

# *The Gun Dog Supreme*

NEWS BULLETIN of the WIREHAISED POINTING GRIFFON CLUB OF AMERICA  
EDUCATION & RESEARCH FOUNDATION

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## LETTER FROM THE EDITOR

Greetings:

Hey! It's springtime! Know how I know? Just picked up the first wood tick of the year. Time to get out the Frontline pronto!

The April issue includes material from around the club. Joan Bailey provides a detailed book review. Larry Semmens joined the editorial team this year, and he's already making some great contributions, including an article on chukar hunting and a gear review on the Garmin GPS collar.

Several club members joined in to give the WPGCA a real presence at Pheasant Fest 2012. Thanks everyone for a job well done! For all you readers, the 2013 event will be in Minneapolis, February 15-17, so join in if you can.

Ted Coon reminds us that griffons can fish too! Join us at the Spring Heartland Test and you just might win a fishing trip with Ted and his dog Buck. In the meanwhile, I hope that you enjoy springtime with your griffon.

*Rem DeJong*

## **On the Cover . . .**

Spring training is underway. Mike Chlapaty and **Flapjack Frankie of Dutchman's Hollow** work on developing "Jack"s" tracking and retrieving skills at a monthly training event near Marshall Michigan.

Cover photo by Rem DeJong

## EDITORS

Rem DeJong  
John Pitlo  
Larry Semmens

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## Steep Country—Strong Birds: The Call of the Chukar

by  
Larry Semmens



### **Way to go Boss! You finally hit one!**

Sometimes it's definitely a good thing that griffons don't talk. A lot of shells were expended before **Aniak of Wolf Fork Canyon** got to make this retrieve.

Photo by Larry Semmens

The first quarter mile of the best chukar hunts often involve a quad-burning, lung-searing, heart-pounding climb up a narrow trail on the side of a mountain studded with sagebrush and lava rock. Time and again the first birds appear when it seems like another step could produce the big one, but what a way to go! Missing these first birds is the norm for me and even the really good chukar hunters miss as often as not on these birds that seem to be the advanced guard of the coveys above. They often flush wild with little warning; surprise is just one of their advantages. "Well ok then, game on, catch me if you can!" they seem to say as they glide around the next rocky point across

the canyon. Once safely away, they land near the rocks and begin their distinctive chuk chuk chukerrrr calls, letting everyone on the mountain know that play number one from the chukar handbook was successfully executed by covey one. The hunters note the landing zone to possibly check out on the way down, pick up their empties and continue the march uphill. Immediately chasing those birds would result only in empty water bottles and tired dogs because once they are on to you, a covey of chukars will usually just run uphill and flush out of range.

Nevada, Idaho and Oregon produce excellent chukar populations in the arid high desert terrain that is prevalent over much of the country between the Cascade and Rocky Mountain ranges. Chukar partridge were introduced in the United States as early as 1893 from their native Middle Eastern countries, many with “-stan” in the name. After 50 years figuring out that these birds do best in habitats similar to where they came from, successful introductions began happening in the western States. The first hunting season was in Nevada in the late 1950’s and by the late 1970’s most of the western states had huntable wild populations. Once established they have proven to be hardy birds able to withstand all but the toughest winters and hot summers as long as there is water available. Populations fluctuate significantly due primarily to spring weather. Cold, wet spring weather is hard on chicks and the bugs they depend on, but an ideal spring will produce broods of 10 to 15 chicks allowing populations to recover quickly from previous lows. Avid chukar hunters have reported finding up to 15 coveys a day, each covey containing five to twenty or more birds. The most I have ever seen is 9 coveys in an afternoon hunt, more on this later.

Wirehaired Pointing Griffons are ideal dogs for chukar hunting. The country is relatively open, with sagebrush and short grass vegetation. A dog that gets out up to a couple hundred yards is often in sight, but not always. Birds can be found almost anywhere. Many times they are just over the next ridge. The dog will either track the birds or catch the scent coming over the top. One of the thrills of hunting these birds is that you can see your dog get birdy above you, track a short way, then freeze into a beautiful point. Of course then you have to shift gears and head uphill to get there before the covey gets nervous and heads out. For me, this means tired legs, heavy breathing and a maxed-out heart rate by the time I reach the dog. Thank goodness for adrenaline! The birds are often downhill on the other side of the ridge. They generally hold well, allowing the hunter to get within 30 yards. The flush is explosive and very exciting—especially following the already highly-charged moments since seeing the dog go on point. Birds seem to be everywhere and leaving in a hurry, usually flying downhill.

Most of my previous hunting experience was for birds taking a rising or level flight path. Years of shooting trap had also made these rising targets the norm, so I don’t have to think about it at all when I shoot. Unfortunately, chukars don’t often present a rising target. They usually fly downhill at what seems like a very high rate of speed. There is rarely sky around the bird, and they blend in very well, so seeing them clearly against the terrain background is a problem for me. I usually miss, and with a lightweight 20 gauge semi-auto, I often miss three times. I stand there in stark disbelief that I could miss so completely. Now these are my own personal excuses, there are actually many

more documented reasons for missing – most of them valid. These birds truly have the advantage and I consider each bird in the bag somewhat of a trophy.

My new pup **Aniak of Wolf Fork Canyon** had her first exposure to chukar hunting in Idaho this year. She was just over a year old, and with this experience, she improved her range and search abilities with every day. The last day was a perfect chukar day—not too hot, moderate wind, with a clear sky. The terrain was steep, rocky, and difficult, especially at first. After we missed the first birds as described above, my good friend, Gary Pool, sent me to the cover where he has normally found birds. He headed off with his two excellent chukar dogs to higher country with less certainty of birds. But this is a team that will find and harvest birds if they are there at all.

Annie and I were soon in light snow covered with chukar tracks. The first point was on top of a ridge in a sagebrush patch. The birds held, I missed what seemed like easy shots and we hiked on a short distance to the next covey. These birds presented a rare opportunity to shoot at birds high in the sky. I fired swinging left to right and two of them fluttered to the ground, hit well but not dead. After nice tracking, Annie made the retrieves, not perfectly to hand, but good enough. I was really proud of her for finding, pointing and retrieving her first chukars.

The next six coveys over about three hours were all very exciting. Annie was hunting like a pro; like I had seen Gary's dogs hunt before. It was incredible to me that this young dog would find, point and hold covey after covey of birds. But I could not hit another bird and I shot a box of shells. When I had just two shells left I headed for the truck. Annie pointed once again about 100 yards from the road. As usual the birds flew downhill and I missed the first shot. Contrary to all good advice I switched to another bird and hit it, only to have it crash in a nearly impenetrable patch of blackberry bramble. Annie understandably was reluctant to push in through the quarter inch sharp spurs that want to tear anything they touch. So I waded in, taking about half an hour to get all the way across. I had given up and was headed to the truck when I turned around and saw Annie coming up out of the patch with that chukar. What a way to end the day!

Some people only hunt chukars one time. It is hard and often frustrating work for sure. The joke frequently told is the first hunt is for fun and every subsequent hunt is for revenge. Fact is, despite limited success as measured by birds-in-the-bag, chukar hunting is my favorite bird hunting of all. I love the challenge and solitude of the mountainous terrain; the excitement of the point and flush; the difficulty of the target; the beauty of the birds and of course the dog work. The high desert country, seemingly empty when viewed from the road, actually has numerous folds and ridges, brushy drainages, rim rock and canyons all of which have the potential for wildlife. I have seen many big game animals, hawks, and other small game critters while searching for chukars. The expansive view of miles and miles of country with a shining river in the valley is alluring, compelling really. It calls for me like this – chuk chuk chukerrrr and I can't wait to get there again.

## Pheasant Fest 2012:

### The WPGCA Experience

by

John Pitlo



**Gabby and Goodboy of Dutchman's Hollow** attract onlookers while Andy Yeast talks griffons with a passerby.

Photo by John Pitlo

Pheasant Fest was held in Kansas City, MO the weekend of Feb., 17-19, 2012. Ken Hurtig picked me up on Thursday and we loaded his van full of the materials and equipment we would need. This included a roll of carpet, table, small stand to hold the TV monitor, TV monitor, handout materials, chairs, computer to run the Power Point program showing our dogs in action, etc. etc. etc.

We drove to Des Moines and stayed at Andy Yeast's house that night. Friday morning we were up and gone at 6 AM with Andy and his dog Gabby in a dog crate in the back. We arrived at the Kansas City Convention Center around 10 AM and were met by Jim Crouse and Dave Finley. We unloaded all the equipment and began the task of setting up the booth. We

were done by 11 AM and the new banners that Jim Crouse had made looked really nice (see photos).

Then those members that were there with dogs went to get ready for the Bird Dog Parade.

Those in the Parade included:

Jim Crouse and **Benny “B” of the Midnight Sun**  
 Andy Yeast and **Gabby of Dutchman’s Hollow**  
 Kirk Dilly and **Cedar of the Sandhill**  
 Hank Carriger and **Goodboy of Dutchman’s Hollow**  
 Sam Cox and **Belle of Arrowrock**  
 Mike Chlapaty and **Flapjack Frankie of Dutchman’s Hollow**

Those manning the booth besides the above 6 people included Ken Hurtig, Dave Finley & John Pitlo.

The show started at 11:30 AM on Friday and ran until 9PM on Friday night. Reopened at 9 AM on Sat. and ran until 6 PM. Reopened at 10 AM and closed at 5 PM



### **Nice Doggie!**

An easy-going disposition is a real selling point of our griffons for families with kids. Here a toddler makes friends with **Gabby of Dutchman’s Hollow**.

Photo by John Pitlo

I can’t say enough good things about the dogs – they were superb!!!!!! Nearly every youngster that walked by had to pet or sit down with the dogs!! They took all the attention in stride and were on their best behavior. There was not a growl, grrrrr or anything that might resemble a threat to any person or other dog that walked by.

We had many people that showed interest in our dogs and we handed out all of our complimentary Gun Dog Supreme copies (nearly 300 of them), many of our business cards, and a good number of informational packets. By Sunday afternoon – the dogs were tired and just stretched out on the floor – a great selling point for laid-back dogs!!!

## The Truly Versatile Gun Dog

by  
Ted Coon



**All hands on deck! I smell salmon!**  
With a name like **Buckingham of Salmon River**, it's a natural that Ted Coon's dog takes to Great Lakes angling.

Photo by Ted Coon

My New Year resolution is to get Buck to be a more versatile hunting dog. Bird season only lasts a few months, and I'd like him to be my outdoor adventure pal more year-around. So I will be working on making him more of an asset when trout and salmon fishing on the Great Lakes. He already accompanies me now on all my trips, so I feel that he can diversify his game-finding abilities just a bit to help in locating fish.

He is great to have along as he is a great listener; he doesn't care what or if we catch any; never asks why we aren't getting any, and never complains. I've fished with certain club members and I had to listen

to: "I've got to go to the bathroom," or "I'm hungry, " or "I'm thirsty." Never mind that they're clueless about Great Lakes angling. I hear: "Why aren't they biting?" and "Why don't we go deeper?" or "Why don't we go shallower?" and "When are we going to quit?"

Don't want to drop any names here, but one is a former Iowa DNR guy, and one just moved to Iowa. Buck just enjoys being along regardless of what or where we fish. Salmon fishing is very temp oriented. They can be in 60 feet of water one day and 200 feet the next. Locating them is a big challenge, so I need to work on getting Buck to lock up on point as we go out when we get over fish. He's already become a great first mate as the photos show. Photos are of Buck searching, Buck tending poles, Buck and me with end result. It might be pretty hard to work this into the



testing program—maybe have to be some “Advanced Utility Test.” I’ll have to talk to Jim Siebel about that.

Ted is donating a Great Lakes salmon fishing trip with him and his wonder dog, Buck, as part of the Spring Heartland Test Fundraiser Auction.

Come to the WPGCA test near Baraboo, WI and get a great fishing trip to boot!



**Ted and Buck show off a day’s catch**

Photo by Ted Coon



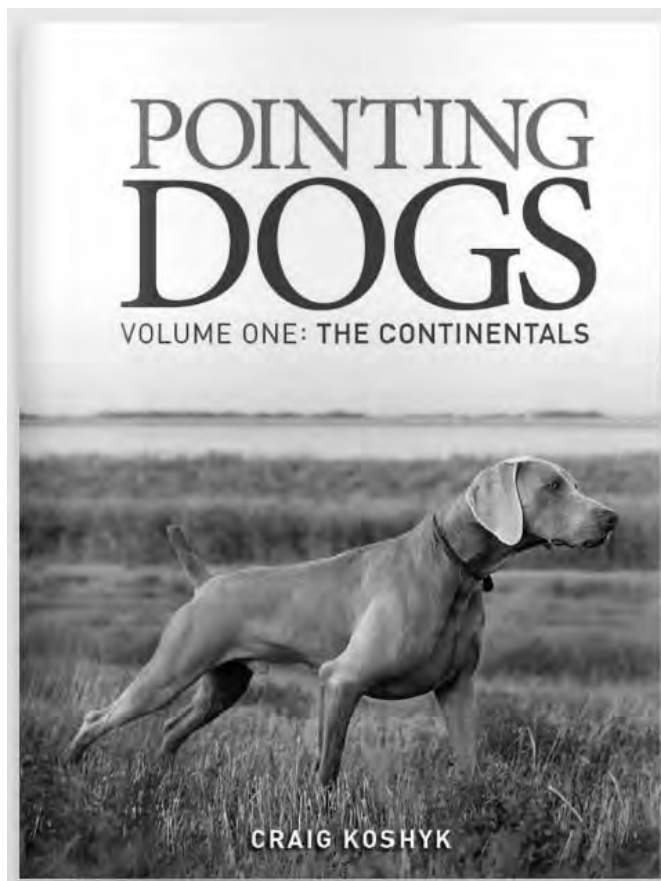
**Buck Keeps an Eye on the Fish Finder Graph**

Looks like salmon about 50 feet down. Get ready on those downriggers!

Photo by Ted Coon

*Pointing Dogs*  
*Volume One: The Continentals*  
By Craig Koshyk

Reviewed by Joan Bailey



“Have You Heard About The Book?” That was the buzzword going back and forth in all directions in December, and January. Emails from Maine, Iowa, Michigan, Montana, and Oregon went whizzing from coast to coast. But it started for me in September when I had an email from my friend of many years, Dennis Carlson. All he said was that he was sending me a book. So when it arrived I was, of course, stunned. I called Dennis to let him know I had received it and because he is one of the most frugal persons I’ve ever known, I asked him, “Are you giving this to me?” “No! He exclaimed, I’m loaning it and you can send it on to Steve Grieser.”

The price of the book is \$100 so you can see why Dennis was not about to give me a copy. I went through the book quickly, not wanting to be too greedy and then sent it on to Steve. Then in late December, after Rick Sodja had borrowed a copy from Hiram Adelman in Bozeman, Rick asked me if I would write this review. Long story for a beginning, but there you are. I did not have the book in front of me so Rick explained the situation to Craig, who sent me my own autographed copy.

It is an amazing book on many levels. It seems that this is a man who is living his passion and it comes through time and time again. The information in this monumental endeavor is what Craig wanted to know and he wanted to give it to all of us who are also passionate about hunting dogs.

But first a description of what the book looks like. This is a *big* book; its nine inches wide by twelve inches long, 381 pages, over 500 color photographs on high-grade glossy paper, and weighs seven pounds. It looks like an expensive coffee table book. The book covers thirty-three breeds, five Outlier Breeds and fourteen Lost and Forgotten.

In all of my years of working with and about the dogs and their owners, I have learned quite a bit of the information in the book, but there was a lot I did not know. Now I have most of the missing links. And, it puts me back to the years when NAVHDA was getting underway and the early years, for we were testing *all* the versatile breeds. That is where my first apprentice judging began and where I became an official judge. I must say that working with and judging *all* the breeds is a great advantage.

I like that Craig dedicated the book to his parents. In his introduction, he explains why he wanted to write it. One of the reasons was to do some “Myth-busting.” And “I was also inspired by the thought of helping hunters who are looking for a new four-legged hunting buddy...”

Craig acknowledges Jean Castaing, from France, as one of the greatest cynologists who wrote the first book on Griffons (*Le Griffon d'Arret a Poil Dur* Korthals) and also his *Les Chien d'Arret* (translation: pointing dogs) published in 1960, covering all the pointing breeds that existed at that time.

Quoting from a front page, xi: “INTRODUCTION, this volume focus on an extended family of dog breeds known as continental pointing dogs, versatile hunting dogs, hunt point retrieve (HPR) breeds or all-arounders...I’ve done my best to describe them all with special attention given to the characteristics that are most important to hunters.”

Craig is a professional photographer and the photos will take your breath away. They are stunning. He says about the photos, “I’ve deliberately avoided identifying most of the individual dogs by name so that they may stand as a representative of their particular breed.....” I’m fine with that, but I would have loved to have a caption telling *where* the photo was taken. Is this Germany? France? But the photos are so outstanding...

He begins with a short history of the development of pointing dogs mostly in Europe and North America. Then he does something very interesting; instead of putting them into “wirehaired groups and shorthaired breeds, he divides the dogs by regions: South and SWest, North and East, Outliers, Lost and Forgotten. As you read the book you will see why it is important to list them that way, because as we see time and time again, breeds were developed to suit the terrain and needs of the hunters in the area at that time. He quotes Castaing,

“Hunters could have been perfectly happy with three breeds of pointing dogs for the three principal uses: forest and marsh; all-terrain-all-game; and open plains. But mistakes, fantasies and personal interest dug trenches---it is too late to fill them in now, so we must deal with them.” Page 15

In the opening part about the history and evolution of pointing dogs, Craig says, “The history of pointing dogs can be divided nearly into two parts: before and after 1859. Prior to that date, the worth of any gundog was measured in the field. If it could not cut it there, it was not kept or bred. The system was relatively crude, but it ensured that gundogs were able to do their job. Then, in 1859, the first dog show was held---and everything changed. No longer was it necessary to prove a gundog’s worth in the field...”

Then he goes into the types of field testing in Europe and North America starting with NAVHDA, then AKC hunt tests, the WPGCA and the newer VHDF (Versatile Hunting Dog Federation).

Part II deals with breeds that developed in South & West (Spain, Portugal, Italy, France and the Netherlands).

For each breed he starts with the history; then the breeding and testing, health, form, and function. Then he addresses the function as in the WPG, which includes Field Search, Pointing, Retrieve, Tracking, Water Work. For our Griffons Craig writes a much longer history section because ours is a bit complicated! He used my *GRIFFONS Gun Dog Supreme* for a lot of the information here, as well as Castaign’s book. The section on Selection & Breeding is much longer for us than the other breeds. In this part, he describes how we started our own testing program.

For each breed, he writes about the character of the breed. After that he has a section called “My View.” And finally, he has a long, narrow column called “At a Glance”. Under this heading are subheadings: Pros, Cons, Details (including country of origin, parent club, Population (how many dogs in each country), Availability, Health issues, Size, Coat , Range, Pace, Retrieve, Water work, Suitability for Protection Duty, Versatility Rating, Risk Profile (refers to ease or not in finding a dog), and ends with Good Choice: for Griffons he says, “Grouse, woodcock, pheasant, snipe, partridge, hare, rabbit, waterfowl, big game

As we read through the book one realizes that dogs were originally developed for the different needs in various regions according to the kind of terrain. In places with wide-open spaces, such as Spain and other countries, their main interest was in a search to cover a lot of ground, as well as pointing and retrieving of the birds. In The Netherlands (Korthals) hunters required the searching and pointing, but also high on the list was the ability for water work; tracking wounded ducks and retrieving them from the many marshes in that country.

In the WPG section (South & West) he tells about the various kinds of rough-haired or wirehaired dogs and how all the clubs (Griffon, Stichelhaar, Pudelpointer, and Spionni) decided that each breed was a variation of the same breed and for some years they came together and kept a registry. That did not last long. When I first became involved with Griffons there was a newsletter from Germany that they called Ruffed Hair Newsletter and there was news about the four breeds in the newsletter.

Craig says in the Griffon section,

As I drove away [from The Netherlands], I reflected on the meaning of the new Europe and how it was the fulfillment of a centuries-old dream for many of the people living there. Passing by Haarlem, I was reminded of an early supporter of European unity, a man who grew up near that city almost 150 years ago. His name was Eduard Korthals, and although he did not live to see a united Europe he did succeed in creating the first truly international gundog, the Wirehaired Pointing Griffon. P. 168.

There is a lot more about Korthals. And then a huge section about the “name,” and the controversy that still exists today! Craig quotes Castaing again,

It was therefore logical, and even necessary, to put an end to the confusion that resulted from the fact that all griffons with a wire coat of various kinds had the same name expressed in different ways in French and German. By adding the word “Korthals” to the name of the breed, French Griffon supporters proclaimed themselves the heirs and upholders of the works of the great breeder.

A lot of the information on the next two pages of the history is from our GRIFFON book. And then our new breeding program with the injection of the Fousek, and discussion on the formation of a new griffon club that did not buy into the CF injection. There’s an interesting section on how well the Griffon functions, from a long explanation of the pointing to all the other duties. He says our Griffons have strong pointing instinct, are very good trackers, and most are excellent water dogs.

One of Craig’s categories for each breed is Character. For the Griffon section there is a short description of the breed by a breeder in Quebec. Then there is a category for Training. And here he quotes an owner of a dog not from our club breeding program. The man (Craig gives his name) says, “You really have to go softly and let the dog think that it had thought of everything. Give the dog the opportunity and it’ll figure things out. Force the issue, and you may create a roadblock.” I know this man; he has one or two Griffons that are not from our club breeding program and I’ve seen his dogs and they are soft. I don’t feel that this man represents the club or breed very well. At the very least, I think Craig should have talked to someone from our club who had a dog from our club breeding program.

However, in the “At a Glance” column we got good grades!

When we get to Part III, North & East, it brings us to Germany, Denmark, the Czech Republic, Slovakia and Hungary. Craig starts this section:

Hunting traditions run deep in Central Europe. Hunters there have their own language, music, customs and rituals. And Hunting dogs have been a part of those traditions for over a thousand years. But it was not until the mid-1800s that pointing dogs caught the interest of the average central European hunter. But when they did, they provided the essential elements for the creation of the most versatile breeds of hunting dogs in the world. P. 194

He provides an outline of the testing that we know and practice NAT, IHDT, UFT, and not just us, but the VDD, KDK, VHDF etc.

It seems to me that “our” Griffons fit into this section, at least the Griffons most of us have known and with whom we share our interests. It has been Germany and CR that we have identified with though we have some good dogs from France in our bloodlines. For our club it has been primarily this area, the North and East where many of our dogs came from; though always some from France. But emotionally our ties are with the German Griffon Club and today that is shared with the Czech Republic.

And so it is that in the section or chapter on the Cesky Fousek, is where I think Craig really shines with his description of the Cesky Fousek. His opening paragraph on the history says,

Officially, the Fousek is a relatively new breed on the versatile gundog scene. FCI recognition was not granted until 1964. Nevertheless, references to Bohemian hunting dogs, generally assumed to be the Fousek’s ancestors, can be found in documents dating as far back as the 14<sup>th</sup> century. So, is the Cesky Fousek a modern creation? Or is it the grandfather of all rough-haired Continental pointing dogs?

Well, we know from the information provided to our club by Joe Nadaker that it does indeed go way back to the 14<sup>th</sup> century when such dogs were known as canis bohemicus. But all the interesting details are in Craig’s book.

Thankfully, Craig met up with our dear friend, the late Dr. Jaromir Dostal and received much of his information from him. Here is what Craig says about Dr. Dostal,

In 2007, I had the pleasure of meeting renowned Czech geneticist and former breed warden of the Cesky Fousek club, Dr. Jaromir Dostal, at the Institute of Animal Physiology and Genetics of the Czech Academy of Sciences...With near photographic memory, he told me about the various breeding lines and the dogs upon which they were founded.

What follows is Dr. Dostal’s description of the ten breeding lines. (Some of us will remember Joe Nadeker telling us about the ten lines.) It is all there in the book. Here I

will only tell you about one of the lines; Line number 4 because of its important link to our program.

Dogs from this line are not very common. Line 4 was founded on a female Fousek named Alma ze Zampachu from bloodline number 3, and a male German shorthaired pointer. Dogs from line 4 are very good runners, excellent in the field. They have shorter coats and less furnishing, but very nice conformation overall. They've become popular in the US since Erik od Jezarek was sent there. American breeders call him Erik the Great!

Several pages later, Craig begins the section "My View" and there he talks about attending a CF test.

...All of the dogs made happy deliveries of whatever their owners asked them to fetch....After spending an enjoyable day with members of the breed's parent club; I began to realize that the Cesky Fousek is a lucky breed. It is firmly in the hands of a well-organized group of dedicated hunters, and its fortunes are on the rise outside of its native land...p. 294

Following that Craig met with Dr. Dostal at his clinic north of Prague. Craig explained that he mentioned Dr. Dostal because of his eyes.

It was a look we had seen before; a certain fiery sparkle, a radiant glow on the faces of a handful of men we had met in our travels. They were men with decades of experience who had spent countless hours in the fields with their dogs. They had each dedicated much of their lives to a breed of gundog that, without their help, may have fallen into the abyss. We saw the years of ups and downs etched into their faces, and would sometimes hear notes of sadness as they spoke to us about the struggles they'd endured.

But, when the light was just right, and the conversation turned to the great dogs they had known, they became young men again, their eyes transformed by an inner glow, their faces beaming.

We saw that look in Dr. Dostal's eyes that day. Since then, I remember it every time I think about the Cesky Fousek, a lucky breed, indeed.

\* \* \*

Note: Very few of us can afford to buy a book for \$100. But perhaps chapters could buy one copy and take turns reading the book. Craig has donated a copy to be raffled at the Idaho test in March 2012. If you want to order a book go to: [www.dogwilling.ca](http://www.dogwilling.ca). You'll find all the information on the website. Enjoy!

## **Keeping Track of Your Dog:**

### **Garmin Astro 320 Review**

by

**Larry Semmens**

While at the fall test in Washington, the judging group was discussing how to keep track of a dog that is out of sight a lot of the time. Someone mentioned that Garmin makes a dog tracking tool, so I looked it up when I got home and eventually purchased one by special order from the local Garmin dealer. The Garmin Astro 320 global positioning system (GPS) and DC 40 collar are great tools for keeping track of your dog and your truck and about 500 other things if you want to. I really like the features provided for use in the field and the ability to download the information to a Garmin map on my computer. I have used this system for one hunting season, mostly in open country. It takes a little practice to use effectively, but I really enjoyed using it once I figured it out. The handheld GPS is very similar to other higher end Garmin GPS units. It finds and locks on orbiting satellites quite quickly resulting in fast determination of your location. It has the typical features including easy marking of waypoints, ability to create routes, electronic compass, altimeter, map, trip computer for speed, distance and time, navigation to waypoints and a host of special features for everything from measuring your heartbeat to geocaching. It gives you the distance and bearing to a waypoint and it will track back to your starting point in the event you forget to mark the truck or cannot take a direct route back. You can view your track on a map using zoom to get the perspective you want. You can use it to plot your course to drive to your hunting spot as all the main roads are visible and most of the side roads and dirt tracks too.

The main special feature is that it will keep track of your dog, using radio frequency. The collar also has a GPS unit in it which takes numerous fixes thus producing a very detailed dog track that is transmitted to the hand held unit. So in addition to the track, the unit is storing of the hunter's movements; it is also creating a detailed track of the dog's travels. One Astro can track several dogs at the same time. No more guessing about how far you walked compared to how far your dog went. The unit will tell you direction and distance to your dog from your position and whether she is running or on point. This is a very handy feature if you cannot see your dog when she goes on point. Although I can't hear it very well, the handheld unit sounds an alarm when the dog points. Range is up to nine miles. Fortunately Annie and I haven't tested the range yet. It has special features for easily marking a covey and you can enter the number of birds flushed and taken. All three main battery types, alkaline, lithium or rechargeable can be used. I use the rechargeable and had no trouble with batteries during any hunt. The collar has a rechargeable battery and cords for household or auto current.

When I get home, I download the tracks and waypoints to my computer running Garmin's free Basecamp product. This makes it easy to see the big picture of the tracks including elevations and where the birds were found. I purchased Garmin's US 100,000 scale mapping software that is more detailed than what the Astro comes with, so I can see topographic information as well as roads, cities and water bodies and lots of other



information. This map is quite detailed but even more detail can be obtained with other third party mapping software. Kirch's Outdoor Products sells map software that accurately shows land ownership, wildlife management areas, waterfowl production areas, Access Yes lands, BLM and other state and federal land boundaries, all overlaid on a 24,000 scale topo map. I don't own any of the 10 states that are available, but I am considering getting some or all of them. These maps would make hunting unfamiliar country much easier.

All of this gadgetry is not necessary of course.

But it does add efficiency and an element of safety for the hunter and the dog. I often hunt by myself and although as a young man I was very good at not getting lost in the woods (maybe because it didn't matter how far I had to walk to get back), I have found that a GPS is a gadget that I don't leave home without on most of my trips anymore. I needed a new GPS about halfway through this season so it was timely for me. These are not inexpensive at about \$600, not including the more detailed mapping software which is about \$100 each or \$250 for all ten states from Kirch's. While the last Garmin handheld I bought was about a hundred dollars, a new mapping GPS can easily cost \$400 so I thought it was worth it to get the dog tracking version for a bit more. The Astro 320 and DC 40 collar add a new dimension to hunting with a dog and I find it to be both useful and fun. In my opinion it is greatly preferred over a beeper collar, especially the beeper I have which sounds like the backup alarm on a D9 Cat. The Astro can be used with a nice bell if desired for work in close cover. I am glad I invested in this tool and the dogs enjoy reviewing the tracks with me on my computer during these long, dark, cold Alaskan winter nights.



#### **The Garmin Astro 320 Collar and Hand Unit**

The collar is about the same size and weight as a typical beeper collar. Besides being a hunting aid, it also serves as a means for keeping track of an older dog that might wander out of hearing range.

Photo by Rem DeJong

### Joan's Books

For those of you who purchase books online from amazon.com, I'm asking a little favor:

Nothing drives the sale of books on amazon.com as do good reviews. Though the sales of my books are good, they could be better if there were more reviews, especially for the latest book, *How to Have the Best Trained Gun Dog*. If you have used this book with success and have purchased something from amazon.com, then you can go online to that book and scroll way, way down to where you can write a review.

It does not have to be long; just a few sentences will do it.

*GRIFFON, Gun Dog Supreme* could also use some reviews; there are only seven reviews so more would really help.

*How to Help Gun Dogs Train Themselves* is doing fine, but if you want to do a review for that, it won't hurt.

Thanks to you all,  
Joan

<p><i>How to Help Gun Dogs Train Themselves</i> takes you and your dog through the first year. For many hunters this best-selling book is all you'll need.</p>	<p><i>How to Have the Best Trained Gun Dog</i> is for those who want a finished dog; one that is steady to shot and steady at the blind.</p>	<p><i>Griffon: Gun Dog Supreme</i> focuses on this amazing gun dog and addresses breeding and judging of <i>all</i> versatile hunting dog breeds.</p>

### **Upcoming Events**

**Heartland Chapter Exposure Days**—generally held monthly April through September. See Web page or contact Jim Crouse(614)562-1860.

**Heartland Spring Test**—Mazomanie, WI April 20-22. See web page or contact Andy Yeast, Test Chair (515)986-0891.

**Northeast Chapter Spring Test**—Springport, ME. May 12. No other details at press time. See web page for update.

**Rocky Mountain Chapter Exposure/Training Day.** See below.

### **Our Websites**

**WPGCA website:** [www.wpgca.org](http://www.wpgca.org)

**WPGCA E & R website:** [www.gundogsupreme.org](http://www.gundogsupreme.org)

## **Rocky Mountain Chapter**

### **Exposure Day, Young Hunters Event, and Expanded Training Day**

We are planning an exposure day this summer, and will again showcase our dogs to the Gallatin Valley Pheasants Forever Chapter's young hunters. Our plans are similar to what we did last year. However, our hosts, Randy and Diane, have suggested adding a second day to the event. The big day is Saturday, July 28th, starting at 8 am and followed by a BBQ and potluck in the afternoon with lots of good food. Sunday would be devoted to helping each other train our older dogs and work on a few touch-up features that we all can use. Food and drink for that day will be each person's responsibility. Please put that weekend on your calendar. Also, please give one of the following folks a call or email regarding your interest and ideas for the second day's events:

Rick Sojda (TEL: 406.585.8924; EMAIL: [rsojda@bresnan.net](mailto:rsojda@bresnan.net))

JJ Conner (TEL: 406.202.3369; EMAIL: [jcbowstring@hotmail.com](mailto:jcbowstring@hotmail.com))

Randy Ross (406.285.6882; EMAIL: [tontoross@gmail.com](mailto:tontoross@gmail.com)).

Another announcement will follow to determine how many birds are needed.

## More from Pheasant Fest 2012

Kirk Dilly and **Cedar of the Sandhills** lead off the WPGCA contingent in the bird dog parade, while Hank Carriger gives a father and son an introduction to **Goodboy of Dutchman's Hollow**.

*Photos by John Pitlo*

