



THE REBEL DOGS BEHIND DOMINATOR POINTERS  
**DANIELS KENNELS**

- DR. FRANCES O. 'FRAN' SMITH  
REPRO VET & BREEDER OF DANIKK RETRIEVERS
- 2021 HRC FALL GRAND
- CHF PARENT CLUB CONFERENCE HIGHLIGHTS

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2XCH 3XRUCH Just Irresistible, called "Stud," is pictured in 2015 at 4 years of age. The orange-and-white male Pointer was bred by Jack and Tracy Haines, owned by Mary Devos, and handled by Jamie Daniels. See story on page 8.

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GRHRCH (12) Oak Point's Traveling Man HOF, pictured at 5 years of age in 2017, went for Grand pass No. 13 at the 2021 HRC Fall Grand. "Mason" is owned by Elaine Mitchell and trained and handled by Stephen Durrence. See story on page 16.



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# REPRO VET & DANIKK LABRADOR BREEDER DR. FRAN SMITH TALKS DOGS



Dr. Frances O. "Fran" Smith is pictured with Cedarwood Danikk Brass Tacks, a 2-year-old male, while at the 2021 Labrador Retriever Club Inc. National Specialty at Purina Farms.

**W**HEN COUNSELING CLIENTS about breeding dogs, Frances O. "Fran" Smith, DVM, PhD, DACT, is candid about expectations.

"If money is no object, go for broke," she advised a woman who wanted to breed a champion show dog with a history of irregular heat cycles and difficulty conceiving. "But do I think it will work? No."

Her wisdom and quick wit come from 50-plus years as a breeder of [Danikk Labrador Retrievers](#) and as a [board-certified veterinary theriogenologist](#). In other words, she's a reproduction specialist.

"Probably 95 percent of the world and the great majority of clients don't know what a theriogenologist is," she says. "It is a specialty in veterinary medicine that basically combines OB-GYN and urology in human medicine. There are less than 300 of us in the country, and I am one of few in private practice."

One of the biggest fans of America's sweetheart breed — the Labrador has been the [most popular breed](#) in the country for 30 years — Dr. Smith is passionate about the annual Labrador Retriever Club (LRC) Inc. National Specialty. Even with back pain and surgery scheduled for when she returns home to Minnesota, she would never miss the [2021 event in October at Purina Farms](#), a celebration of the club's 90th year.

Besides bringing her Danikk Labs entered in conformation and hunting tests, Dr. Smith is chair of the National's hunting and Working Certificate tests. Her longtime partner, Dr. John C. Lawrence, a retired veterinarian, is event chair.

Tucked in the middle of the week's activities, Dr. Smith will go to St. Louis for a board meeting of the Orthopedic Foundation for Animals (OFA), of which she has been president since 1990. OFA is probably best known for its Canine Health Information Center (CHIC) program in which parent clubs select testing for breed health clearances.

Dr. Smith also is the health committee chair for LRC. Her veterinary expertise combined with

a doctorate degree in animal reproduction landed her the job serving as chair — the club's first and thus far only one. "I knew how to read grants," she says.

Through the years Dr. Smith has reviewed a plethora of grants, given that the LRC is one of the top parent clubs to support research funded by the AKC Canine Health Foundation. A charter member of the Purina Parent Club Partnership (PPCP) Program that began in 2002, LRC each year uses its annual PPCP donation to fund studies that benefit the breed and that are expected to help the most people and dogs.

One of the early studies LRC funded investigated [exercise-induced collapse](#), a potentially fatal disease of hunting and field trial Labrador Retrievers. Affected dogs become weak and collapse after just minutes of hard work. Before the variant discovery in the canine dynamin 1 (*DNM1*) gene enabling breeders to breed carriers without producing affected dogs, EIC was confused with many other conditions.

Dr. Smith's keen interest in canine health is tied to her initiation into purebred dogs and dog breeding at age 10 when her parents bred their German Shepherd Dog, "Trina." This was before the founding of OFA and the CHIC program.

"My job was to keep the puppies clean, and because of my work with the puppies I got to pick one," she says. "I chose a male whom I named

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"MY GOAL HAS ALWAYS BEEN TO BREED A DOG THAT LOOKS LIKE THE BREED STANDARD AND IS TALENTED AND TRAINABLE ENOUGH TO BE A PERSONAL GUNDOG FOR EVEN A NOVICE TRAINER."

Dr. Fran Smith

'Lance.' He had such severe hip dysplasia at 4 months of age that he had to be euthanized as he could barely stand up. I made up my mind right then that when I grew up, I was going to do something so no little girl would have to put down her dog. It is because of German Shepherd Dogs that I became a veterinarian."

She and her sister, Jacqueline "Jackie" Stacy, today an AKC all-breed show judge and breeder of Affenpinschers, got involved in junior showmanship through Bob and Mary Kay Brockett, the German Shepherd Dog breeders from whom their parents got Trina.

"In those days, at the end of a show, they would announce, 'Junior handlers get a dog and come to



These 2 ½-week-old Danikk Labrador puppies are from a dual-sired litter. Dr. Smith will send their DNA to the AKC to confirm the sires, though based on coat color genetics she knows the sire of the two chocolate puppies and of the yellow puppy. The mystery is to learn the sires of the black puppies, as both sires carry the black color gene.

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**"I ADVISE OWNERS OF PROMISING YOUNG DOGS TO COLLECT THEM AROUND AGE 2 TO HELP MAXIMIZE THE SPERM NUMBERS AND INCREASE THE LIKELIHOOD OF MULTIPLE LITTERS FROM A SINGLE COLLECTION. I LOOK AT FROZEN SEMEN AS AN INSURANCE POLICY."**

Dr. Fran Smith

Ring 1," Dr. Smith says. "You would show anyone's dog. One of the dogs I showed was a Standard Poodle that was so well-trained, the dog could have done the gaiting pattern without a handler."

Many years later when her boyfriend planned to go to an animal shelter to find a hunting dog, she told him, "You can't do that. That's not the way things are done. You have to get a purpose-bred dog so you know what you're getting."

Dr. Smith got him a field-bred black female Labrador Retriever, Rushmon's Babe. "'Babe' was a phenomenal gundog. My boyfriend was not a very good trainer, but if he made a mistake, she was forgiving enough that he could retrain her a new way and she would do it right," she says.

Babe became the foundation bitch of Danikk. "Babe was not show quality, but I bred her to a show champion and she produced a show champion in her first litter," says Dr. Smith. The show champion out of Babe, whelped June 5, 1973, was CH Danick's Bonnie Babe, who finished quickly with four Majors.

Dr. Smith explains the different spelling of her early kennel prefix, "I had combined my children's first names, Dana and Nick, to make Danick and then found out the AKC would not allow it due to it being someone's surname. This is when I changed the spelling to Danikk."

Meanwhile, "Bonnie" was bred to a yellow male, MBIS CH Shamrock Acres Light Brigade, who for many years held records as the second top-winning conformation Labrador and the top-producing sire. That mating began a longtime friendship with the (Shamrock Acres) breeder of "Briggs," Sally McCarthy Munson, who steered Dr. Smith into getting involved with the Labrador Retriever Club and OFA.

Reflecting on her efforts as a breeder, Dr. Smith says, "My goal has always been to breed a dog that

looks like the breed standard and is talented and trainable enough to be a personal gundog for even a novice trainer."

Her Danikk Labrador Retrievers number more than 20 conformation champions and multiple Master Hunters. Dr. Smith trained and finished the 43rd Master Hunter in history, CH Danikk Leap Of Faith MH, a yellow male.

"'Bungee' exemplified the importance of tailoring training to fit your dog's personality," she says. "If he thought I was confused in teaching him, he would basically say, 'Forget it.' I learned to trust him and not nitpick."

Owners of her Danikk Labs have achieved three obedience trial champions and earned many titles in rally and agility. A 10 ½-year-old Danikk-bred Labrador called "Pearl" (PACH Danikk Pearl Of Wisdom) recently added a new title of Preferred Agility Champion piloted by owner-handler Colleen Bush.

Dr. Smith judges AKC field trials and competes in them on a limited basis with her own dogs. In September, she judged the fall trial of Back Bay Knott's Island Retriever Club in Goldvein, Virginia.

"Twenty years ago, I owned a Field Champion that I got from Mary Howley (Candlewood) and owner Dennis Bath," she says. "I wanted an older dog to teach me what to do, so they helped me get FC-AFC Bluegrass Dust Commander when he was 11 years old after he had earned 135 Open points.

"If I tried to tell him to do something stupid, he would look at me as though to say, 'You want to rethink that?' He was awesome and taught me a lot. He slept beside my bed until he died at age 14."

Bungee's granddaughter, CH Danikk's Tiarra, a yellow female called "Tia," was memorable. "She was absolutely beautiful and a very talented gundog despite never being formally trained," Dr. Smith recalls. "She died from squamous cell carcinoma of the footpad, which spread rapidly and killed her less than six weeks after being diagnosed. It was so devastating that I almost gave up Labradors."

At her Smith Veterinary Hospital in Burnsville, Minnesota, Dr. Smith considers herself lucky to have knowledgeable clients who put their dogs' health care first. Most breed for conformation and sporting. "They ask questions and listen to my advice. They understand we want to maximize the health of their bitch and her puppies," she says.



Preparing to perform an artificial insemination surgery, Dr. Smith is a board-certified theriogenologist who specializes in reproduction.

As a frequent lecturer at conferences for veterinary students and breeders, Dr. Smith espouses a straightforward philosophy. “No one has to breed dogs,” she says. “Importantly, breeders should never put their bitches at risk because they are relying on having puppies to pay their bills.”

A carefully timed breeding is key to success, though she finds that some breeders balk at the cost of progesterone testing, the gold standard for determining when a bitch is ovulating. “Typically, multiple tests are needed, and depending on the clinic and the geographic area, a single test may be \$85 or more,” says Dr. Smith. “If the cost of progesterone testing is an issue, a breeder probably should not be breeding.”

About 75 percent of the patients at her clinic deliver puppies naturally, and the rest are delivered via cesarean section. Dr. Smith spends a lot of time counseling breeders. When deciding whether to breed a female, she advises, “Your best success is breeding a young bitch that had a litter at her last heat.”

The biggest change in dog breeding, Dr. Smith says, has been the ability to ship semen. “This has

made stud dogs much more accessible. I advise owners of promising young dogs to collect them around age 2 to help maximize the sperm numbers and increase the likelihood of multiple litters from a single collection. I look at frozen semen as an insurance policy.”

The biggest challenge breeders face is placing puppies responsibly, she says. “I tell them to be selective. If they have even a twinge a placement might not be a good fit, they should not do it,” Dr. Smith counsels.

As the 2021 LRC National Specialty wraps up, CH Danikk Black Silk had success in the Best of Breed ring, though was not a winner, and Cedarwood Danikk Brass Tacks won the Novice conformation class both days and earned a Working Certificate. Both dogs were models at Judge’s Education, a nod to Danikk’s correct breed type.

Back at home, Dr. Smith made it through back surgery with flying colors. With a new litter of Danikk puppies on the ground one week later, life is full of promising opportunities and loads of fun. ■



# A REBEL IN THE DOMINATOR KENNEL

BY BARBARA FAWVER | PHOTOS BY CHRIS MATHAN

**O**N A COOL, CLOUDY SPRING AFTERNOON, the third day of the 2013 Southeastern Open All-Age Championship, a remarkably calm orange-and-white 2-year-old male named Just Irresistible stretched his front legs and looked around as though half-asleep.

Delivering the powerhouse Pointer to the breakaway, Judd Carlton, who was scouting for handler Jamie Daniels, knew once he let loose of the dog, a stylish, forward-running, quail-finding storm would overtake the Georgia countryside. Known as “Stud,” or rather, as “Stud Muffin” to owner Mary Devos, the bird dog, in his derby year, was a novice at field trials let alone at an open all-age championship stake.

“By the time Stud ran, many dogs had put down quality performances,” Jamie recalls. “I told Judd, ‘We’re going to have to do something to separate ourselves from the rest of the field.’ An indelible memory is what Just Irresistible made with Judd and me, both of us absolute rookies, along for the ride.”

About 20 minutes into the hourlong horseback stake Jamie saw they had a shot at winning and got gutsy with his handling, sending Stud to the opposite side of the hourglass field, away from his bracemate. The maneuver could have collapsed the whole effort but instead produced one of three outstanding quail covey finds.

“My wife, Allison, called him ‘The Butterfly Boy’ because when he moved, it looked as though he never touched the ground,” says Jamie.

An indisputable stellar show made Stud the first derby to win in the 23-year history of the Southeastern. “Stud pulled it off just perfect,” Jamie says. “That’s when he got me on the map, and he got himself on the map.”

Most would agree that running a derby in a major all-age championship is not the natural springboard to success. “An all-age dog is the baddest of the bad,” Jamie says. “They have to be strong and have more endurance because we ask a lot of them.”

That win at the Southeastern ignited Stud’s four-year field trial career. Bred by Jack and Tracy Haines, the 2XChampion/3XRunner-Up Champion took his wins between Jamie’s plantation obligations. As if not being privy to a full-circuit career wasn’t bad enough, tragically, a porcupine injury from his first summer on the South Dakota prairie haunted him years later, taking his life in his prime at 6 ½ years of age.



Judd Carlton, who scouted for Jamie Daniels, poses with Just Irresistible at the 2013 Southeastern Open All-Age Championship when he made history as the championship’s first derby-age winner.

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At left: “Stud,” pictured at 4 years of age, was bred by Jack and Tracy Haines and owned by Mary Devos.

Jamie plans to repeat the formula that worked so well this fall when he hits the all-age circuit with Stud's carbon-copy derby-age grandkids out of litters he bred. There's Dominator's Wild Bill and his littermate sisters, Dominator's Maybelle, Dominator's Queen Bee and Dominator's Debutante, sired by NCH 2XCH 2XRUCH Miller's Blindsider, called "Sam," out of Dominator's Red Wine. There's Dominator's Rebel Queen sired by Sam out of Pearl Again.

### A STRING OF BIG OL' LIVER DOGS

Curiosity landed Jamie Daniels at his first bird dog field trial. Coincidentally, it was the 2001 Southeastern Open All-Age Championship. Working as a dog trainer at Longleaf Plantation in Thomasville, Georgia, he had noticed the field trial winners pictured in *American Field* magazines lying around.

"Where's all this happening?" he asked.

"It's happening right here in Thomasville, Albany and Alabama," his manager told him.

"It was the end of quail season, and I had some time off," Jamie says. "I told the manager I wanted to go up there and watch this championship."

Jamie called in a favor knowing he would need a horse to watch the trial. A "green" colt was

delivered to him at Chickasaw Plantation in Sasser, Georgia, where the Southeastern is run.

"Every afternoon a guy would take this string of big ol' liver dogs off the trailer, and I would help him," he says. "After the third day, he came over and asked me what my name was. He said, 'What do you do for a living?'"

"I said, 'I'm on a plantation down by Thomasville. I do the hunting, and I break the colts,'" Jamie continues.

"Well, I seen you ride that sorry colt you got. If you can ride him, you can ride anything I got. You want to go on the road with me?" asked Fred Dileo, a well-known all-age trainer and handler from Climax, Georgia.

"I asked, 'What do you mean go on the road?'" says Jamie.

"Jump in the truck, and let's go up and down the road to field trials," Dileo replied.

That summer, Jamie went with Dileo to the South Dakota prairie to train dogs. "I always worked hard, but he sure did," says Jamie.

"I learned from Fred that the key to a successful dog man is hard work. The harder you work, the luckier you get."

Three years later, Jamie scouted for Fred when they won the 2004 Masters Open All-Age

Stylish Pointers are, from left, Dominator's Bullmarket Bud, Dominator's Rebel Rogue and NCH 2XCH 2XRUCH Miller's Blindsider.



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“I LEARNED FROM FRED (DILEO) THAT THE KEY TO A SUCCESSFUL DOG MAN IS HARD WORK. THE HARDER YOU WORK, THE LUCKIER YOU GET.”

Jaime Daniels

Championship with NFC 5XCH RUCH Funseeker's Rebel. The white-and-liver ticked male called “Ty” went on to win the 2007 National Field Trial Championship, which helped him earn a record 3,968 points and be named the 2006-2007 Purina Top Field Trial Bird Dog. Dileo was honored as the Purina Outstanding All-Age Handler.

Dileo indoctrinated Jamie into the Rebel dogs — those big ol' liver dogs Jamie helped him take off the trailer at the 2001 Southeastern. Ty was one. He was sired by CH Double Rebel Sonny, and his grandsire was CH Double Rebel Buck.

Dileo got hooked on the line begun in the early 1960s by Fred Arant Jr. of South Carolina through his mentor Tony Terrell of Texas and Dr. John Criswell of Oklahoma. Tough competitors with exceptional bird-finding acumen, the early Rebel dogs weighed around 70 pounds, which made them look like they ran slow though they moved fast.

Arant created the Rebel dogs through three generations of half brother to half sister crosses. The first breeding sired by Newman's Delivery Dan out of Miss Mary Doone produced Rambling Rebel Dan, a Hall of Fame Pointer. He sired A Rambling Rebel, who won the Continental Open All-Age. His son, Hawk's Rex, sired 2XNCH Whippoorwill's Rebel, who won the National Field Trial Championship in 1987 and 1989.

Working with Dileo gave Jamie a foundation in field trial dogs though there were not enough dogs on the string to support two trainers. In 2005, Jamie took a job as manager of Caney Creek Plantation in Albany, Georgia. During his 11 years at Caney, Jamie developed a robust quail habitat at the 10,000-acre plantation while still helping Dileo at local trials and working dogs that needed fine-tuned.

All too soon, at age 46, Fred Dileo was killed in a terrible accident on Nov. 13, 2007. “When Fred



died, he took part of me with him,” says Jamie. “I didn't know if I wanted to do bird dogs anymore.”

One day unexpectedly Dileo's clients Stan Howton and Rob Butler showed up at Caney Creek. Their Pointer, Elhew Sinbad, would have been a new dog on the circuit with Dileo.

“What are you doing?” they asked Jamie.

“I'm managing a plantation,” he replied.

“Get up. You've got dogs to work,” they told him.

“They kind of got me going again,” Jamie says.

## THE BESS & SCOOTER CROSS

One of Dileo's last breedings was a mating of his female, Cuivre River Daisy, a blue hen who produced quality dogs regardless of the stud, to 4XCH Just Wait, co-owned by Dr. Hunter Wilcox, Jack and Tracy Haines, and David Suitts. “Daisy” was linebred on Rebel dogs. Her sire, Double Rebel Sonny, was also the sire of National Champion Funseeker's Rebel.

The litter produced 14 pups. The Haines' stud fee puppy was a female whom they named Just Wait Bess. In 2010, Tracy Haines was looking for

Sam works the Georgia countryside with handler Jaime Daniels. Owned by Nick Berrong, Sam has won three championships, including the 2018 National Open All-Age Derby Championship, and two runner-up championships. He recently won the 2021 Sunshine Open All-Age Championship.



RUCH Miller's Bring The Heat ("Lacey"), owned and handled by Jack and Fran Miller, was bred three times to 2XCH 3XRUCH Just Irresistible, producing 16 individuals that thus far have won 48 championships, including seven nationals, and runner-up championships.

a stud dog to breed to "Bess." She consulted Jamie, who had worked magic on a pup she had sent him from an earlier litter sired by Just Wait.

"I told Tracy I had just seen a dog out of Funseeker's Rebel and Riverton's Blackeye Pea that goes back to a dog of Fred's we named A Frontline Rebel," Jamie says. "She bred Bess to 'Scooter' (CH Riverton's Funseeking Scooter). That's where Stud came from."

When Bess' litter was born, Mary Devos was living with longtime friends of her family, the Haines, in Broomfield, Colorado, while attending the University of Colorado at Boulder. As a gift, Devos got to choose a pup.

"They were all white, and a couple had liver heads," says Devos, who had high hopes her pup might turn out for the AKC field trials she enjoyed

with her father. "I chose the male with the orange eyebrow patch."

Three months later while on her spring break, Devos rode with Tracy Haines to deliver the Bess-Scooter litter to be evaluated by Jamie Daniels at Caney Creek. "The kennel was immaculate, and everything was so green and beautiful," recalls Devos, conceding it helped to soften the bitter-sweetness of leaving behind her puppy.

"Even as a pup, Stud had something noticeably special that made him stand out," remembers Jamie. "Working with him was like trying to lasso a tornado. He was a big, far runner, though he never ran off and never got lost. As he got older, he got really good at finding birds."

After winning the 2013 Southeastern Open All-Age Championship in his derby year, Stud won the Border International Chicken Championship that September in Canada. He won Runner-Up at the 2014 Masters Open Quail Championship.

As a 4-year-old, Stud was the Top Qualifier in the first series of the 2015 Florida Open All-Age Championship, eventually winning Runner-Up Champion after two call-backs. Held at Chinquapin Plantation in Branford, the Florida Open All-Age is one of the toughest on the circuit. Its open, sandy terrain sprinkled with patches of wiregrass, briers and scrub oak is best-suited for a down-to-business bird finder. The memorial trophy is named for Fred Dileo, who was particularly fond of the venue and had won it in 1995 and 1996 with Double Rebel Buck, Stud's great-great-grand sire on both sides of his pedigree.

At the 2015 Florida Open All-Age Championship, Stud ran three straight days. As was not uncommon during Stud's career, Jamie handled him in the first series but had to return to Caney to manage a hunt. Rich Robertson stepped in to handle him in the call-backs to garner Runner-Up laurels.

Recalling Stud's performance at the 2017 Southeastern Open Quail Championship, where Stud was Runner-Up Champion to his half sister, CH Dominator's Dotted Line, Jamie says, "It was probably the best job I saw him do on ground application, and I was more amazed than anything. Although 'Dot' had three covey finds to his one, she did not beat Stud on the ground."

Stud inherited from his Rebel relatives a natural talent to dig in and find birds. "Probably the biggest thing is he would never come from

behind through the gallery,” says Jamie. “He was always up front. He has passed that ability on to his offspring.”

## HOPING FOR A NICK

A potent producer, Stud was bred to eight females that produced 44 American Field winners. His offspring have thus far earned 295 wins or placements in all-age and shooting dog stakes. The A-list roster includes 14 Champions, seven are National Champions and two are Runner-Up National Champions, plus 17 Runner-Up Champions. Two are Purina Top Shooting Dogs and one is a Purina Amateur Field Trial Bird Dog.

A cross made to Jack and Fran Miller’s female, Miller’s Bring The Heat, was so successful, they made it three times, the last one via artificial insemination. The Millers, of Barwick, Georgia, had visited Jamie to work dogs. “Stud had class and grace when running and bird-finding ability second to none,” Fran Miller says. “We were hoping the traits we saw in Stud and what we had in our ‘Lacey’ would nick.”

It was a nick, indeed. The first litter Lacey whelped in February 2014 produced dogs that won 23 championships or runner-up championships, five were national wins. “Stud’s influence on our breeding program has been mind-blowing, and

his contribution to our sport is undeniable,” says Fran Miller. “It is probably a once-in-a-lifetime nick. Every litter has been a clone of the one before.”

The Millers sold several pups as derbies to pro trainers George and Mike Tracy of Summerhill Kennels in Glenville, Pennsylvania, who brought on owners to support their campaigns. A superstar from Lacey and Stud’s first litter trained at Summerhill was NCH 10XCH 2XRUCH Miller’s Unbridled Forever, who won the 2019 National Amateur Invitational Championship handled by Brian Sanchez of Great River Kennel in Central Islip, New York, co-owner with Neil Walker. Year-long success made “Will” the 2019-2020 Purina Amateur Shooting Dog. In 2021, Will won the Atlantic Coast and Southeastern Open Shooting Dog Championships handled by Mike Tracy.

A second-litter high achiever is 4XCH RUCH Miller’s Heat Seeker. “Woody,” handled by George Tracy for co-owners Bill and Muriel Primm, Dennis Hood, and Jack and Fran Miller, won the 2021 New England, National Pheasant and Northeastern Open Shooting Dog Championships and was Runner-Up Champion at Garden State. Woody’s first win was the 2019 Georgia Open.

The Tracy team also trained and handled from Lacey and Stud’s second litter CH RUCH Miller’s Just Plain Rowdy for owner Allen Linder and

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Jaime Daniels



Jamie hoses the kennel at his farm in Dawson, Georgia.

2XRUCH Miller's Locked and Loaded for the Primms. From the third litter, there are 2XRUCH Miller's Record Heat, owned by Linder; CH RUCH Miller's High Heat Index, owned by Casey Hollander and Stanton Harrell; and RUCH Miller's Extreme Heat, the 2019-2020 Purina Derby Top Shooting Dog, owned by Joe McHugh.

"Often, you'll see breeders get a good nick and a good litter, but when they repeat the breeding, they don't get anything," Mike Tracy says. "It's amazing that Lacey's three litters with Stud produced so many good dogs. These are smart, bird-finding dogs that are friendly and nice to be around."

The Millers started all the Lacey-Stud pups on birds. One they own from the third litter is the 2020 National Amateur Shooting Dog Derby Champion, Miller's Packing Heat, a female handled by Fran Miller.

Senah Plantation owner Benjy Griffith of Leesburg, Georgia, bought interest in three males from the first Lacey-Stud litter in the fall of 2015 with the understanding that Jack and Fran Miller would run them in their derby year. Fran Miller handled a pup called "Dan" (NCH 2XCH 5XRUCH Miller's Unfinished Business) to his win at the 2016 Masters Open Shooting Dog Championship. Then, she ran Dan in the 2017 National Amateur Free-For-All, where he was the Runner-Up Champion, qualifying him for the 2017 National Amateur Invitational, where he added another Runner-Up Champion to his record.

Senah Plantation head trainer Joel Norman handled Dan and won the 2018 National Open Shooting Dog Championship, repeated his championship win at the 2019 Masters, and took Runner-Up at the 2020 and 2021 Masters. A crossover to all-age stakes netted Dan Runner-Up at the 2021 Florida Open All-Age Championship.

In 2022, Norman plans to try all-age stakes with Dan's littermate, CH RUCH Miller's Stray Bullet, and with Dan's son — Stud's grandson — NCH CH Senah's Back In Business, the 2021 National Open Shooting Dog Champion. When "Nate" won the National in 2021, it was the second time in the 60-year history of the National Open that a father and his son had won.

"These dogs have that desire and range to run in all-age," Norman says. "Although they were started and handled as shooting dogs, they are smart and honest. They look for you to give them direction, and they respond. They are very competitive."

Other notable all-age dogs sired by Stud include 4XCH Showtimes Sam Houston, whom owner Larron Copeland handled to win the 2019 and 2021 Continental Amateur All-Age Championships. Copeland also handled CH Showtimes Mocking Jay, the 2020 National Amateur Quail Champion and the 2019-2020 Purina Amateur Top Field Trial Dog. Respectively, their dams are KF Alias and Thin Ice.

Stud sired 3XRUCH Seekin a Thrill, a male whom owner Ross Leonard handled to Runner-Up at the 2020 National Amateur Shooting Dog Invitational and at the 2021 Mississippi Open Shooting Dog Championship. A female, 4XCH 2XRU CH Thrill Me, handled by Tommy Rice and owned by Keith Finalyson, was the 2019 National Open Shooting Dog Champion. Both Pointers are out of Snow Thrill.

Jamie, pictured with derby-age littermates Dominator's Debutante and Dominator's Queen Bee, feeds [Purina Pro Plan SPORT Performance 30/20 Chicken & Rice Formula](#) to his hardworking all-age dogs.





Holding a restless 4-month-old Pointer pup called “Rip,” Jamie is shown with his family, wife Allison, daughter Rose Marie and son Thomas Christopher.

## ‘I THINK WE’RE THERE’

Having recently moved to a farm in Dawson, Georgia, Jamie is looking forward to this chapter of his life as he and his wife, Allison, raise their two young children. Besides breeding, training and handling all-age dogs, Jamie taps into his plantation background as a real estate broker setting up land sales for buyers of hunting preserves.

As Jamie walks through his kennel, it is quiet with no barking dogs, a signature of the laidback, mellow nature of the Rebel dogs. “My goal is to preserve the Rebel bloodline,” he says. “Fred (Dileo) was working toward the same thing — breeding a smaller, classier dog that looks fancy but has the Rebel ability to find game.”

When Dileo died, Jamie got Pearl Again, a half sister to Stud’s dam, Just Wait Bess. Jamie bred Pearl Again to CH Riverton’s Funseeking Scooter, Stud’s sire, and got Dominator’s Rebel Heir, Stud’s half brother. “Rebel” won the 2017 Florida Open All-Age Championship — and the Fred Dileo Memorial Trophy.

“I knew Rebel had won it when we got done, and I don’t normally feel that way. I am a sentimental guy, so it was quite emotional to win,” he says.

As to Stud, he was Mary Devos’ first and only all-age dog. “I sometimes worked three jobs while going to school to support his campaign,” she says. “It was pretty cool how I got so lucky with him.”

Stud was Jamie’s first Open All-Age Champion. “Everybody’s got to have that one dog that motivates them,” he says. “He would be it for me.”

A few straws of Stud’s frozen semen remain. “I wish we had bred him more,” Jamie says.

“If he could come around now, the world would be his oyster,” he reflects. “At the time, I was a very new handler in the sport, and I am sure I made every mistake a handler could make. Despite my novice skills, he excelled and taught me to trust more and handle better. He pulled me into the winner’s circle with him. At the time, I was unaware of just how special he would be not only to me but to our sport.”

Satisfaction comes from knowing that Stud stamps his best qualities into his children and now his grandchildren. “When I leave this game, I want people to go back and remember the Dominator dogs,” Jamie says. “The No. 1 thing you can hope for as a breeder is to leave a line better than you found it. I think we’re there.” ■

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“THE NO. 1 THING YOU CAN HOPE FOR AS A BREEDER IS TO LEAVE A LINE BETTER THAN YOU FOUND IT. I THINK WE’RE THERE.”

Jaime Daniels

# HRC GRAND SETS THE STANDARD

STORY AND PHOTOS BY KEITH SCHOPP

IN HUNTING DOG AND HUNT TEST CIRCLES, it is known simply as “The Grand.”

Officially, it is the Hunting Retriever Club (HRC) International Grand, and twice each year enthusiasts who share a passion for hunting dogs, and more specifically, duck hunting dogs, travel hundreds or thousands of miles to participate and earn a coveted “Grand” pass.

Pass two Grands and earn 300 championship points and a talented hunting dog becomes a legendary Grand Hunting Retriever Champion (GRHRCH). Pass four Grands and earn 1,000 championship points and your legendary hunting dog attains Hall of Fame (HOF) status.

“Mason,” formally known as GRHRCH (12) Oak Point’s Traveling Man HOF, is going for Grand pass No. 13. Whelped Jan. 19, 2012, the gray-muzzled 9 ½-year-old Labrador has passed

every Grand he’s entered and accumulated 1,360 championship points. He’s a Hall of Famer, in a class by himself, and has the potential to surpass the all-time record of 15 Grand passes.

The 2021 Fall Grand, held Sept. 18 to 21 near St. Louis, will be different for Mason. His handler for those 12 Grand passes, professional trainer Stephen Durrence of Taylor Farm Kennels in Sylvania, Georgia, is at home on oxygen battling COVID-19. With 20 dogs entered at the Fall 2021 Grand, Durrence scrambled to place dogs with other professional handlers to make the journey to St. Louis. He tapped his good friend and fellow professional trainer Marcus Bice to run Mason.

It’s a tough assignment. Marcus and Mason have less than a week to get acquainted and train together. The veteran trainer and handler and the talented retriever will give it their best.

A test setup at the Fall 2021 HRC Grand prepares participants for the course.





Pro handler Marcus Bice sends GRHRCH (12) Oak Point's Traveling Man HOF, better known as "Mason," on a mark.

It's hot, humid and dusty at the August A. Busch Memorial Conservation Area in Weldon Springs, Missouri, and the 7,000-acre property is teeming with lakes and fields to test the most talented hunting dogs and their handlers. Besides Labrador Retrievers, there are Golden Retrievers, Boykin Spaniels, Chesapeake Bay Retrievers, and Flat-Coated Retrievers.

HRC Grand Hunt Committee Chairman Tracy Stubbs couldn't be happier.

"It's the biggest Grand ever," Stubbs says. "We have 884 entries and 795 dogs to start counting scratches. These are dogs, owners and handlers from 140 HRC clubs around the country. It doesn't matter where you're from or what you do in life, when you have a Grand Hunting Retriever Champion you have the ultimate hunting dog."

Ten sites — five land and five water — have been selected at Busch. Handlers are grouped into 10 flights of about 75 dogs each. To earn a Grand pass, dogs must complete five series including two land, two water and the upland test. Dogs are judged at each series and earn a "2" for meeting the standard, "1" for a marginal performance, and "O" for failing the test. Only one marginal score is allowed through the first

four series. Dogs are dropped along the way. The upland test is pass or fail.

The HRC is sanctioned by the United Kennel Club, which carries the registry and offers titles for the HRC program. Stubbs explains that the Grand Hunt test was created for dogs that have attained their Hunting Retriever Championship (HRCH) title.

"Before the Grand, you'd get your HRCH title and you were done," he says. "The Grand was a way to keep those dogs active and in the game — ultimately to improve our purebred hunting dogs. We've come a long way since that first Grand in 1986. It was hosted by the North Louisiana HRC in Monroe, Louisiana, and there were 13 entries."

The journey from 13 entries in 1986 to nearly 900 entries in fall 2021 is a testament to the HRC philosophy: "Conceived by Hunters, for Hunters." Tests are set up that simulate hunting situations. Participants must dress in camouflage clothing. It's a family friendly atmosphere, a hunting and dog-loving fraternity, and a game that continues to grow.

"Our founders wanted something for duck hunters where you compete against a standard,

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"WE'VE RECEIVED  
UNWAVERING  
SUPPORT FROM  
PURINA THROUGH  
THE YEARS."

Tracy Stubbs, HRC Grand Hunt  
Committee Chairman

Rhett Riddle, a pro trainer, traveled from South Carolina to handle "Ranger," a Boykin Spaniel, in the HRC Grand.



not each other," Stubbs says. "And still, it's challenging. We have 500-point clubs and 1,000-point clubs, and then we have our Hall of Fame class. That is the pinnacle hunting dog."

Hunting Retriever Club President Jack Gravely of Foley, Oklahoma, says adding the Hall of Fame class four years ago has been a huge catalyst for growth at the Grand. "At the 2017 Grand there were four flights of dogs," he says. "Here at the Fall 2021 Grand there are 10 flights. Hall of Fame status has been huge for breeding rights as well as bragging rights."

Each test site at Busch is designated as a water or land location and named after an HRC sponsor. Appropriately, Purina Area Manager Ray Voigt and consultant Kelsi Toth are visiting with handlers at Purina Land and will visit professionals and amateurs at every site before the Grand is over.

"This is a huge event for Purina," Voigt says. "It's challenging and geared to the hunter. It's a family friendly atmosphere and very inclusive, and they root for each other. We're proud to be a part of this event."

Stubbs notes that *Purina Pro Plan* is one of two HRC Legacy sponsors. "We've received unwavering support from Purina through the years," he says.

## DOGS ARE WHAT IT'S ALL ABOUT

After two series, Mason has a good Grand going. "He's making me look pretty good," Bice jokes. The third series is a triple water mark with a blind retrieve, meaning Bice must handle Mason to retrieve a bird the dog did not see. The test site is appropriately named "Lucky Duck."

Bice brings Mason to the line and the judges are chatty. "Looks like Mason is going after No. 13," one judge says. "No pressure Marcus," another says.

Bice smiles and replies, "The last thing Stephen told me was 'Mason has passed every Grand he's entered. And he's going to pass this one, too.'"

With that, Bice blew his duck call and the test began. Mason picked up his three marked retrieves, no problem. Bice lined up Mason for the blind retrieve and sent him with a forceful "BACK" command. Mason veered left, offline. Bice blew his whistle, attempting to cast Mason right. Mason continued left: a cast refusal. Another toot on the whistle. Another cast refusal. Toot. Still no luck.

The judges had no choice. "Call him back Marcus. I'm sorry," one judge says.

Mason was out. No Lucky Duck No. 13 at this Grand.

"It's not what I wanted," Bice says after the long walk back to the truck. "He's a really nice dog. We just weren't working well together on that blind today."



Sue Liemohn and her retired Labrador Retriever, GRHRCH Taylor Farm's Midnight Georgia MH, called "Georgia," enjoy the people and dogs at the HRC Grand.

Stephen Durrence appreciated the effort. "It's not Marcus' fault, and it's not Mason's fault," Durrence said later. "They had a very short time to get acquainted. I've had Mason since he's been 6 months old. He's still in great shape, and he'll get to play again at the Grand."

Those who participate in the HRC Grand are drawn to the sport for many reasons. The main attraction common with all is getting to work with their dogs.

Rhett Riddle is a professional trainer and handler from Hartsville, South Carolina. He's parked in the shade at one of 10 test sites with 10 dogs entered in the Grand.

"I love dogs. That's why I'm here," Riddle says. Formerly a veterinary technician, Riddle trained bomb detection dogs for five years and settled into the hunt test and dog training game.

"Over the years I began to learn dog psychology, what they're thinking and what they're trying to tell you," he says. "The best part is getting to work with dogs every day. It's a bonus when they pass."

Meanwhile, Sue Liemohn of St. Francis, Minnesota, and her retired Labrador, GRHRCH Taylor Farm's Midnight Georgia MH ("Georgia"), are under the merchandise tent at HRC Grand headquarters. Liemohn is taking orders for HRC Grand apparel, including camouflage shirts, and embroiders the Fall 2021 HRC logo for customers each afternoon and evening. It's part of her Sue's Embroidery and Designs business, but she and Georgia have many more Grand connections.

"Georgia has four Grand passes and four Master National passes, and she won the 2019 SRS (Super Retriever Series) Crown Championship in the Open division," Liemohn says matter-of-factly. "Stephen Durrence ran her and won with her in the Open division. I qualified her two years in a row in the Amateur division."

Liemohn, who started competing with Georgia in 2008, says, "The best part is meeting new people and seeing the dogs work. I just love the dog work."

Amber Everett is an emergency room nurse from Bridgeport, Texas, who is hooked on the hunt test game. She has four dogs entered: "Linda," "Rylee," "Jessie," and "Bodie."

"How did I get here?" Amber says. "I'm the only child of a dad who loves to hunt and fish who married a guy who loves to hunt and fish.

My first Valentine's Day present from my husband, Taylor, was a cute little Labrador we named Bodie. I bought a book on retriever training and watched every video I could get my hands on and went to seminars. I said, 'I can do this. I can run a dog.' Next thing you know I have four HRCH retrievers and a dog trailer, and I'm driving to the Grand."



Amber Everett came from Texas with four HRCH retrievers, including "Jessie," left, and "Linda."

Everett's goal at the Fall 2021 Grand is to get a Grand pass for 6-year-old Bodie and earn second Grand passes for Rylee and Jessie.

"We want all the initials in front of their names," she says.

Bodie came through, earning his first Grand pass. He'll be back at the Spring 2022 Grand going for his second pass and Grand Champion Retriever status.

Good news just in. Stephen Durrence has kicked COVID-19 and is back running dogs. He enjoys the challenge and agrees passing the Grand is the pinnacle for a hunting dog. He also values the family atmosphere and camaraderie of his HRC colleagues.

"My wife, Kendra, will load up our children and bring them along," he says. "You can ask anybody, they're all as much a part of the event as I am. Bottom line, our dog family is part of our family." ■

# ONE HEALTH: ADVANCING CANINE AND HUMAN HEALTH



**T**HE ONE HEALTH CONNECTION between dogs and people and the environment touches many diseases and ailments shared by both species. This link to better understanding diseases and achieving optimal health outcomes wove throughout the 2021 AKC Canine Health Foundation National Parent Club Canine Health Conference.

This year's virtual conference, held Aug. 13 to 15, featured 18 talks presented during half-day sessions devoted to dermatology and immunology; cancer; neurology and epilepsy; and cardiology. Most of the presenters, their studies funded by CHF,

enlightened attendees with a glimpse of research that has become their life's work.

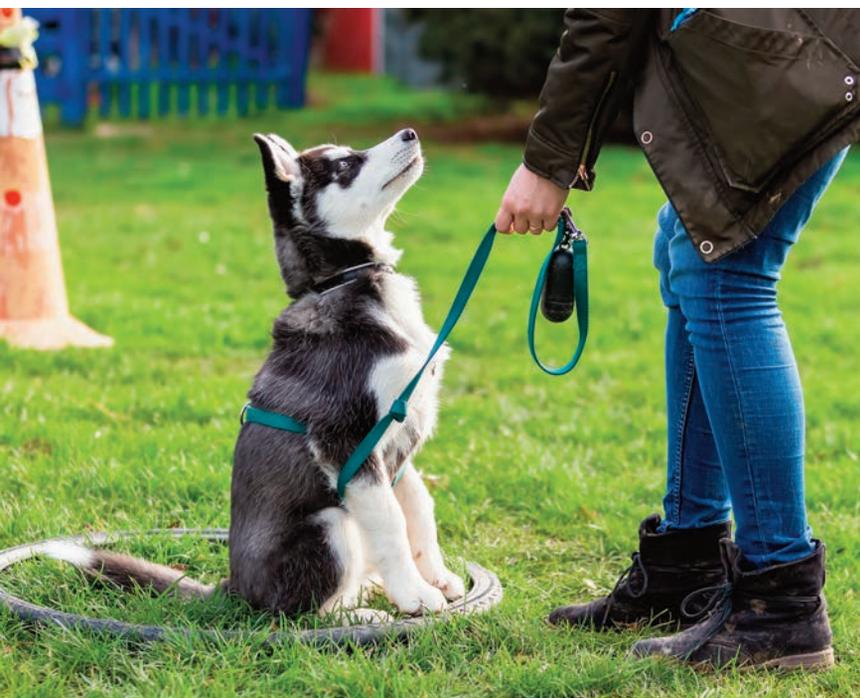
Funding this important canine health research is the mission of CHF, one that is shared with parent clubs and dog lovers. Having just passed its 25-year anniversary in 2020, CHF has provided more than \$62 million in research grants since its beginning in 1995. Purina is proud to be a charter sponsor since 1997 of CHF and of this conference. Here are highlights from this year's 13th biennial event.

## A SIMILAR NEUROLOGIC DISEASE: DM & ALS

The progressive neurologic disease known as degenerative myelopathy (DM) affects more than 40 breeds of dog, including mixed breeds, says Joan R. Coates, DVM, MS, DACVIM (Neurology), professor of neurology and neurosurgery at the University of Missouri.

Shortly after Dr. Coates and a collaborative team discovered the [autosomal recessive mutation in the superoxide dismutase 1 \(SOD1\) gene](#) tied to DM in dogs, they realized it was the same gene causing some forms of familial amyotrophic lateral sclerosis (ALS), or Lou Gehrig's disease, in people. In dogs, the *SOD1* gene contains a missense mutation that codes the wrong amino acid affecting the gene's protein.

Among their similarities, DM and ALS are more likely to occur with age. Depending on the breed, dogs typically develop DM from 9 to 11 years of age; people may experience ALS symptoms from age 40 to their mid-60s. In both







## 20 YEARS OF CHIC

Eight parent clubs tried something new in 2001. They invested in the health of their breeds by signing up for the pilot [Canine Health Information Center \(CHIC\)](#).

Now, in its 20th year, CHIC pauses to celebrate. Adding to the excitement, the American Kennel Club recently announced it will start including a dog's CHIC number on its registration and pedigree records.

With 207 breeds enrolled and 154,474 dogs having received CHIC numbers, the program that instilled an open approach to reporting on the health of individual dogs has proved valuable.

Updating conference attendees, Eddie Dziuk, Chief Operating Officer of the Orthopedic Foundation for Animals, says, "CHIC has promoted awareness of health testing and, importantly, allows breeders to apply selective pressure to breed healthy dogs."

Co-sponsored by the OFA and the AKC Canine Health Foundation, CHIC relies on parent clubs to designate appropriate breed health tests. CHIC numbers are issued when owners submit their dogs' test results and share the information publicly in the database — regardless whether a dog passes its health clearances.

Meanwhile, the CHIC DNA Repository, which began in 2005, banks 30,877 DNA samples of dogs representing 198 breeds. Researchers worldwide have used the DNA for studies ranging from cancer and eye diseases to neurological conditions and metabolic disorders. Dziuk encourages owners to update their dogs' health records with new diagnoses to benefit ongoing research. Updates can be emailed to [ofa@offa.org](mailto:ofa@offa.org), along with a dog's name, CHIC number, diagnosis, and pertinent health information.

Happy Birthday, CHIC!



species, muscle weakness becomes debilitating. Hind-limb weakness renders dogs paralyzed within a year. Damage to nerve cells in the brain and spinal cord of people may cause difficulty walking, slurred speech and behavioral changes. About 5 to 10 percent of ALS is inherited, and 50 percent of children whose parents have the familial form develop ALS.

The genetics of DM is mired in complexity. "We found that only some dogs that inherit the *SOD1* mutant allele from their sire and dam develop the disease," Dr. Coates says. "Homozygosity is a risk factor for DM but not a definitive diagnosis. Further, the longer an at-risk dog lives, the higher the likelihood of the dog developing DM, giving it an age-related incomplete penetrance mode of inheritance."

More recently, some heterozygous dogs that inherit only one copy of the *SOD1* gene mutation have developed DM. This has occurred in Rhodesian Ridgebacks, Chesapeake Bay Retrievers, Bernese Mountain Dogs, German Shepherd Dogs, Australian Shepherds, Alaskan Huskies, and mixed-breed dogs. Additionally, a second *SOD1* missense mutation has been found in Berners, though it is less common.

"The heterozygous inheritance in dogs seems logical since most human *SOD1* mutations are dominant ALS," says Dr. Coates. "The fact that homozygosity is a major risk factor though not a definitive diagnosis for DM is important for breeders when they interpret DNA test results. They can breed dogs that carry the *SOD1* mutation to clear dogs to avoid producing affected dogs without reducing genetic diversity."

Importantly, because of the similarities between the two diseases, DM is now recognized as a naturally occurring model for studying ALS in people and developing new therapies. "Nucleic acid-based therapies using antisense oligonucleotides offer promise in modifying or arresting the course of neurodegenerative disease," Dr. Coates says. "We believe therapies that decrease the amount of aggregated *SOD1* in neurons are likely to reverse or slow the disorder in canine DM."

## THE ENVIRONMENT AND ATOPIC DERMATITIS

Sharing insights relating human and canine atopic dermatitis (AD), Domenico Santoro, DVM, DrSc, PhD, DECVD, DACVD, DACVM, associate professor of dermatology at the University of

Florida, says, “Dogs and humans have strikingly similar AD. It is a complex, multifactorial, chronic disease that can be caused by alterations in the skin barrier, immune dysfunction, nervous system imbalance, environmental pollution, excessive nontargeted hygiene impairing immune tolerance, stress, and family history.

A pruritic, inflammatory skin disease, AD affects up to 30 percent of dogs, 10 percent of children, and 4 percent of adults. “The companionship of people and dogs, their shared environment, and the similarities between human and canine dermatitis make the dog a perfect natural animal model for this disease,” Dr. Santoro says.

Citing a Finnish study published in 2018 in [Scientific Reports](#), Dr. Santoro notes that in this study of nearly 6,000 dogs representing 258 breeds the researchers found that allergic signs were more prevalent in dogs living in urban environments, and if a dog was allergic,

it was more likely the owner was also allergic. Regular contact with farm animals and other pets was believed to protect against allergies.

Importantly, dogs are key to understanding AD and developing effective treatments. “Given the One Health effect of this disease, a canine animal model will undoubtedly be helpful as we explore novel therapies such as plant extracts, beneficial bacterial and antibiofilm agents,” Dr. Santoro says. “Dogs will help us understand the risk factors and protective factors of this complex disease.”

## ENVIRONMENTAL CANCER RISK IN DOGS & PEOPLE

Lymphoma and bladder cancer are common cancers in people and dogs, says Lauren A. Trepanier, DVM, PhD, DACVIM, DACVCP, the Melita Grunow Family Professor in Companion Animal Health at the University of Wisconsin-Madison.



“OUR GOAL IS TO ESTABLISH WHETHER CERTAIN HOUSEHOLD CHEMICALS CONTRIBUTE TO LYMPHOMA AND BLADDER CANCER IN DOGS.”

Lauren A. Trepanier, DVM, PhD, DACVIM, DACVCP, of the University of Wisconsin-Madison

Increased risk for both cancers in people relates to exposure to industrial and lawn chemicals and water or air pollution, and the same may be true for dogs. Dr. Trepanier and her research team are working to measure suspect toxic chemicals and pollutants in dogs with lymphoma and bladder cancer to help identify preventable chemical exposures that may be driving these cancers.

In a [study in Boxers](#), a breed susceptible to highly aggressive T-cell lymphoma, the research group evaluated the environments of 56 Boxers with lymphoma and 84 unaffected Boxers aged 10 and older. “We found that Boxers with lymphoma are two times more likely to live within 2 miles of an active crematorium or a chemical supplier and almost six times as likely to live near an active nuclear plant,” Dr. Trepanier says.

“We also found that these Boxers with lymphoma were more likely to live in a county with a high ozone level and high human risk for exposure to volatile organic compounds (VOCs), such as butadiene from car exhaust and formaldehyde from paints and paneling. Although association does not prove causative, it raises concerns.”

As for bladder cancer in people, about half of cases are due to smoking and about 20 percent are related to workplace chemical exposures. The cause of the remaining 30 percent of bladder cancer is not well understood. Since dogs develop

## 9/11 RESEARCHER, DR. CYNTHIA OTTO, RECEIVES THE ASA MAYS AWARD



Dr. Cynthia M. Otto of the Penn Vet Working Dog Center

While 9/11 was life-transforming for families who lost loved ones and for America, it was life-defining for Cynthia M. Otto, PhD, DVM, DACVECC, DACVSMR.

The lead investigator of the [9/11 Medical Surveillance Study](#), her inquisitive nature steered her on a journey, notably the work continues, to learn about the short- and long-term health and behavioral effects to dogs deployed at Ground Zero, the Pentagon and the Fresh Kills Landfill at Staten Island.

Befittingly, on the 20-year anniversary of 9/11, Dr. Otto was awarded the Asa

Mays, DVM, Excellence in Canine Health Research Award from the AKC Canine Health Foundation. The award, named for Dr. Mays, a charter member of the CHF board of directors, is given biennially to a researcher who advances canine health.

Working at Ground Zero with a four-dog team as part of the Federal Emergency Management Agency Pennsylvania Urban Task Force I, Dr. Otto saw firsthand the tribulations to search-and-rescue dogs. Unlike their human counterparts, they had no protective gear yet were exposed to toxic chemicals and hazardous conditions.

With CHF funding support of \$600,000 for this research, a collection of individual studies that thus far have resulted in 11 scientific journal publications, Dr. Otto explored the impact of 9/11 related to toxicology, mortality and the dog-handler relationship. Lifetime monitoring of deployed dogs produced surprising results showing that they suffered little negative

effects compared to humans. The last surviving 9/11 dog, a Golden Retriever named “Bretagne,” died in 2016 at 16 years of age from kidney failure.

Inspired by the important role of the 9/11 search-and-rescue dogs, Dr. Otto, professor of working dog sciences and sports medicine at the University of Pennsylvania, founded the [Penn Vet Working Dog Center](#) in 2012. She currently is executive director.

Congratulations, Dr. Otto!





a similar form of aggressive bladder cancer and share environments with people, dogs may help identify chemical risk for bladder cancer in both species, says Dr. Trepanier.

A [study of 66 dogs with bladder cancer](#) and 70 older unaffected dogs compared the household proximity to high-risk chemicals and found that affected dogs were four times more likely to live in homes that used insecticides, more than four times likely to live in areas with high ozone levels, and three times more likely to have higher levels of total trihalomethanes, which are chlorination byproducts in municipal tap water.

A [second study evaluated](#) whether dogs and owners shared similar toxic exposure in the household. In 42 healthy people and their healthy pet dogs, urinary exposure to acrolein, an air pollutant in cooking fumes, arsenic metabolites linked to bladder cancer, and one herbicide breakdown product were detected in both species and were significantly higher in dogs.

“Dogs are smaller and closer to the ground, and they tend to roll in the grass and groom themselves, which could explain the higher levels in dogs,” Dr. Trepanier says. “Most importantly, we also found that higher urine chemical levels in

dogs were linked to higher chemical levels in owners, which suggests shared source of these chemicals.”

Meanwhile, research on both cancers continues. Dr. Trepanier and her team are now directly measuring VOC chemicals in dogs with lymphoma and unaffected controls. In another study, they are directly measuring acrolein and arsenic metabolites in [dogs with bladder cancer, unaffected matched dogs and their owners](#). Recruitment is ongoing for both studies. For information, contact [Dr. Trepanier](#).

“Our goal is to establish whether certain household chemicals contribute to lymphoma and bladder cancer in dogs,” Dr. Trepanier says. “Ultimately, the big picture is to provide evidence-based cancer preventive strategies.”

The ties that connect dogs and people and the environment offer hope. Dogs may help us better understand Lou Gehrig’s disease, and vice versa people may help us learn about treatments for degenerative myelopathy. There also are opportunities to gain awareness about ways to reduce atopic dermatitis and cancers such as lymphoma and bladder cancer. One Health is a bridge to a future of optimal health care for dogs and people. ■

# FEMALE BORDER COLLIE, 'LEE,' CAPTURES PURINA OUTSTANDING HERDING AWARD



"Lee" is the top Border Collie in 2020-2021 USBCHA field trials.

The confident, forward style of a 6-year-old tricolor female Border Collie named "Lee" was the catalyst that helped her become the 2020-2021 Purina Outstanding Field Trial Herding Dog. Bred, owned and handled by Beverly Lambert of Andover, Connecticut, Lee is the top winner in the [U.S. Border Collie Handlers Association](#) (USBCHA) herding field trials, a sport in which dogs are judged on their sheepherding skills.

"It was a truncated year in which there was not the usual number of trials due to COVID-19," says Lambert, a 40-year USBCHA competitor who handled Lee's parents, "Joe" and "Nan," members of the 2017 U.S. World Team. "Our biggest success was at the Bluegrass Classic in Lexington, Kentucky,

where Lee took third in the Finals. The rest of her points were earned at smaller trials."

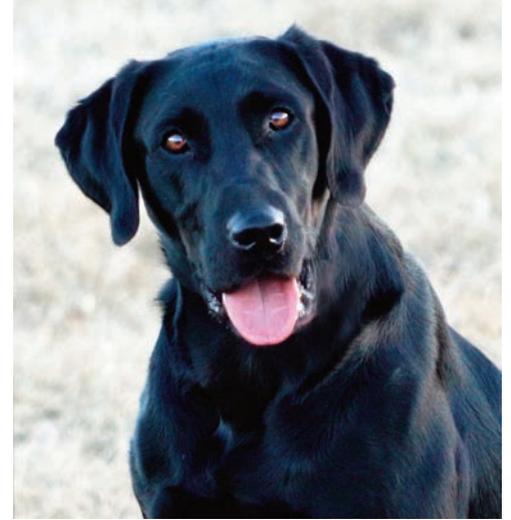
Nurturing Lee's innate ability was not easy due to the scarcity of wide, open sheepherding pastures in the Northeast. After foundation training Lee in her five-acre starter pasture at home, Lambert began traveling the country to work her talented Border Collie at the ranches and farms of friends. "A good dog must be willing and able to work even when they cannot see or hear you," she says. "I had to give Lee experiences to foster that."

Although it took Lee four years to settle into a competent, trustworthy sheepherding partner, Lambert is pleased with the results. "Lee is a strong, aggressive dog who is hard to handle, but she really suits me. I enjoy running her," she says. This year's Purina Outstanding Herding Dog is fed [Purina Pro Plan SPORT 30/20 Chicken & Rice Formula](#) dog food. ■

PHOTOS: WERNER REITBOECK PHOTOGRAPHY



Having a strong, assertive working style, Lee has matured into a competent, reliable sheepdog.



The 2020 Purina Outstanding Retrievers are, from left, NFC-FC-AFC Cropper's Fire In The Hole, the Open winner, FC-AFC Hockley Creek's Switch Hitter, the Amateur winner, and Watermarks Shadow, the Derby winner.

## PURINA AWARD RETRIEVERS ARE 'DEEP,' 'MICKEY' & 'SHADOW'

The top-performing Labrador Retrievers in the country in 2020 retrieved the highest honors in the field trial game at a banquet in August at Gilmanton, Wisconsin. These Purina Outstanding Retriever Award winners, "Deep," "Mickey" and "Shadow," along with their owners and handlers were enthusiastically celebrated for their success.

Winning the [2020 National Open Retriever Championship](#) put Deep (NFC-FC-AFC Cropper's Fire In The Hole), an 8-year-old male, in the lead to become the Purina Outstanding Open Retriever. Owner Katharine "Kate" Simonds of Morrisville, Vermont, has judged and competed in field trials for 50 years. She and her late husband, Pete Simonds, were inducted into the Retriever Hall of Fame in 2011 and 2001, respectively. Simonds recalls her self-fulfilling prophecy when she told handler Al Arthur, "I want you to find me a really good dog — one that we can win the National with." Arthur of Sandhill Retrievers in Lincolnton, Georgia, recognized Deep's potential, which translated into 23 Purina Points during the year. Bred by Dr. Jack Gwaltney Jr. of Charlottesville, Virginia, Deep was named by first owner Newt Cropper of Ocean City, Maryland. Conveying her excitement to have won, Simonds says, "Deep is a wonderful dog with all the attributes you look for in a retriever."

A four-time Purina Award winner, Mickey, a 7-year-old male, achieved 31.5 Purina Points with owner-handler Robby Bickley of Gainesville, Texas, to earn the Purina Outstanding Amateur Retriever Award. It was his third time to win the Amateur award having previously won in 2017 and 2019, a year in which he also won the Open award, marking the first time a dog won both

awards with the same handler. FC-AFC Hockley Creek's Switch Hitter earned the Field Champion and Amateur Field Champion titles as a 3-year-old. A two-time double header winner, Mickey swept both the open and amateur field trials in [2019 at the Brazosport Retriever Club](#) and in 2020 at the Centennial Retriever Club. Bred by Joe O'Brien and James Roberts, both of Tulsa, Oklahoma, Mickey was sired by NAFC-FC-AFC Texas Troubadour out of FC-AFC Dance Hall Gal. "Mickey has a lot of the qualities we often talk about, but what sets him apart is his memory," Bickley says. "He is smart and has an excellent memory."

The Purina Outstanding Derby Retriever is a 2-year-old male named Shadow, who compiled an impressive 95 Purina Points with 11 wins and 26 placements. Watermarks Shadow was handled by Bill Hillmann of Caldwell, Texas, the co-owner with breeder Dr. Mary Tatum of Giddings, Texas. Both veterans in the sport, Hillmann has handled six Purina Derby Award winners, and Dr. Tatum, who has produced two National Champions and dozens of Field Champions under the [Watermark](#) prefix, was named the [2015 AKC Breeder of the Year for Retriever Field Events](#). Shadow was sired by FC-AFC Hawkeye's Candlewoods Shadow out of Watermarks Rising Starr. "It was a really nice breeding, and Bill said, 'We can make this dog great,'" Dr. Tatum recalls. "Shadow is a powerful dog and very strong in the water."

Powered by *Purina Pro Plan*, Mickey is fed [Purina Pro Plan SPORT Performance 30/20 Chicken & Rice Formula](#) dog food, and Shadow is fed [Purina Pro Plan SPORT Performance 30/20 Salmon & Rice Formula](#) dog food. ■

# Circle of Champions



## 'JOSIE,' A SPINONE ITALIANO, IS NO. 1 IN ALL-BREED

A fast climb up the rankings makes a 3-year-old female named “Josie,” which is short for Josephine, the No. 1 [Spinone Italiano](#) in all-breed competition and No. 2 in breed competition. The two-time Reserve Best in Show winner, the first brown Spinone to win Reserve, won March 26 at the Tupelo Kennel Club in Jackson, Tennessee, and Aug. 22 at the Carolina Kennel Club in Greensboro, North Carolina. Formally known as GCHS Collina d’Oro Solo Un Bacio, Josie was bred by Stacey Anderson Belt, Lorne Belt and Laura Reeves, all of Grants Pass, Oregon. They began the [Collina d’Oro](#) breeding program in 2005 with a focus on producing Spinoni with gentle temperaments and natural hunting ability. Her dam, BIS GCHS Collina d’Oro Adele By Royal Design, is the first Spinone bitch to have won a Best in Show. Josie is owned by Claire Wisch Abraham of Lovettsville, Virginia, and Stacey Anderson Belt. Handler Kelly Wisch Shupp of Hallam, Pennsylvania, says “Josie loves being a show dog. She is very social and fun to campaign.” This top winner is fed [Purina Pro Plan SPORT Performance Chicken & Rice Formula](#) dog food.

A natural charmer, “Josie” is on a winning streak after having won 13 Sporting Group placements in August, six of which were Group Firsts and one that netted a Reserve Best in Show.

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## ENGLISH SETTER 'STELLA' WINS NSTRA 2021 PURINA ENDURANCE CLASSIC

The statuesque standout among 192 bird dogs competing at the National Shoot to Retrieve Association (NSTRA) [2021 Purina Endurance Classic](#) was a 4 ½-year-old tricolor female English Setter named “Stella.” Owner-handler Mike Stotts Jr. of Nine Mile Falls, Washington, attributes the success of Stotts’ Skipping Stella to her keen bird-finding ability, stylish pointing and strong overall performance over six 30-minute rounds and the final one-hour round. Held Sept. 8 to 11 in Lewistown, Montana, the endurance event was a walking trial that drew handlers of several bird dog breeds from across the country. Points were earned for quail covey finds, retrieving ability, backing or honoring a brace mate on point, ground coverage in search for game, and obedience work. Stotts, a 20-year NSTRA competitor and avid hunter, says, “On the last day, Stella ran in four rounds. In the final round, she slammed the first quail covey find about 100 yards out, only five seconds into the round.” Bred by Shaun Rydl of Buzzard Roost Kennels in Medora, Iowa, Stella is fed [Purina Pro Plan SPORT Performance 30/20 Chicken & Rice Formula](#) dog food.

“Stella” shined in her performance through seven rounds to win the NSTRA Purina Endurance Classic.



## 'HIGGINS' IS TOP-WINING AMERICAN-BRED DANDIE DINMONT



The top-winning American-bred [Dandie Dinmont](#) in the history of the breed is “Higgins,” a 4-year-old male with eye-catching appeal and tenacious temperament. The winner of 11 Bests in Show, MBIS GCHS King’s Mtn. Henry Higgins is the No. 1 Terrier and No. 1 Dandie all systems. Representing the 12th generation of King’s Mtn. Dandies, Higgins was bred by Betty-Anne Stenmark of Grass Valley, California, Sandra Pretari Hickson of San Bruno, California, and B.J. Pumfrey of Vancouver, British Columbia. He is handled by Luiz Abreu of Starr, South Carolina, and owned by Teresa (Puna) Bell of Kailua, Hawaii. “Higgins is an incredibly balanced dog from front to rear, and he has great length of body, correct tail set and carriage,” Stenmark says. “He moves wonderfully with evident drive from behind while holding a correct topline. His impressive, masculine head and big dark eyes show off an affectionate dog who loves dog shows.” The handsome Higgins is fed [Purina Pro Plan SPORT Active 27/17 Turkey & Barley Formula](#) dog food.

A record-setting American-bred Dandie Dinmont, “Higgins” is much like his famous Australian relative, NZ/AUST/AM CH Hobergays Fineus Fogg, the No. 1 dog in the country in 2006 and winner of 63 Bests in Show.

## LAGOTTO ROMAGNOLO NAMED 'ORCA' IS NO. 1 SPORTING DOG

In a little more than one year on the U.S. show circuit, a white-and-brown 3 ½-year-old female [Lagotto Romagnolo](#) named “Orca” has ensured that Americans not only recognize Italy’s famous truffle-hunting dog but also fall completely in love with the adorable breed. The No. 2 all-breed dog in the country, No. 1 Sporting dog and No. 1 Lagotto all systems is EUR MBIS/BISS JEW19 MBIS/MBISS GCHS Kan Trace Very Cheeky Chic. Handled by Phil and Amy Booth of [BlueRose Kennels](#) in Mims, Florida, Orca is owned by Victor Malzoni Jr. of Malibu, California, her breeder Sabina Sinkovic Zdunic of Rijeka, Croatia, and Ante Lucin of Croatia. “Orca is an intelligent, endearing companion and truly one-of-a-kind for her breed,” says Phil Booth, who has piloted her to 24 Bests in Show and Best in Specialty Show at the [2021 Lagotto Romagnolo Club of America National Specialty](#). A European superstar before 2 years of age, Orca won 22 Bests in Show at Fédération Cynologique Internationale shows, twice earning Supreme Best in Show over all-breed entries of 6,000 dogs. Orca is fed [Purina Pro Plan SPORT Performance 26/16 Chicken & Rice Formula](#) dog food.

With powerful movement, perfect footing and effortless gliding across the ring, “Orca” is the highest-achieving Lagotto Romagnolo since the breed was recognized in 2015 by the American Kennel Club.



## AKC NATIONAL GUNDOG BRACE BEAGLE CHAMPIONSHIP IS WON BY 'MEG,' 'MOLLY,' 'TRACKMAN' & 'CHAOS'

With rabbit-tracking accuracy, four Field Champion Gundogs outshined the competition to win their classes at the 2021 AKC National Gundog Brace Beagle Championship Oct. 4 to 5 at Belmont Jefferson Beagle Club in St. Clairsville, Ohio.

**NGBC FCGD Eagle's Wings Mega Ball**, a 2 ½-year-old tricolor female, won the 13-inch class with clean, tight check work, following the rabbit's every turn into cover and down the path. "Meg" topped 52 hounds with her good nose, straight-line tracking and exuberant chop mouth. Owned by breeder Marty Gipson of Paris, Missouri, Meg was handled by Zak Hoover of Upland, Indiana. Her sire, FCGD Hillside's High Ball, is Gipson's first finished Field Champion, and her dam is FCGD Stanford's Jessie.

**NGBC FCGD Old Hatchie's I'm Taking The Grand Tour**, a 2 ½-year-old black-and-tan female, won the 15-inch class, outperforming 66 rabbit trackers with her slow, chop mouth, big nose and focus. "Molly" was handled by breeder-owner Todd Odle of Jackson, Tennessee. She was the high hound in second series when she ran with her littermate sister, FCGD Old Hatchie's

Dragondoll, who held second place. Odle says Molly performs much like her dam, NSPC NGBC FCGD Stephen's Pearly Blue. Her sire is FCGD McDaniel's Jake From State Farm.

**NGBC FCGD Still's Wipeout Trackman**, a 4-year-old tricolor male, kept his cool to overturn the high brace and win the 13-inch class out of 38 gundog Beagles. Handled by owner Travis Still of Blackville, South Carolina, "Trackman" stood out with his squall mouth that opened to a chop mouth when trailing the rabbit into thick cover. Likening Trackman to his sire, NSPC FCGC Still's Wipeout Slim Shady, Still says Trackman was the stud puppy out of a litter whelped by FCGD Strickland's One Eye Wonder. David Strickland of Georgia is the breeder.

**NGBC FCGD Hall's Hillbilly Chaos**, a 6-year-old tricolor male, came back from fourth in second series to win the 15-inch class. Handled by Caleb Cole of Scottsburg, Indiana, a co-owner with Marc Gibbs of Marengo, Indiana, "Chaos" kept the rabbit going and stood out with his tracking and high-pitched mouth. Bred by Tim Young of Booneville, Indiana, Chaos was sired by FCGD Blue Rivers Doc Holiday out of Young's Rock Hard Roxy.

Molly, Trackman and Chaos were fueled for their fast-action, rabbit-tracking performances by [Purina Pro Plan SPORT Performance 30/20 Chicken & Rice Formula](#) dog food.



The 2021 National Gundog Brace Champions are, clockwise from top left, "Meg," "Trackman," "Chaos," and "Molly."

## AZAWAKH NAMED 'RELIC' WINS SANTA BARBARA BEST IN SHOW & SIGHTHOUND SPECTACULAR



A long and lean, sophisticated 3-year-old red-and-white female [Azawakh](#) named "Relic" is setting impressive records. She has won five Bests in Show, including at the Santa Barbara (California) Kennel Club, topping 1,500 dogs, and the Greenville (South Carolina) Kennel Club, edging out 2,169 dogs. MBIS/BISS GCH Azamour Anbar also took first place at the Santa Barbara Sighthound Spectacular. "Relic is breathtaking to watch," says handler [Christian Manelopoulos](#) of Haw River, North Carolina. "The hallmark of this African sighthound breed is its light, effortless movement, making it appear to float across the ground. Unlike sighthounds with powerful side gait, the Azawakh has a unique upright carriage and its front feet do not extend past the nose." Owners Pippi and Patrick Guilfoyle of Monroe, North Carolina, befriended breeders Francesca Zampini, Patrizio Palliani and Gianni Baylo, all of Citt  di Castello, Italy, after seeing their Azawakh at the World Dog Show. Relic's sire, Azamour Sumrack Masseur, won the Sighthound Group at the World Dog Show in 2013 and 2014. "Although Relic is a diva to others, she is very sweet and playful at home," says Pippi Guilfoyle. This beautiful Azawakh is fed [Purina ONE SmartBlend Chicken & Rice Natural Adult](#) dog food.

The No. 1 Azawakh all systems, "Relic" is the first Westminster Kennel Club Best of Breed winner, having won in 2020 and 2021, after the breed became eligible for dogs shows in January 2019.

## 2021 GRAND NATIONAL GROUSE CHAMPION IS ENGLISH SETTER NAMED 'MAC'

A 9-year-old white-and-orange male English Setter named "Mac" hunted grouse with top-notch expertise to win the [2021 Grand National Grouse Championship](#) in November at Marienville, Pennsylvania. 8XCH 3XRUCH Ponderosa Mac won the one-hour stake with an outstanding grouse find on a challenging, wide open course. Handler Scott Chaffee of [Pioneer Kennels](#) in Clare, Michigan, says, "Mac had a great, forward-running race and perfect manners." Highly versatile and adaptable, Mac has won championships in all three cover dog geographical regions. He is the only cover dog in history to win eight championships and to place in four consecutive Nationals. At the Grand National Grouse Championship, he was Runner-Up Champion in 2017 and Champion in 2018, and at the Grand National Grouse & Woodcock Invitational Championship, he was Champion in 2018 and Runner-Up Champion in 2019. Bred by Chaffee and his wife, Tammy, and owned by Steve Snyder of Ellendale, Minnesota, Mac was sired by 2XCH 2XRUCH Jetwood out of 2XCH Cooper Mtn. Pepsi. This top cover dog is fed [Purina Pro Plan SPORT Performance 30/20 Chicken & Rice Formula](#) dog food.

Among the greatest cover dogs ever, "Mac" won his eighth career championship at the 2021 Grand National Grouse Championship, outperforming 55 bird dogs. In 2021, he also won the New York State Grouse Championship and the Wisconsin Cover Dog Championship.





PHOTO: RHONDA CASSIDY

## POMERANIAN: A VERY BIG DOG IN A SMALL PACKAGE

Energetic and fun, the Pomeranian is a sassy, independent toy dog. A German spitz breed descending from working dogs of the arctic, the Pom originally weighed more than 50 pounds and was used for herding, pulling sleds and guarding. Despite the breed's downsizing, the Pomeranian to this day is a very big dog in a small package.

British royalty, Queen Charlotte in 1767 and Queen Victoria in 1888, had Pomeranians that were beloved companions. Gifted with a 12-pound male named "Marco" from Florence, Italy, Queen Victoria was so enthralled with the breed that at one time she had 35 Pomeranians in her kennel. She sparked the breed's popularity and a trend toward smaller Poms.

The third most popular toy breed registered by the American Kennel Club, the attention-getting Pomeranian is glamorous with a magnificent double coat, heavily plumed, high-set tail that lies flat on the back, sweet foxlike expression, and pricked ears. Loyal though sometimes stubborn, the Pom excels at conformation, obedience, rally, agility, and pet therapy. This loving lap dog weighs from 3 to 7 pounds.

**Sources:** *The Complete Dog Book*: Official Publication of the American Kennel Club and the [American Pomeranian Club](#)

**Above:** GCHP Empee's Cyber Monday HOF GC, co-owned by breeders Mario J. Panlilio Jr. and Maritess Ingco with Stephanie Hentschel.