

SOCAL NAVHDA

ON POINT

NEWSLETTER AUGUST 2016



MIKA

Irene Fradella

Avoiding Problems

Invitational Bound

Great Photos

Irene Fradella's NAVHDA Journey



Inside this Issue

Irene Fradella—

Page 2 ,3,4,5

Holding Bumper — Page 6

Training Rules— Page 7

*Avoiding Training Problems—
Pages 8*

Cliff Fleming Page 9

Jim McDonald Page 10,11

Gary Johnson Page 12,13

*Clint Lager
Page 14,18,19,22*

Photos Page 20,21

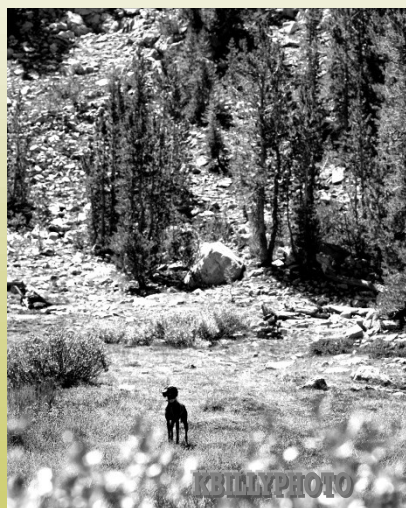
Scheduled Events Page 23

**"Ones best success
comes after their
greatest
disappointments."**

—Henry Ward Beecher

I have been training in the NAVHDA program for five years. My husband Rodge decided to get a German Shorthaired Pointer puppy to train for upland bird hunting. He then joined the SoCal Chapter of NAVHDA and trained our puppy Heidi for Natural Ability and Utility. After she got her Prize I Utility, he decided to breed her. On delivery day she had just one puppy weighting six ounces. We named him Falco. Falco became the center of my universe from the moment he was born watching him grow and playing with Heidi gaining weight each day. Rodge had the male pick of the litter sold to a chapter member before Falco was born. There was some discussion as I wanted to keep Falco. Rodge agreed that I could keep him if I trained him and tested him in the NAVHDA program. I readily agreed, and so my dog training journey began. I had been to a few training days with Rodge and Heidi but had little idea on how to get started. Falco and I were clueless as they say, but I had done some pre-training at home in the back yard.

CONTINUED NEXT PAGE





When Falco finished his vaccination series I took him to the park and to our cabin in the high desert where I would let him run out on the long line, blow the whistle and change direction. This taught him to quarter in front of me and come back to the whistle. Falco was smart and caught on quickly. On to Prado Dog Park and his first official training day.

At the time other chapter members, Kim Gentner and Jon Auer also had puppies that were born within a few days of Falco, so we had other NA dogs to train with. Falco loved the field work and tracked very well. When it came to the water, he put on the breaks. Pat Beaver loaned me her waders and I had them for seven months. We overcame his difficulties with the water work and by the Natural Ability test day he did very well with a score of four in the water.

On test day Rodge said "Just go out there and have fun with your dog". I kept that in my head all day, and really isn't that what it's all about? Having fun with your dog? The field and water work went very well. Falco brought tears to my eyes when he retrieved a flushed bird to hand. The track didn't go well that day and Falco came away with an NA Prize III. We tested NA again for a 112, Prize I.

Falco and I trained and tested twice in utility even though we knew we were not ready for the test. My husband and training mentor Rodge insisted that we test for the experience. We received a Prize III in one UT test and a no prize in the next UT test one week later. "Well next year" I said. "Let's go hunting"! I had two wonderful hunting seasons with Falco. We hunted pheasant, quail and dove. He could mark very well and would always bring the bird to me, even if I wasn't the shooter. We had so much fun together we were really a team. One month before his third birthday my heart was broken, I lost my best friend to a rare kidney disease.....

CONTINUED NEXT PAGE



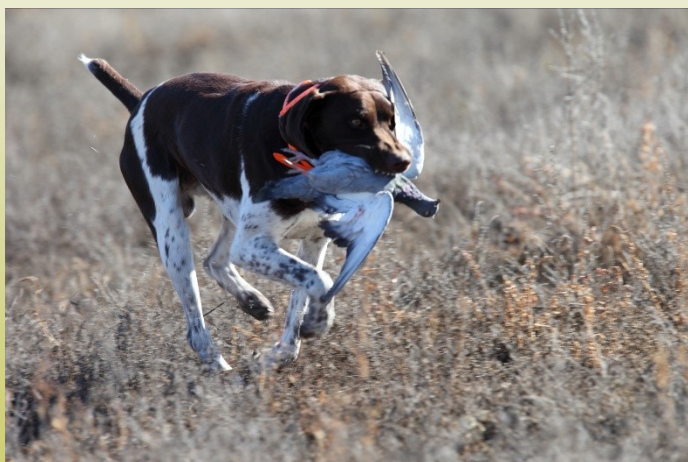
When we decided we wanted and needed another puppy we had male pick of the litter from Gabby Awbrey's Great Oaks litter which was coming up. On my third trip down to Ramona to see the puppies, Great Oaks Skylar was my pick and I was his pick. I think he had his eye on me as I did on him.

I learned a lot training Falco and I was ready to put my experience to work on my new puppy. Once Skylar became adjusted to his new home, I started his training. Sit, stay, whoa and "the down", dragging hot dogs and bird wings in the back yard until I could take him out of the yard (after his vaccination program). Then the long line in the park and open space in the high desert and Prado Dog Park. We started the water work right away at Prado. Skylar swam behind the Jack Johnson (the chapter boat) as I rowed all around the pond. As long as I was in the boat he had no qualms about going into the water, but go in after a bumper? Oh no, not again! Skylar was great in the field, could track very well, no problem there. It didn't take long and by test day, we had it knocked. Gabby, the breeder was one of the judges on test day. Jim Carpenter one of the other judges asked me to throw the bumper three times. Skylar went right in. Then Gabby said, "I want to see that one more time Irene". No problem, Skylar went right in again. We went home with a Prize I, whew!

With NA out of the way, we began training for utility. Utility training is more challenging but it is also more interesting. Especially if you have some experience. You know in advance what you need to be able to teach your dog. Now those are key words, *what you need to be able to teach your dog*. You as a trainer need to know the material so you can teach (or more accurately) *figure out how to teach your dog*. Factor in your teaching ability. Are you able to teach the drills, walk at heel through the healing steaks, steady by the blind, retrieve of duck, the drag, steady to flush, wing and shot? Also, how to fix the training problems? How do I get my dog to be quiet in the blind? In the duck search if my dog retrieves a duck before ten minutes or comes out of the water without one, can I resend him without a shot? We don't get a master's degree and get a job teaching dogs how to train for natural ability and utility. I learned a long time ago from a Spanish teacher. Repetition is the key to learning (for you as the trainer and your dog). Thank you Mrs. Tilden. I remind myself that almost every day.

There are many more women in our chapter now than there were a few years ago. More women are joining NAVHDA every month. Long time members Erika Dennis and Pat Beaver came home from the Invitational with Versatile Champions, as did many of our male chapter members. We are so proud when a member gets the VC title. We all inspire each other. Ellen Kincaid never gave up on her Spinone, Gelati. I was at the test when she finally got her Prize I Utility. That inspired me to keep at it. As my mother used to say, "Never give up, never quit".

CONTINUED NEXT PAGE



Irene Fradella's NAVHDA Journey

In my five years in NAVHDA I have attended and volunteered at many tests. I learned a lot in the process. You can learn from observing other handlers and their dogs. It helps you to anticipate problems that may arise in a test. Heat, field conditions, handler errors, etc. Oops! Did I say handler errors? We as trainer/handlers can make mistakes that affect our dogs scores in the test. That is why it is beneficial to attend and volunteer at NAVHDA tests. *Observe and learn.*

When a problem arises during a training session I come away trying to figure out how to solve it. Does my dog understand what I expect of him? If not, how do I figure out how to teach him what I expect? I never come away from a training session that I don't learn something. Whether it's chatting with other chapter members about a problem, discussing it with Rodge or just trying to figure out how to better communicate with my dog. I am no training genius that's for sure and I have much less experience than many of the other chapter members. But I have a dog that loves to train so I am always glad to "Just go out and have fun with my dog".

I have said this before when someone asks when am I going to test Skylar in utility. My answer is, "When he knows the material and is mature enough to take the test". In addition, when I as a handler don't make any mistakes. Then I hope all the stars will align and we will come home with a Prize. See you all out there training.

Irene Fradella





Holding a bumper correctly (in the middle) seems like an unimportant task. However, you should try and get your dog to carry the bumper in the middle to help him when hunting. Dogs that carry bumpers at the end or by the rope have trouble finding the balance point when carrying game. Birds will be carried or dragged by the neck or head which not only is highly inefficient but may cause your dog to become frustrated and want to quit as he continually steps on the bird he is retrieving. If you force fetch your dog this problem should be totally worked out on the table. This will often happen when learning the "hold" command. For those of you who are not force fetching, try and remove the bumper that is carried incorrectly and replace it with his mouth in the middle. Once replaced have him hold for a short time before removing or have him walk at "heel" for a short distance with it in his mouth. Your dog will soon learn there is a balance point to all objects and finding that makes carrying them easier. Try not to bring stress to your dog over this. After all they just made a good retrieve! Simply place it in correctly and let them recognize on their own that their may be a better way. Dogs that have learned this will pick up a duck or goose and try a couple positions with the bird before settling into what feels good ("balanced"). Finding the balance point on the elk below? You are actually sending your dog to retrieve **elk???** *Good luck!!!*



kbillyphoto

Training Days Guidelines & Procedures

- (1) Please keep your dog under control at all times, particularly when he/she is not working on a drill.
- (2) Everyone in the field must wear blaze orange hat, t-shirt or vest. **Members holding a gun in the field must have completed a hunter safety class or have a hunting license.**
- (3) Children are to be supervised and remain in the designated parking area at all times.
- (4) No alcohol on premises.
- (5) "Boat Safety", persons under 12 years of age must wear a life jacket when in the boat.

SOCAL NAVHDA OFFICERS

President Jim McDonald
 jimmymac555@sbcglobal.net
 Vice President Rodge Fradella
 delta@tstonramp.com
 Secretary Irene Fradella
 delta@tstonramp.com
 Treasurer Linda Mitchel

 Director of Publications Gary Johnson
 760 559 3173 gary_johnson@busdk12.com

Training Day Coordinators

Jon Vesely
 562 335 3053 jonat4kix@verizon.net
 Tim Shepard
 Jon Auer



Avoiding Problems with your Pointing Dog

by Gary Johnson

Obviously many things can and will go wrong when you are training your dog. One of the more difficult problems is gun shyness. Be very careful about allowing your dog to be near loud noises such as gunshots without taking some time to prepare your dog or pup for that moment. There are many schools of thought on dealing with this topic. Gundog Supply has some good info you could look at. In general, you should use a friend to help you as it will be hard to pay attention to your pup while firing the gun. Have the friend go out 100-150 yards with a small caliber gun like a .22 or 410 shotgun. Then get your pup to chase a clipped wing pigeon. When you lift your hat your friend fires the gun. Make sure your dog is excitedly chasing the bird when you have him fire. Have him walk 25 yards closer and repeat until he is 25 yards or so away. The next time use a 20 gauge and then another time a 12 gauge. If you see any fear or anxiety have the shooter discontinue and try the drill from farther away a couple weeks later. Don't rush the process. You want to end this with a 12 gauge in your hand shooting while standing next to your dog. If it takes a few extra sessions . . .so be it . . .you can hunt the rest of your dogs life.

Blinking is purposefully avoiding gamebirds. If you see this happen be aware that it is a very serious situation that possibly you have created. Leaving the scent cone, getting soft on point and flagging may be a signal that a dog may begin blinking soon. Usually you the trainer have done something unknowingly that is causing the dog to ignore their instincts created over a couple hundred years of breeding. Somehow, the dog is associating something negative with finding birds. It does not take many repetitions for this to stick. Sometimes people are using their e-collar to correct a dog that is creeping on point. **Be very hesitant to use your e-collar while a dog is scenting birds.** You want all associations with birds to be positive. You want them "bird crazy" . . .with control. **Never correct a dog if it does not understand what behavior caused them to be corrected.** It really is not about what you the human perceives but rather what your dog perceives is happening. **Try to look at it from the dogs point of view.** NAVHDA encourages owners to let their pups chase some birds when they are young. This is really to try and ensure that they are "birdy" and not more concerned about obedience than birds. Once they are "birdy" you begin to teach them to hold point, not creep and remain staunch as they wait for you. Try and keep your dog having a positive attitude when working birds. If you see the tail tucked consider how you are training. You want your dogs tail to be up and alert showing confidence, happiness and eagerness when seeking game. I see many people strongly command "whoa" when their dog points. This is a very strong command similar to telling a child "no". What child likes to be told no? That's right they prefer the word "go". When pointing or backing be careful with the word "whoa". Let the bird tell the dog to stop. Use launchers. If the dog creeps launch the bird and let it fly away. Do not say anything. The bird flying away just taught the lesson. Keep your dog enthused about finding birds. This is the best thing you can do to prevent blinking. Try to keep your mouth shut and leave the OBEDIENCE at home. Bird crazy dogs is what we are looking for. If you are a parent try and remember taking the kids to Disneyland. If the kids are to have a truly great time there one must kind of just "let them go". Watch from a distance or off to the side. The kids will quickly naturally hop in line and wait their turn. Be available for food, beverages, restroom, etc. Watch the parent that tries to micromanage. They are miserable, as are the kids. Sometimes we need to just let go and have a little trust it will all work out. Your young dog training to hunt birds is a similar situation. Keep it fun. Make it their Disneyland. You will see many potential problems effortlessly work out. Your dog loves being with you. Let them love hunting, too!!

Competing in Iowa



Cliff Fleming is pictured above left. He and his dog Belle qualified for the Invitational test in Searsboro, Iowa. Cliff is from Iowa and looks forward to visiting family while back in home country. Cliff is the president of Inland Empire NAVHDA and also a member of SOCAL NAVHDA. Cliff is planning on sharing his journey with Belle to the Invitational and we look forward to reading about it in next month's issue. We will also have several photos of Belle at that time. Belle is the mother of several great young dog's in our area. Many chapters had no members qualify for the Invitational. We can be proud to have qualified 7 different members for the Invitational Test. **Keep up the great work!** Your dogs love your commitment. You will love owning and hunting with such a highly trained dog. Learn from another member and **pay it forward by sharing your knowledge with another.**



Competing in Iowa



Our Latest Adventure

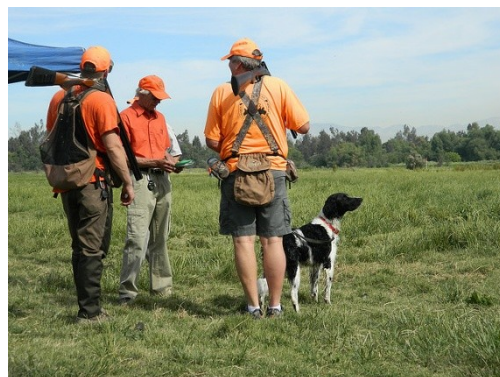
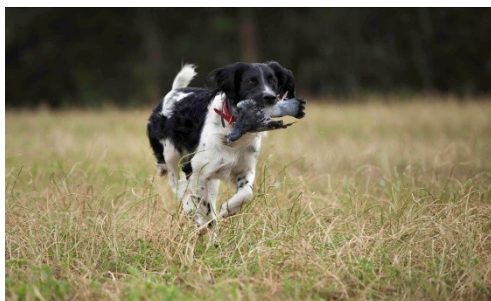
Two years ago Ryder and I went to Iowa to attempt getting a VC title. Everything went as planned except for the blind retrieve. He refused to go. When we got home we attempted to enter a UT test. We were on stand-by for 3 tests but to no avail. Spring of 2015 arrived and we achieved our second Prize 1 Utility Test. Now, just in case we wanted to make another trip to the Invitational we were qualified.

As the year progressed, I was feeling less and less like making the trip. There is a lot of time and hard work that goes into getting yourself and your four legged friend ready for the Invitational. In December of last year we had a terrible tragedy in our club. Out of that tragedy and to the memory of our good friend Guido, we decided to re-dedicate ourselves to achieving the VC title.

Over this last year many of you in the club, have helped Ryder and I prepare for our trip. I want to thank all of you that helped us get to where we are and I hope we make the club and all of you proud. We have four members of our club heading out to Iowa, wish us luck and soon we will be home with more VC titles for our club.

Jim and Ryder

CONTINUED NEXT PAGE



Jim McDonald & Ryder: reprint from August 2014

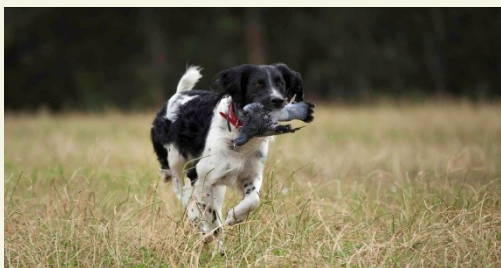
Growing up my family target shot with bows and rifles, never hunting other than shooting a few birds with my BB-gun. I had a good friend at work that was constantly talking about deer hunting. When I hit 50 and had my mid life crisis, **I told my wife; " I can get a girl friend, sports car or take up hunting. "** I already owned a bow and several guns so hunting it was. At the time I thought this would be the cheaper way to go but boy did I have a lot to learn.

I started out deer hunting and wanted to share the experience with my son. After his hunter safety course I heard of a Junior Pheasant Hunt in San Diego so we applied and he was accepted, so when the date came, off we went. Watching those dogs work the field and **seeing my son get a couple of birds I was hooked**, I wanted to get a dog.

I talked with my wife about it, she had been saying she wanted another dog and I told her about the GSP's that I had seen. She looked them up and in the processes found the Long Hair Pointer, she has a soft spot for long hair. **Then by accident she found the Large Munsterlander.** Seeing the picture online and reading about them, we talked it over and decided this was going to be our next dog. The only breeder we could find at the time was in Oregon. When contacted he was a little apprehensive, these dogs were only sold to hunters and I had yet to take a shot at a bird. With a little persistence, this being the kennel's last litter, them having 13 puppies to place, and **agreeing to run him in a NA test I won him over.** So, I bought my first working/hunting dog. I think most people that get a bird dog have hunted or been exposed to them before getting one, **I was in for an eye opening ride.**

Again my wife went online and **found a trainer near us, Guido Dei. I gave Guido a call** and asked, " How much to train my dog?". Guido replied " Nothing". I just had to join the club and show up at Prado. The next month is all a blur; **I had help from so many members of the club**, every time I showed up. We went from a dog with no manners, who did not point or track and in just over a month, Ryder was doing it all. Then Thursday before the test we go for a run and he gets a foxtail up the nose and needs surgery. Despite the time line and surgery Ryder managed to get a 112 prize 1. What a feeling to go from a clueless rookie team to a clueless prize 1 team in a month. This never could have happened without the support of so many of our club members.

Our training continued, and eventually passed the UTILITY TEST with a prize 1! Now we had the question of going to the Invitational, or not. This test is hundreds of miles away and the commitment to more training is large. We finally made the commitment and on September 13th in Searsboro IA, we will attend the INVITATIONAL TEST. Ryder and I will see how prepared we are. **It is hard to believe in 2 ½ years the clueless dog handler and his oddball black and white dog have made it to the Invitational.** I wish to thank everyone who helped Ryder and me get to this point and hope to make you all proud and come home with that elusive VC title.



Competing in Iowa



Having been the newsletter editor the last two years I have always requested that people going to the Invitational write some thoughts about their NAVHDA journey for others to read and maybe garner some tips, motivation and hope. Pictured above left, is Griffin and I as new NAVHDA members. I would show up at the monthly training day and Griffin would eagerly pull me around the parking lot as I tried not to get rope-burn on my hands as he would try to pull away and get into the bird-field to chase whatever may be flying or hiding. My perspective with SOCAL NAVHDA is that it has been an exciting journey. As a novice handler I had zero knowledge but had faith that I had a really good dog. Many training days I would sit by the side patiently waiting for some miraculous help to appear. It seemed that many times Rodge & Irene Fradella took me in the field to show me how to plant the one or two birds I had bought and helped me guide Griffin through the process. Even though **it was frustrating** to know that many of the training days were spent with long periods **waiting to learn how to train**, I noticed that both of **my dogs (Mojo and Griffin) were making steady progress**. They were not only learning to hunt and how to work in partnership with me while hunting but were also becoming much better "citizens" around the house. This was definitely a win-win situation. When Griffin was about a year old I noticed that I was frequently parked next to the same person at training day and he had a GSP about the same age. This was Ralph Martinez and his dog Tori. We both tired of waiting our turn in the training fields and began driving to different fields to train and then return to the NAVHDA POND for lunch. We had now both learned enough training skills where this was efficient and seemed very effective. After our NA tests we continued this practice getting ready for the UT. The UT test is much more challenging so we had to find more time to train as once a month certainly wasn't enough. Both of our dogs improved immensely. Tori received a prize 1 and Ralph began training for last years invitational (They passed!!!). Griffin's duck search was non-existent so we did not pass this UT test. We did not pass the duck search on the second go round either, but he did much better. Searching for 6 minutes before returning to me and sitting at heel. Eventually Griffin learned to love duck searching and sometimes now goes into the reeds to catch live ducks just for fun. When it's not duck season and he comes trotting towards me from the reeds with a duck in his mouth this leaves me with a slight dilemma. Is this a "training" duck or a "wild" duck? Fortunately Griffin has a soft bite and never damages these ducks and we can tell him "good boy" and place Mr. Duck back in his natural habitat. Once the duck search was mastered the UT Test became much more manageable. Steadiness and Retrieving to hand are the other big components of this test.

CONTINUED NEXT PAGE

Competing in Iowa

As Ralph was now training for the Invitational I had to find some new training partners. Training with Kevin Billy and Clint Lager became a regular weekend event. We all saw our dogs improve. Kevin's "Mika" won the AKC Senior Hunt title and a Grand Champion show title. Clint and "Duke" also qualified for the NAVHDA Invitational and almost finished the Master Hunt title and a Field Trial Championship. Along the way good friendships were formed with all three of these individuals. This has lead to us competing in other events around the state and hunting together. **It's a journey.** We have been diligently preparing for the Invitational test for several months. Sometimes it feels like we are completely ready and shortly after it feels like we will be "lucky" to pass. The blind retrieve (100 yard water crossing) and the field work concern me the most. They will have more chukar in the field than we have ever experienced and frequently we are training with pigeons as they are most available. Training for chukar with pigeons is not the best training method. Many new skills must be learned to compete effectively at the Invitational. This continual learning process has brought Griffin and I **closer than we have ever been.** Whether we pass or not, **this alone has been worth the time and sacrifice.**

We are very fortunate to train with SOCAL NAVHDA at Prado. Only nine dogs west of the Rocky Mountains qualified for the Invitational this year and seven of them are members of SOCAL NAVHDA or train at Prado. Matt Moore & Mike Bridges qualified but chose not to go to the Invitational. We have several members or friends of SOCAL NAVHDA that have successfully competed and/won at the Invitational. Some of these are: Juan and Carlos Hernandez, Gabby Awbrey, Ralph Martinez, Pat Beaver, Mike Shepherd, Brett Marek and of course Guido Dei. I am thankful for their help and advice when asked. These people have always been very willing to share their knowledge to help myself and others. Access to birds is highly important when trying to get your dog to achieve a new level of performance. Jon Vesely and Ty Mitchell have been terrific in helping us have access to birds. Griffin is a very talented GSP who has performed well in many hunt tests. He has also had some bad days and failed miserably. It's important to **remember that your dog is almost always trying to please you with their performance.** Sometimes they get a little selfish but most of the time when mistakes are made it's just that they are so eager to please you they cannot wait to run out and grab the bird. Their adrenaline is pumping and they lose some control. As handlers we make our share of mistakes too. Thankfully no one zaps me with the e-collar every time I forget where the tip-up is at or when I forget to bring water into the field. We now have another GSP, *Electricblues Hitailyn Boogie*. "Boogie", is 15 months old and did the NA test in the spring. When we get back from Iowa we will be anxious for a break but will not wait too long to: (A) go hunting and (B) begin working on Boogie's steadiness to wing shot and fall so that we can compete in AKC field trials and be ready for the UT test in the spring. Griffin will hunt and run some field trials. **Griffin and I would like to thank all that have helped us along the way. It has been great fun. A special thank you to my wife Whitney for being highly tolerant of the many training and hunting days,** a freezer filled with training birds and the regular presence of chukar and pigeons in cages on our patio!!! I would like to think this is not the end of our journey but simply an end to the beginning for Griffin and I. Thanks to the many have helped volunteer at training days and tests. It's fun at training days now to remember that only a couple years ago we were the eager eyed new NAVHDA member. **Favorite training tip:** Do not give a command you cannot or will not enforce. **Most important part of training** that helped us be successful in NAVHDA or AKC testing: **Force Fetch.**

Enjoy your journey!



Competing in Iowa



I am sitting back drinking a beer and thinking "In a few days my dog and I are headed to the prestigious NAVHDA Invitational". "Wow!" is my first thought and then "I should get another beer to celebrate!" This is big! Three years ago my wife and I decided it was time to get another dog. Naturally I thought I would get a Black Labrador being a waterfowl hunter and because I grew up hunting pheasants with Black Labs in the mid-west. The more I thought about it the less a Labrador would meet my hunting needs, home life, or recreational activity levels. After reading about so many breeds I decided a Hungarian Vizsla would be the right dog for me and my family. Growing up our hunting dogs were 99% house dogs and we relied on their prey drive to help find and flush pheasants for us. Most of the time the dogs would flush birds early and add chaos to our hunt but they were still fun to have around. I have always loved a dog's company. Also, during waterfowl season I have shared duck blinds with friends and their professionally trained dogs. Those days in the blind were also filled with chaos, flared birds, and neighboring blinds yelling "Get your dog!" From these experiences I knew that I wanted a dog that would hunt "with me" and "for me". Keep in mind I have not owned or trained my own hunting dog and I was not sure how to achieve success. Ready for a journey, I started contacting breeders. I spoke with about 10 breeders and I found they were not right for me and some told me I was not right for them. One of the show focused breeders said her dogs would not be a good fit for me put me in touch with Warren Eizman (Firestorm Bird Dogs, Anza, CA). At first I was a bit miffed that she didn't want me to own one of her show dogs but looking back this was the best thing she could have done for me. I called Warren and found he was passionate about his dog program and the success his breeding's have achieved in AKC Field Trial and agility events. It just so happened he had a litter of 5 week old pups and he invited me to come take a look. After spending time with the pups I realized I couldn't pick one of these because I hadn't spent enough time with them.

CONTINUED PAGE 18

Competing in Iowa



Michael Rizzo and his Small Munsterlander "Milo" will travel to Iowa to compete at the NAVHDA INVITATIONAL. They will be competing in 4 events and hope to achieve the title of Versatile Champion, NAVHDA'S highest prize. Milo is almost 4 years old and has competed in the U.T. Test twice. The first time Milo had a perfect score in every event except the duck search where he received a "3". You must receive a "4" in duck search to qualify for the Invitational. The following year Milo and Michael competed in the Utility Test again and had a perfect score (4) in every event qualifying to compete at the National Invitational. We hope Milo has a terrific performance in Iowa.



kbillyphoto

SOCAL NAVHDA



**WHERE MEMBERS
TEACH OTHERS
HOW TO TRAIN
THEIR BIRDDOG**

SOCAL NAVHDA MEMBER BENEFITS

1. Receive Monthly newsletter from February to October.
2. Have your unlimited webpage site within the www.Socalnavhda.com website for 10.00\$/year.
3. Access to the Members Forum in the Chapter Website Password: "best dogs" with a space between the two words.
4. Choose a trainer mentor out of a list of professional and very experienced trainers.
5. Participate in a monthly training day.
6. Be first in line to enroll your dog in the Chapter's NAVHDA Tests before all other NAVHDA national members.
7. Have access to the SoCal. NAVHDA Trailer packed with versatile hunting dog training supplies for \$20.00 key deposit, refundable if you'll leave the chapter.
8. SoCal. NAVHDA members are covered by NAVHDA liability insurance at the Chapter's sanctioned events.

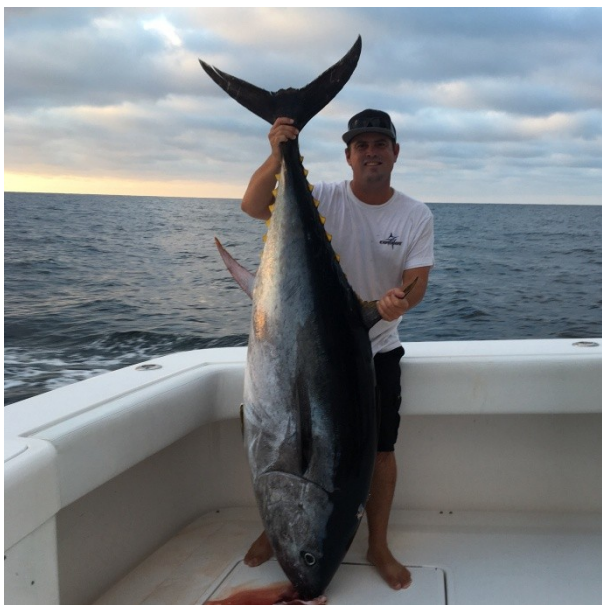
NAVHDA SPONSORS





Many NAVHDA chapters have trouble finding good places to train. Above is one of the many nice fields we have to train in at Prado. You are welcome to use any of these fields. Some prefer the alfalfa fields as they are much less likely to have foxtails. Many of these fields have water nearby. If it is a hot day simply take your dog to a pond to cool down. Plan on practicing 2 or 3 things when you go to Prado. This will guarantee you don't forget your dogs weak areas and ensures that your dog will do at least one thing they LOVE!!

Kevin Billy takes most of the photos in this publication. These are photos of his neighbor and brother on a couple recent fishing trips off the coast of Southern California. He sent these in to show what his friends were doing while he was training at Prado. Never have I experienced this level of fishing success. In fact, I called Kevin to see if the photos were doctored. The fish on the left is 125 lbs and the one on the right is over 200.



CONTINUED FROM PAGE 14

At that point Warren reminded me that he had 2 day old puppies in another room and we could go see the puppies. After spending time with the dam and the pups I knew this was the litter I would choose my pup from. For the next 7 weeks I traveled 2 hours each way to spend time with pups. We spent time playing with bottles, shoes, dog toys, watching TV, and of course pigeons, quail, and Chukar. At 8 weeks I took my favorite pup home and I named him Firestorm Pacific "Duke". This is when the journey really began.

I don't believe my wife or I knew how our free time would change but I knew there would be lots of time spent with the dog. My wife and I have been together for 25 great years and have 3 kids. My oldest has successfully flown the nest to enjoy his adult life, another is a senior in college, and one is still at home finishing high school. My wife, Stacey, jokes that Duke is my "replacement child". I must say she spoils Duke like he was a child. He gets to share snacks all day, lays at her feet, whines for more snacks, and she talks to him like his is a newborn child. Needless to say my wife has been a huge supporter of the time I spend on this hobby and tries to keep me in check. Her support means the world to me and I truly love her for helping me enjoy my new found hobby. She is without a doubt a huge part of the success we see with Duke.

From the beginning I expressed to my wife I wanted this pup to be a well-rounded hunting dog but couldn't find anyone in my circle of hunting friends that shared the same desire for a Versatile hunting dog. Most of my friends had professionally trained waterfowl dogs and the newly introduced Vizsla owners I spoke with only trained field work. I shared my thoughts with Warren Eizman and he mentioned I should look into NAVHDA . I should contact his long-time friend David Awbrey.

CONTINUED NEXT PAGE



Challenges are what
Makes Life Interesting
Overcoming them
Is What Makes Life
Meaningful

Competing in Iowa

I also found the NAVHDA.org site and discovered SoCal NAVHDA was having their Fall Test on one of the days I was going to the Oranco Bowman's Archery Range in Chino. That day I ventured for the first time to Prado Recreational Dog Park. I found the testing area and was greeted by Pat Beaver who I had spoken with over the phone a couple of times. She quickly introduced me to several club members. I sat and watched some of the field work and after watching a few dogs work the field I was impressed by the handlers and dogs. I was also introduced to other colorful personalities like Guido Dei, Rodge & Irene Fradella, Jon Vesely, Jon Auer, Carlos & Juan Hernandez, Gabriel Awbrey, Chris Gentner, and many others. At one point Pat called me off to the side and handed me a freshly shot Chukar and said go work with your puppy. These truly made me feel welcomed and left an impression on me. As I went to work with Duke I spoke with a man that was getting ready to run his dog in the UT field test. He was excited to talk about his dog, what he had achieved with his young dog, and how much training advice he had received from other NAVHDA members. I recall he was quite nervous and I felt he was genuinely interested in sharing his experience and knowledge. This man was Gary Johnson and little did I know what a positive impact he would make on our future training. I went away from this day knowing this group of like-minded people was something I wanted to be a part of.

Over the next several months I attended many of the training days and continued to build relationships with many members. I found myself training most often with Gary Johnson and his GSPs and Kevin Billy who also has a Vizsla. The three of us spent countless days at Prado & Raahauge's training our dogs, pushing each other to train more, and share ideas. I have also spent many days with Ty Mitchell, Ralph Martinez, Jim McDonald, Irene & Rodge Fradella, Pat Beaver, Cliff Fleming, Tim Shepard, Guido Dei, Jon Auer, Chris Gentner, and so many others. With the countless hours of training Duke, found success in his AKC hunt testing by earning his Junior Hunter, Senior Hunter, and 4 of 5 passes on his Master Hunter Title.

CONTINUED PAGE 22

SOCAL NAVHDA members at AKC Hunt test

Clint Lager, Kevin Billy, Gary Johnson and Ty Mitchel and DUKE, MIKA, GRIFFIN, MOJO, ROY





New SOCAL NAVHDA member Jamie Walton trains her young dog Sochi to be steady while pointing birds. Jamie is making eye contact with her dog and giving a hand signal reminding her dog not to move as she approaches the bird. Notice a check-cord beneath the dog. If you have a young dog it is a good idea to train with the check cord attached as that allows you to slow or stop the dog if they become unresponsive to your commands. Do not allow the dog to get sloppy during bird work. It will become a habit. Sometimes it is helpful to have a training partner available to assist if your dog wants to break point early or chase the flushed bird. Jamie has a shotgun with her so she probably is working the dog to be steady to shot. One of the best parts of NAVHDA is meeting like minded people and training together. Say hello to someone new at a training day and you may find someone new to train with.





kbillyphoto

Kevin and Staci Billy's Mika retrieves a bumper while exercising at one of Southern California's beaches. Below Mika contemplates what it would be like to do a duck search in the Pacific Ocean. She probably will conclude that the NAVHDA Pond at Prado looks pretty simple in comparison. Mika loves to retrieve, however, does not always show the same enthusiasm when hunting. This is one of the challenges of training your dog. Sometimes you know they will love doing something. However, they have not discovered this passion yet.



kbillyphoto

Competing in Iowa

Several of these AKC events were also attended by Gary, Kevin, and Ty which made the training days we shared even more special. Ty, Gary, and I have also competed in the same AKC Field Trial events which we all have a passion for. To date Duke has earned 6 points towards his Field Champion Title and 5 points towards his Amateur Field Champion Title. Duke also earned a Prize One in his NAVHDA NA & UT tests and we are on our way to the Invitational. There is absolutely no doubt that I attribute a great deal of Duke's success to having committed training partners. The relationships I have built in NAVHDA and the AKC organizations have made all the difference in training and the successes we have achieved. I can't thank everyone that I have trained with enough for sharing their time with me.

Duke & I have trained primarily with Gary Johnson (Griffin) and Cliff Fleming (Belle) over the past couple months focusing on the Invitational test scenarios. On a few occasions we even met up with Jim McDonald (Ryder) for some field work. I know Duke and I have benefited from the training sessions and I have seen all the dogs improve and overcome less than stellar performances. I think the best part of our training sessions is that we are all so committed to the common goal of improving our dogs and enjoying the camaraderie. We shared ideas, failures, successes, and pushed each other to get out and train. I would say we even have picked each other up when our dogs were not cooperating and one of us was frustrated scratching our head for answers. The invitational means even more when you have good friends testing with the same goal in mind. On September 18th, 2016 Duke & I will be tested again at the NAVHDA Invitational. The journey up to this point has been memorable and life changing to say the least. Whatever the outcome, I will have some amazing memories and good friends to share them with.



SCHEDULED EVENTS

September 11—Training Day at Prado

Training days: 7:30—8:00 Set- Up & Air out dogs

8:00 Gather to hear days plan

8:30—1:00 Training

1:30 Help put away tables, EZ UP, etc

