

# **So you're new to NAVHDA?**

## **Wisconsin River Chapter**

*Modified from the Southern Minnesota Chapter by Paul Juckem*

### **What is the Wisconsin River Chapter of NAVHDA all about, and what's in it for me?**

We are a training and testing organization sanctioned under the *North American Versatile Hunting Dog Association* (NAVHDA). The Wisconsin River Chapter is one of many chapters scattered throughout the USA and Canada. Our primary goals are to facilitate the training and testing of the versatile pointing dog through chapter sponsored training days and Chapter sanctioned Natural Ability, Utility Preparatory, and Utility tests. We concentrate our training and testing efforts on the versatile pointing breeds only (also known as continental breeds).

### **As a new member, what should I expect from our chapter?**

Chapter members are invited and encouraged to attend chapter events including training days, social functions, planning meetings, and chapter tests. As a member you may train your dog at any of the training dates. You'll be given a list of sources for training birds. You'll have access to training equipment. You'll receive assistance in obtaining your dog training permit (needed for training on your own -- a copy of the regulations and application are included with this packet). You'll be in the company of other pointing dog training enthusiasts and may train together to assist one another.

### **What should the chapter expect from me?**

We are an entirely voluntary organization at the chapter level, and therefore, entirely dependent on the chapter membership to conduct all chapter activities. You should be willing to share your time and talents with other chapter members. You should volunteer to help with chapter activities such as: becoming a chapter officer, helping with the chapter tests, helping with training days, helping procure training birds, helping procure training sites and permits.

Lunch during training days is also a wonderful chapter social event, and therefore a group effort. The lunch coordinator for each training day typically brings the main course. All other members are expected to bring something to share, even if only something small (side dishes, salads, desserts, anything from that grocery store you passed on your way here, etc.).

### **Why do I have to be a member of both the local chapter and international?**

Local chapter dues are used to offset costs of sponsoring tests and training activities and to pay our annual insurance premium. NAVHDA International dues are required for every NAVHDA member so that you are insured while at chapter activities.

## **Okay, I've decided that the Wisconsin River Chapter of NAVHDA is for me. How do I get started?**

First, pay your dues to both the international and local chapter. International dues are due annually from the date you first join. Chapter dues are due in January and are for the calendar year. There is no pro-rating of dues paid after January. Then plan to attend whatever training days and events that work into your schedule. A copy of the chapter membership form is included with this packet.

## **I'm new to chapter training days. What should I expect?**

There will be other members with their dogs, all with varying experience levels and training goals. Introductions are made and chapter members discuss what goals they may have for the day's training. Chapter members with similar training goals may be matched up and work together for the day. Alternatively, some members prefer to work in groups that span a wide range of experience, with newer members learning by watching and interacting with older members. While some members are quite experienced and have helpful advice, very few are professional trainers. For this reason it is your responsibility to train your own dog; chapter members are here simply to help speed you along your path to success.

## **Some common courtesies:**

- Order all training birds in advance of the training day. Pick up and pay for all birds you ordered. Assist whoever brought your birds with distribution.
- Any birds accidentally released are your responsibility.
- Keep your dog leashed or crated until it is your turn in the field.
- Do not rely on a rope attached to the bumper or trailer hitch as a dog stakeout; use a chain stakeout or crate your dog when you are unable to be with it.
- Clean up after your dog around the lunch tables and vehicles.
- Leash your dog up as you return from the field. **Please remember to keep your dog watered and cool during hot summer days.**
- Assist others with planting birds, gunning, transportation, equipment, etc.
- Offer your advice only when asked -- there is usually more than one way to accomplish a training goal.
- Dispose of your own dead birds and garbage.
- Don't wait until others have paid for and planted birds to go out and hunt "scratch" birds without their permission.
- Whenever your schedule allows, plan to stay until all members have had the chance to train their dog before leaving, unless they do not need your assistance.
- Do not tag along with other members and their dogs in the field unless you ask first and are invited to walk along. Most members would gladly have you walk along with them, but there are times additional people add confusion for the dog or its handler.
- Do not let your dog escape from you and work other members' birds. If it happens, offer to pay for the birds.

All of the above courtesies have been found to help everyone have a successful and fun training day.

## **I don't know what goals I should have. Any advice?**

While there are many different approaches to training a versatile pointing dog, many incorporate training techniques described in the following resources:

NAVHDA "Green Book",  
NAVHDA Aims, Programs, Test Rules (the white booklet)

Because NAVHDA is a testing organization, you can set training goals by following the sequence of testing described in the NAVHDA Aims, Programs, Test Rules booklet. It describes the test rules, and most members find that if they enter a test, they are compelled to set training goals to prepare for that particular test. If you stick with NAVHDA and train your dog to the level of utility test qualification, you will have an outstanding hunting dog anyone would be proud to own. If you pass the NAVHDA Invitational, you'll have as well trained and useful a hunting dog as anyone in the country.

## **What will I need as far as training equipment?**

There are many different training aids available. We've included a few pages with this packet that show some of the essential equipment you'll need for training, as well as the reason for having this equipment. Please realize that most members acquired their equipment over several years, so if you're in need of something for the day, please ask someone -- you may be able to temporarily borrow one from a member or from the chapter itself. Nonetheless, chapter equipment is meant to be used by all members so we ask that you obtain the essential equipment (shown in the pages below) at your earliest convenience.

In addition to the essential equipment shown in the accompanying pages, the following list includes some additional items that you may find helpful. This list is not exhaustive, nor is every item on the list necessary:

- First aid kit -- one for you, one for your dog
- Retrieving bumpers
- Surveyor's marking tape for marking planted birds
- Poppers (shotgun blanks)
- Blank pistol and blanks
- Plastic garbage bags to bring birds and/or garbage home
- Hip boots or waders
- A change of clothes (training involves demonstrating and sometimes that means getting wet)
- Electronic collar
- Bark collar
- Portable training table
- Remote release or manual release bird launcher
- Backing dog
- Canoe or duck skiff with paddle(s) and life vests
- Running shoes, a spring-loaded bicycle leash (springer, walkydog, etc), or ATV attachments – it's important to keep hunting dogs in good shape at home, especially if you'll be training in hot weather.