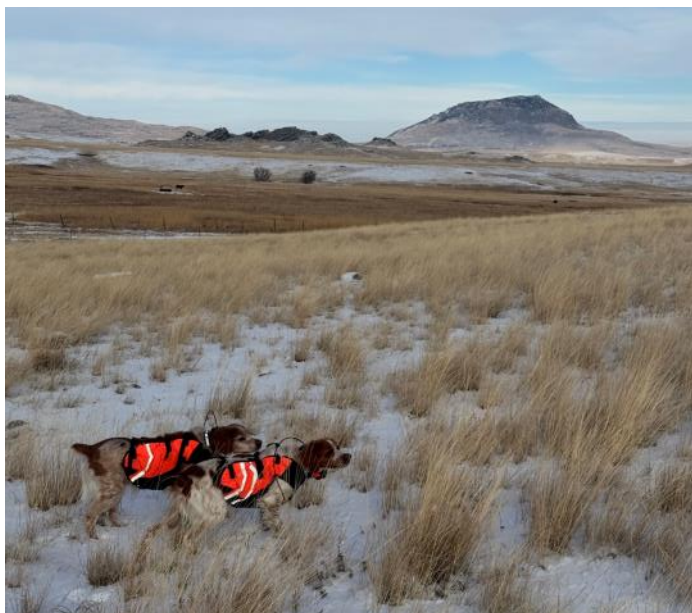


Matt Crootof and Bean
Photo provided by Matt Crootof



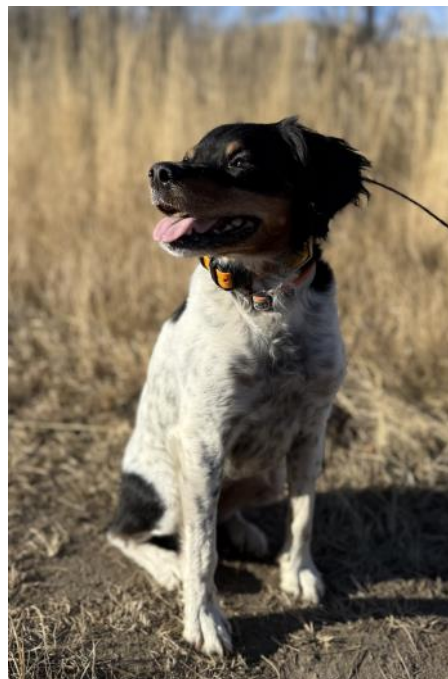
Maisie, Trixie on point while
Mel goes in for the shot.

Photo Provided by Mel Kotur



Maisie and Trixie, the dynamic duo

Photo Provided by Mel Kotur



Bean in portrait mode

Photo by Matt Crootof



Maisie, Trixie, and Mel Kotur after a successful hunt near Square Butte

Photo Provided by Mel Kotur



Do you have photos you would like to share with the readers of the Whoa Post? Please send them to thewhoapost@gmail.com

UKC Events

March 7 & March 8, 2026

Sonoita, AZ.

Epagneul Bretons of the Southwest & Korthals Griffon

Desert Southwest

Desert Southwest Cup 2026

Liberated

Contact: Shooter Smith, 303-506-2284,
ebsofthesw@gmail.com

March 14 & 15, 2026

Delavan, IL

Epagneul Breton Club of Illinois

Wild, Liberated, TAN/WRT

Contact: Jamin Carr, 920.889.4992,
ebclubofillinois@gmail.com

March 28th & 29th

Spencer, IA

Great North Epagneul Breton Gun Dog Club

Type of Events: Type W, TAN

Contact: Tasha Pleskac at 320 420 2442 ta-
sha@hhfgundogs.com

April 14-18, 2026

CEB-US National Conclave

Eureka, KS

Liberated Trial, TAN, WRT

Contact: Jeff Pleskac Jeff.Pleskac@ceb-us.com



***"If you don't own a dog, at least one, there is not
necessarily anything wrong with you, but there may be
something wrong with your life."***

– Roger A. Caras

An advertisement for the Madison River Anglers Rest & Retreat. The background is a photograph of a large, dark wooden cabin with a gabled roof, situated on a grassy lawn with trees in the background. Overlaid on the image is the text "Madison River Anglers Rest & Retreat" in a white serif font. Below this, "Ric Haulenbeck, owner/operator" is written in a white sans-serif font. In the bottom left corner, the address "PO Box 569 Ennis, MT 59729" and phone number "714-402-5344" are listed. In the bottom right corner, the email "ric33lbp@aol.com" is provided. A small inset photograph in the center shows a person wearing a hat and waders, kneeling in a body of water and fishing with a rod.

Stud Dogs



Gun Noir Tuxedo Machine a Chase WRT

Breeder- Dave Flynn of Sugar Creek

Tux originates from the Cliathen Line

DOB 5-30-17 OFA Good

Ric Haulenbeck 714-402-5344

ricflyfish@aol.com

Breeders

Coteau Kennel

Pete Wax & Sherry Niesar

Bismarck, North Dakota

sniesar@outlook.com

701-222-8940

www.coteaukennel.com

Hyalite Kennel

Butch Nelson & Karen Paugh

Denton, Montana

406-567-4200

hyaliteknl@yahoo.com

Touchstone Kennel

Coln Johnston

cejohnston@touchstonekennels.com

Touchstonekennels/Facebook

940-642-1037



Are you interested in listing your kennel or stud dog on the Breeders or Stud Dog page of the Whoa Post?

All listings part of a paid membership only. For more information, contact the editor at sniesar@outlook.com

Regional Events

April 11 and 12, 2026

NSTRA Open/ Novice

Fargo, ND

Contact: John Wickenheiser, 701-715-0180,
jpwick4@yahoo.com

April 18 and 19, 2026

Mid North/Big Sky Challenge Trial - NSTRA

Acton, MT

Contact: Brent Underdahl, 406-799-2108

April 25 and 26, 2026

NSTRA

Williston, ND

Contact: Erick Bauer, 218-290-4931, bauereick@yahoo.com

May 1-3, 2026

Acton, MT 59002

Montana Brittany Club – AKC

Field Trial

Contact Tommie Dahl, 406-827-1827

May 3, 2026

Fargo, ND

All Amateur Single/ Double - NSTRA

Contact: Logan Wickenheiser, 701-412-3774, Wildgoose-
chase110@gmail.com

May 23, 24, 25 2026

Regional Championship - NSTRA

Dickinson, ND

Contact Chad Norpel, 701-571-8433, cnorpel@hotmail.com

May 16 -18, 2026

German Wirehaired Pointer Club of Wisconsin - AKC
Field Trial

Sheyenne National Grasslands, Hankinson, ND 58057

Contact: Elizabeth Barret-Dixon 612-865-7556

May 22-24, 2026

German Wirehaired Pointer Club of Wisconsin - AKC
Field Trial

Sheyenne National Grasslands, Hankinson, ND

Contact: Elizabeth Barret-Dixon 612-865-7556

May 29 – 31, 2026

Billings, MT

Yellowstone NAVHDA

NA/GDT/UT

Contact: SARA BAIER, (406) 380-0250

June 13 – 14, 2026

Bismarck, ND

Central Dakota NAVHDA

NA/GDT

Contact: KARA BRAYKO (701) 339-8435

June 20 – 21, 2026

Kindred, ND

Red River NAVHDA

NA

Contact: STEVEN BUCK (701) 729-6483





Big Sky Epagneul Breton Gun Dog Club Board Meeting Minutes

January 27, 2026

In Attendance: Butch Nelson, Todd Lehner, Jim Hoschouer, Pete Wax, Sherry Niesar

Ken called the meeting to order at 731pm CT.

Jim provided a treasurer's report. Currently, the Club has a balance of \$9725.86. Increases are due to membership renewals. The Board approved the treasurers report.

A discussion was held on how to increase engagement and participation with the Club. The following ideas were discussed.

- A contest with prizes for articles about dog and hunting related topics. It would not be open to board members. Only new, never published material would be considered.
- A reboot of Ask Butch column. After much discussion the board decided that it should be an Ask the Trainer column featuring trainers: Butch, Colin, and Todd. We will advertise this new/old column in the next Whoa Post.
- Develop new merchandise with club logo. It was recommended that Sherry investigate print on demand options so there is no warehousing of items.
- With an expanded balance, it was recommended that we give part of the balance away to groups or individuals in need. An Amendment to the Club bylaws is needed to move this suggestion forward. The board members will work through email to draft an amendment to be voted on at the next meeting.
- Butch suggested that we recognize an individual that has done something good for the dog/conservation world.

Fall Field Trial: Butch asked if we wanted to do another field trial in Denton. The board answered yes and everyone agreed to pitch in with their areas of expertise.

Ken addressed the board with an official letter of resignation for his position of president. He will remain on the board as a board member. The board will bring suggestions to the next board meeting to fill the vacant position of president.

Meeting Adjourned at 8:30 pm CT.

Respectfully submitted,

Sherry Niesar, Club Secretary

Renew Your Membership

Membership to the Big Sky Epagneul Breton Gun Dog Club is due at the beginning of each calendar year in January. Each member is an important component to the club, adding to the newsletter with articles and photographs and at the clubs annual field trial. If you are not a member, then consider joining. Aside from becoming a part of a group of talented, friendly and likeminded dog owners, members:

- Receive the Whoa Post
- Are eligible to place ads in the Marketplace at no charge
- List Breeder and Stud Dog information (newsletter and web site) at no charge
- Have access to dog training professionals and mentors
- Receive advance notice of special events
- Have opportunity to participate in UKC sanctioned field trials
- Join a fellowship of like minded individuals

Dottie says,
"Hey Boss,
it's time to
pay our
membership
dues!"



Complete your membership form today and help support the UKC trial system.

Big Sky Epagneul Breton Gun Dog Club Membership Form

Name _____ 2nd Family Member _____

Address _____

Telephone _____ Email _____

Membership Category \$20 Individual _____ \$30 Family _____ \$50 Business _____

Make Check out to: **Big Sky Epagneul Breton Gun Dog Club**

Return form & dues to: Jim Hoschouoer 3575 Pasha Lane, Bozeman, Montana 59718