

The Whoa Post

June 2026

June Issue

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Recently I had the pleasure of participating in the Krothal's Griffon United States Club field trial near Milaca, Minnesota. It's a bit farther east than I usually travel, but it was worth the trip. The trial accepted some late entries and they needed an extra judge, so I was enlisted. Decades ago Pete and I were on the list to receive a Griffon pup, but the litter met with tragedy, so we never had the chance. While we never owned a Griffon, we have known and enjoyed several.

As a judge I expected to see only one breed, but this trial was open to all breeds. I walked behind Pudelpointer, German Shorthaired Pointer, Weimaraner, Spinone Italiano, Griffon, and Epagneul Breton entries — a diverse field, each dog with its own skill set and personality. A Griffon expert, Aline Tremblay, was brought in from Montreal; she was knowledgeable about Griffon conformation and other breeds, welcoming, and happy to share her knowledge with a smile.

As with any trial, there were winners and those who didn't earn ribbons. We had several new handlers, including one from Montana, who earned ribbons, but mostly I saw a happy group.

This trial is run similarly to the Rocky Mountain Cup, with a barrage to determine the cup winner. We brought in winning handlers from both days. There were some heartbreaks, but the final barrage comprised two women handlers, one of whom was very new to the sport. Both brought enthusiasm, but there could be only one winner. Melissa, with her shorthair, won the barrage and the Land of Lakes Cup for 2026. She embraced her judges and thanked them, then turned to her bracedmate and thanked her for running her dog with such exuberance that an observer would have thought they both were winners.

Let this be the model for all things dog: celebrate everything, lift everyone up, and learn from your fellow handlers and judges.

Sherry Niesar

Whoa Post Editor



BSEBGDC Board Meeting Minutes

June 9, 2026

Present: Sherry Niesar, Peter Wax, Jim Hoschouer, Ken Bruwelheide, Todd Lehner, Colin Johnston



Jim welcomed everyone.

Minutes from May meeting were reviewed. Todd made a motion to accept the minutes as written and seconded by Peter. Motion carried.

Jim presented the treasurer's report. The account balance is \$ 9,835.86. Ken moved to accept the report, Peter seconded. Motion carried.

2026 Rocky Mountain Cup Field Trial – Jim reported that we need to request access to the State Land from the agency that manages it. Butch will follow up with the land owner and agency.

Sherry reported that judges have been secured. They are Peter Wax, Larry Elison, Ken Teppel, Fred Overby and Sherry Niesar on TAN.

All meals are planned.

Sherry discussed trophy options for the field trial.

Jim was able to locate the original bylaws of the Club. After discussion at the last meeting the bylaws define a quorum as two thirds of the board Members.

Good Deed Amendment

Pete moved to approve the amendment as written and Todd Seconded. Motion carried.

The BSEBGDC (CLUB) established a Good Deed Fund with the purpose of providing financial support to those in the dog world within the region of influence of the CLUB. Persons or groups may apply for funds with a letter of application that includes the reason for funding and how they will use the funding. Board members may also recommend a person or group to be the recipient of the Good Deed Fund. Disbursements are limited to \$ 1000 per year. Disbursement is only made with a two thirds majority vote of the Board of Directors with a quorum present. This fund is available year-round.

Those benefiting from the established fund could be to help EB owners with assorted EB related costs as needed. Could also be used as a trial scholarship for youth.

Jim directed Sherry to write a summary of the amendment for distribution, develop an application and protocol for rating of applications and distribution of funds.

Meeting Adjourned at 8:27 pm CT.

Respectfully submitted,

Sherry Niesar, BSEBGDC Secretary

Respectfully submitted,

Sherry Niesar, BSEBGDC Secretary

How to Trial, Have Fun & Win by Peter Wax and Fatmi Anders



It is 2008 in Kansas at the French Brittany Gundog Association's National Field Trial. The brisk morning is filled with exuberance. Enthusiastic handshakes, loud greetings, and barking dogs. The long hours of training and commitment are about to be tested. On my way through the crowded car lane, there, off to the side is a gal and young man. Standing with homemade leash and orange roan pup. Eyes wide. Alone in a crowd. Passing we makes brief eye contact. I keep going. Been there and done that.

At the end of the day passing the same line of cars, there, the same young couple in desperate conversation. The dog is tied short. Desperate yet unable to reach them. The young man expression shows the days outcome. The pretty gal looks at me with hopelessness. I keep walking. None of my business. Then, something makes me turn around and ask in an upbeat tone "how was the run?" "Naw" is the reply. He kicks the dirt and scowls at his confused pup.

"May I pet your pup?" already bending down. I am immediate rewarded with a wagging tail and warm tongue. Still crouched, looking only at the pup, I tell the story of my first dog test. It is the German VJP in South Dakota. It began and ended in the first stage at the release of my deranged Drahthaar. In the first 30 minutes he had chased a rabbit, some farm chickens, and multiple wild ducks only to be recaptured when I dove into an irrigation-ditch he is crossing. I returned dripping wet to a cheering crowd, get in my car and drive 11 hours home.

Once I had them laughing, I explained to them that trialing will be good for their family. That in trialing, like in hunting, not all days are golden. But if they train together the trialing season is just a second hunting season. That winning and losing are the yin & yang of the journey. I then give them my ingredients to a successful trial experience.

Knowledge: You must know the rules. This is not to be confused with a secondhand interpretation provided by the guy standing around and not running. The Rules can be found on the United Kennel Club's webpage www.ukcdogs.com and downloaded as a pdf. Once you know the rules you will also need to know how a Judge will apply them.

One way to learn is by asking questions on the UKC Message Board. A second is by running your dog as nothing beats experience (Richard Petty) and a third is to adopt a mentor. The third option is the best option. A mentor can teach things a book, chat room, or video cannot. Things like how to plant a pigeon on a windy day, slip on a half-hitch with one hand, tie a bowline, a few real tricks, and when and how to use some new vocabulary words. But the most important thing a mentor can teach you is how to "see" the dog.

There is no mentoring program. You will need to find one on your own. Picking a winner is paramount but picking one that is honest and has integrity is just as important.



Continued on page 4

How to Trial - Continued from page 3

Mentors do not need to be a UKC or CEB affiliated. Success is the same in NAVHDA and NSTRA. In fact, I believe an old breeder that is also a NAVHDA senior judge to be the best mentor. Bring the right attitude (a learning attitude). Show up humbly, cheerfully and with a willingness to help to “earn your spot”.

Expectations: At your first trial expect to learn and make friends. Think of entering as joining a fraternity. A fraternity of individuals who test their dogs and training skills against each other. There is a pledging process. Come with those expectations, and you are ensured a good result. Never take your eye off the goal and the “goal” is winning. That goal is everything. Your dog knows it instinctively. They are bred to win. It is the only way they know to play. Desire it, dream it, smell it, taste it as there is nothing like winning. Be a dog. The proper expectation for your first trial is to learn how to win, after that the expectation should be to win every time.



Attitude: Attitude is the internal emotional force that makes us victorious or victims. Come with your mind and heart open to learning and accepting of others. Respecting and accepting others will be paid back ten-fold. The dog community is mostly composed of good folks willing to help if asked. For the price of asking, I have seen strangers transport another’s dog cross country, share training birds, gear, secrets, antibiotics, and even some magic elixir for the injured soul. The learning attitude is the proper attitude as it puts absorption of knowledge first and the emotions that makes us poor handlers second. Each time you run learn. Learn to anticipate. Learn to read the dog, the wind and the terrain. Learn to see the dog run like a judge see a dog run.

Prepare: A prepared dog is the holy grail of winning. Every dog has his day is a myth. No champion got there by luck. In a trial any holes in your training will shine. Winner’s train often. They train in the rain, the wind and the snow. They train with a steady partner and with the dog from hell. A barking, unsteady oversized point stealer will teach you plenty about your dog and your training program. A dog with above average abilities prepared properly will win if trained and handled properly.

Winning: The sights, sounds and smells associated with your first blue ribbon and loving cup are never forgotten. It is so intoxicating that it can trigger a lifelong addiction. Beyond what we feel, the benefit is to the breed. Competition is the best tool to evaluate brood stock. If you care about the Epagneul Breton’s confirmation, style of hunt, run and desire, then compete. Compete in the venue designed for your breed – the UKC Pointing Dog.



My NSTRA Experience with S.A. Ziva de la HHF

By Ridge Henderson

Ziva and I did our first National Shoot-to-Retrieve Association (NSTRA) event May 1 and 2 in Kindred, ND with the Mid-North Region of NSTRA. This was an introductory event and brought together newcomers and veterans of NSTRA for both a seminar and training day and then a day NSTRA All-Amateur Trial.

Hosted by the Wickenheiser family in Kindred, ND, the trial Chairman was Chad Norpel, President of the Mid-North Chapter. For those unfamiliar with NSTRA, it was started in the 1960s by hunters to extend the hunting season with another activity for folks who had bird dogs and wanted to stay active in the off season. Currently, there are over 1,000 local trials as well as a dozen or so National Events.

Our weekend began with a half day seminar on NSTRA led by Scott Townsend, National President and Chad Norpel. The rules of a NSTRA field trial were reviewed. They are a bit more complicated than a UKC trial or an AKC Hunt test but not overly complicated. Obviously, a thorough review of the rule book would be in order before entering.

NSTRA scoring:

- Finds - max of 100 points
- Retrieves - max of 100 points
- Backing - max of 75 points
- Ground Coverage - max of 100 points
- Obedience - max of 75 points

The seminar was followed by lunch and then mock runs of 15 minutes to give the newbies an opportunity to get a feel for what an actual trial would be like. Each new person was accompanied by a mentor.

The seminar, the mock trial and the trial day were well organized and the field marshals for each bracket kept the trial day moving along efficiently.



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NSTRA - Continued from page 6

The game of NSTRA.

- No training collars or training/tracking collars are allowed.
- Runs are 30 minutes
- Handlers shoot their own birds.
- 2 judges on 4 wheelers. Judges switch handlers at the 15-minute mark.
- Each run is a brace of two dogs.
- Field size varies from venue to venue but generally is a 1/4-mile square.
- Five birds are placed for each brace. The bird planter, a very important job in the trial, puts a bird in each quadrant of the field and one bird in the middle. The birds can be in any part of each quadrant.
- The objective is to find as many birds as you can before your brace mate finds them. You are scored on each bird that your dog finds.
- A full bracket is 16 braces per field, and they usually run 2 fields.

Ziva ran in the afternoon brackets. The brackets were $\frac{1}{2}$ the normal size with 16 dogs competing in each bracket on each field. We had the option of taking a mentor with us and I took that option; it was super helpful to have a calm voice reminding me of what I had learned the day before. Her bracket was 8 braces for a total of 16 dogs. On her first run she found 4 birds. The handler, me, made a fatal mistake on the 4th bird and unfortunately that resulted in a bird that could not be scored. Despite the mistake by me, Ziva earned 654 points which was good enough for 1st Place in that bracket and our first Blue Ribbon in NSTRA!

If you are interested in NSTRA and I think you should be, there is a robust National website that has lots of information. I would recommend spending some time at the website and exploring. I think it will answer a lot of your questions.

I believe these are the steps you need to take to participate.

- Join the National
- Join the Regional Club
- Register your dog
- Find the schedule of Events on the National NSTRA web page <https://www.nstra.org/>. Locate an event that you want to attend, then go to the regional website where you can register for the event.

The NSTRA folks will welcome you, they are passionate about their trials and are eager to expand their membership and bring new people into the fun that they have. They have a mentor program, and you can request a mentor walk the course with you. I would highly recommend that you take a mentor. The websites are functional and relatively easy to navigate; the registration is easy.



Bruce Mooney 1955-2026, L'Escarbot Kennels'

On Saturday, June 6, 2026, Bruce Mooney, my brother, best friend and business partner passed away from heart complications.

Bruce was an expert in the Epagneul Breton breed and he was instrumental in producing outstanding dogs at L'Escarbot Kennels. Bruce was one of the founders of the French Brittany Gun Dog Association, now known as the Epagneul Breton Club of USA. Bruce had an eye for perfection in our breed. He studied the Epagneul Breton, getting a superior education from friends who were among the best breeders in France and also from legend and good friend of the breed David Follinsbee, who brought the true Epagneul Breton back to the USA in the mid 1970's, calling them the French Brittany Spaniel.

I would like to mention some of our friends in France that educated us on the breed we love. The honorable Christian Gunther, Didier Desprez, Pierre Terran, Pierre Williems, Robert and Marilyn Pottier, Herve Bourdon, Franck Pardo & France Beridot, Dominique Larrieu, Maryse Baudet, Gilles Pasty and Trainer Frederic Herbelin. Bruce spent countless hours talking about this wonderful breed. Bruce talked with delight about our many trips to France, a country he loved.

Bruce's goal from the beginning was to educate the people in the USA on the importance of seeing the whole dog. The importance of keeping the true type (conformation) which can be easily overlooked because of how difficult it is to produce the true Epagneul Breton. Hunting ability, temperament and conformation (cobby). Bruce had an eye second to none, spotting a true cobby dog.

Bruce was an avid pheasant hunter, an outstanding duck caller and excellent shot and fisherman. Bruce was a mental health counselor for thirty plus years.

I will miss the many conversations with him, telling me I need to stay the course and keep working on producing the true type. He was my mentor and best friend. I have many fond memories in the field hunting behind our outstanding dogs.

John Mooney, L'Escarbot Kennels



Bruce Mooney, John Mooney and Etoc de L'Escarbot in Escource, France, Fall Field Trial, October 19, 2012 after Etoc took a First Place Excellent

About the Rocky Mountain Cup Field Trial

The Rocky Mountain Cup is a traditional heritage field trial held on wild grounds of Central Montana. From the trial grounds on a clear day you can see two different mountain ranges, the Highwoods and Little Belts. You can expect to see mule deer, pronghorn, an assortment of duck species, gray partridge, sharptail grouse, ring necked pheasants, sandhill cranes, an assortment of song birds, badgers, skunks, hawks and eagles, coyotes and maybe a fox. The grounds are a mix of dry creek beds, planted, restored and native grounds and the occasional tree for shade.



It can be hot in late August but the day always opens cool in the 60's. Like anyplace, the weather is a gamble. Regardless of the weather, come prepared. Bring rain gear and condition for heat. Bring lots of water for you and the dog. Even in fifteen minutes you both will need it.

Some people attending the trial have been coming since the beginning. They know the grounds, the pitfalls and can offer advice to the new comer. Did you know too many birds can be a pitfall? This is not a liberated trial where a set number of birds are placed on the course for each dog. Wild trials offer birds where you find them. Just like hunting. This trial offers real life (in 15 minutes) experience for the fields you hunt. Take some time to read the rule book at <https://www.ukcdogs.com/pointing-dog-forms-rules>. It will help.

The trial organizers are proud of our hospitality and food. We use the Denton town hall as field trial headquarters. Breakfast and supper are served at the hall as well as information meetings and Saturday's award presentations. The food is exceptional. Breakfast offers rolls, sweet breads, egg bakes and more. Dinners are equally sumptuous with homemade pie and ice cream for dessert. Don't plan to lose weight.

There has been some discussion about nonresident hunting dates. In no way do the new regulations say that non residents cannot hunt beginning September 1st when the season opens. Here's what the new regulations regarding nonresidents says:

Nonresidents hunting on public lands and privately owned lands that are a part of a hunting access program begin hunting 10 days later than residents for all species except mountain grouse.

Lets break this down. As a nonresident you cannot hunt prairie grouse (sharptail, partridge or sage grouse) on state land, block management property or federal land. You CAN hunt on private land, just remember to ask permission. You can also hunt mountain grouse (ruffed, spruce, dusky grouse) on both public and private lands beginning September 1st.

If you don't want to hike up the mountains, there are many streams that boast exceptional fishing for different species of trout. It is worth a fishing license, especially if you come from a place where trout are stocked. Add a fly rod to the mix, it's truly exciting and maybe a once in a lifetime experience.

Are you interested in attending the trial? Visit the Big Sky website for all the details. You'll find the premium with all trial details, field trial entry form, and meal plan form.

<https://montanabreton.com/events-and-news/>

See you at the trial in August!

2026 Rocky Mountain Cup Field WILD Trial

August 29 and 30. 2026

Open to ALL POINTING DOG BREEDS

13 Reasons to Attend this Field Trial

- Outstanding vistas
- High number of bird contacts for your dog at the field trial
- Compete for the famed ***Rocky Mountain Cup***
- Go fish blue ribbon trout streams
- Upland game bird season starts September 1st
- Go hunt unique upland bird species
- Expand your lungs at higher elevations
- Unmatched hospitality
- Excellent and abundant food (don't plan to diet!)
- Meet new people and renew old friendships
- Win prizes at the dinner-raffle
- Compete for the famed ***Rocky Mountain Cup***
- Discover maple sticks at the local café (don't plan to diet!)

***Mark your calendars for
August 29 & 30!***

**For more information
www.montanabreton.com**



Photo Gallery



Ridge Henderson with Ziva. This dynamic duo competed at the Korthal's Griffin field trial in Milaca, MN June 13-14. Ziva received several placements in open events. Congratulations!



House guests don't get special treatment. Val on the right was visiting for the weekend and joined in on hold training with the resident hounds.

Photo provided by Sherry Niesar



Mike Johnson and Skye demonstrating the finer points of Dock Diving in the off season.

Photo provided by Mike Johnson

Share your photos with the readers of the Whoa Post. Email them to thewhoapost@gmail.com





Recipe: Stuffed Venison Cakes

from: AETN Arkansas Outdoors Cookbook

Ingredients:

1 lb. ground venison
 2 C soft break crumbs
 3 TBS onions, minced
 6 TBSP melted shortening
 1/2 TSP poultry seasoning
 2 TSP salt
 3 TBSP water
 1 egg well beaten
 1/8 TSP black pepper



Directions

Combine bread crumbs, onion, melted shortening, poultry seasoning and only 1 teaspoon of the salt. Add water and mix well. Start and set oven at 375 F. Combine ground venison and remaining 1 teaspoon salt, pepper and egg.

Instead of blending mixtures, fill bottom third of well greased muffin tin with crumb mixture, then a third with meat mixture and remaining third with crumb mixture. Bake at 375 F for 35 minutes.

Top with gravy, barbeque sauce, cheese,, vegetables or mash potatoes.



Share your recipes with the readers of the Whoa Post
 Email them to thewhoapost@gmail.com



The Big Sky Epagneul Breton Gun Dog Club is working to fulfill its mission to support the dog and conservation world with a Good Deed Fund. The purpose of the fund is to support the dog world, conservation, and United Kennel Club field trialing traditions.

Preference will be given but not limited to club members or those owning Epagneul Bretons, but all are eligible. This fund may distribute up to \$1000 per year with a two thirds majority vote of the Board of Directors with a quorum present. This fund is intended for those in need and is available year-round.

If you know of a worthy candidate or cause, contact a board member. Board members are found on the website at <https://montanabreton.com/contact/>

UKC Events

August 29th & 30th

Denton, MT

Big Sky Epagneul Breton Gun Dog Club

Type of Events: Wild, TAN

Species: Gray Partridge, Sharp-tailed Grouse, Ring-necked Pheasant

Open Braces, Open Solo, Gun Solo, TAN

Contact: Sherry Niesar, 701-527-3714 or
sniesar@outlook.com

November 14th & 15th

Bloomfield, IA

Epagneul Breton Club of Illinois

Wild & Liberated

Open Braces, Open Solo, Gun Solo, TAN/WRT Con-
tact: Suzanne LaFary, 309.231.8868 or
surladelavankennel@gmail.com



"Dogs are like humans, only without the flaws."

Unknown



**Madison River Anglers
Rest & Retreat**

Ric Haulenbeck, owner/operator

PO Box 569
Ennis, MT 59729
714-402-5344

ric33lbp@aol.com

The background of the advertisement is a photograph of a large, rustic wooden lodge with a dark roof and a chimney, situated in a grassy field. In the foreground, there is a smaller inset photograph of a person wearing a hat and a life vest, kneeling and fishing in a body of water.

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**

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Regional Events

July 10 - 12

Helmville, MT

BIG SKY NAVHDA

NA/GDT/UT

Contact: ANDY GOODOVER, (406) 539-5546

July 11 & 12

Wick's Kennel All Amateur NASTRA

All Amateur

Kindred, ND

DBL/DBL

Contact: John Wickenheiser, 701-715-0180

July 24 - 26

Whitehall, MT

MONTANA SHARPTAIL NAVHDA

NA/GDT/UT

Contact: KERRY O'CONNELL, (406) 930-2849

August 7 - 9

Helmville, MT

BIG SKY NAVHDA

NA/GDT/UT

Contact: RACHEL WILLARD, (970) 397-8229

August 14 - 16

Billings, MT

YELLOWSTONE NAVHDA

NA/GDT/UT

Contact: SARA BAIER, (406) 380-0250y

August 14 - 16

Tagus, ND

CENTRAL DAKOTA NAVHDA

NA/GDT/UT

Contact: KARA BRAYKO, (701) 339-8435

August 22 - 23

Erie, ND

RED RIVER VALLEY NAVDA

NA/GDT/UT

Contact: STEVEN BUCK, (701) 729-6483

August 22 - 23

Kindred, ND

RED RIVER VALLEY NAVHDA

NA/GDT/UT

Contact: STEVEN BUCK, (701) 729-6483

August 28 - 30

Whitehall, MT

MONTANA SHARPTAIL NAVHDA

NA/GDT/UT

Contact: ANNE ROBERTS, (541) 420-3662

September 5-7

NSTRA Endurance pre trial

Dickinson, ND

Format: Quad/Triple (4 fields, 3 days)

Trial Chair: Dean Goodall

Contact: 701-690-6671 | dagfb1@yahoo.com



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