

Mid-Carolina Field Trial Club Celebrates 50 Years

By E. LAWTON HUGGINS
Sandlapper Field Trial Club

ON November 20, 2010 the Association of South Carolina Field Trial Clubs gathered at the Mid-Carolina Field Trial Club near Cassatt, S. C., for its fall amateur celebration. When the association's fixture was set during the summer, the fall event of the Mid-Carolina Field Trial Club was greatly anticipated — this club would be celebrating its 50th anniversary of hosting bird dog field trials on these historic grounds.

Charles K. Young, a charter member of the club, stated that the first field trial was actually run the first weekend in November, 1960. He has no problem remembering the date as he ran dogs on the grounds on Saturday and his oldest daughter was born on Sunday of the same weekend.

The club made the decision to delay the celebration a couple of weekends to accommodate the Region 3 Amateur Shooting Dog Championship and its sister club's H. Cooper Black, Jr. Memorial Field Trial. The principals of this club are givers and supporters of other clubs and their kindness was rewarded with a large gathering for their event.

Also in attendance was local legend Gary Bradley, another charter member, who is in his mid-80s and is still regarded as the club's "top Derby man."

Rounding out the original players was Marion Yarbrough who has over 40 years of involvement with the club on his resumé. All three of the aforementioned members were running dogs this weekend and enjoying themselves greatly. They are certainly part of "The Greatest Generation."

The Huggins team first visited the Mid-Carolina trial in November, 2003, in response to my 9-year-old daughter's desire to run her own shooting dog in a field trial. I selected this club's fall fixture thinking we would slip into a small trial, let Marian run her dog and slip back home quietly. Imagine my surprise when I arrived on the grounds and found the field around the clubhouse full of horse trailers, horses and bird dogs. The entry on that day included over 30 dogs in the Amateur Shooting Dog Stake alone. After introducing myself to Mr. Yarbrough and paying my entry fee, I wandered into the clubhouse and began to look around at the walls which were covered with laminated articles from *The American Field* detailing the exploits

of club members on the regional and national stage. It became clear that I was standing in the epicenter of the Palmetto State's bird dog world.

At the time our string of gun dogs all carried the Klee's prefix designating our longtime association with Roger and Susan Duerksen. Marian selected Klee's Dashing Queen, a daughter of their great champion Erin's Dash, for her field trial debut. Queen had been retired from competition for quite some time but she had retained her skill sets and did not disappoint, rendering a nice race and three polished pieces of bird work. The seeds of a young field trialer were sown that day and have been nurtured by this club and its members ever since.

On February 17, 2007 Marian made a triumphant return to the club and gained her first amateur shooting dog placement with Klee's Sweet Pye, which was still under the ownership of the Duerksens. Following this placement, they conveyed ownership to Marian and Pye is an integral part of her team to date.

The youth movement continues to

gain momentum at Mid-Carolina. The anniversary weekend was a family affair with the grounds populated by children at play, riding horses in the gallery and enjoying the fine meals with their parents and grandparents.

One special 10-year-old, Jack Kimbrell, was on hand to run his puppy. This miniature version of his grandfather, John Ray Kimbrell, piloted his puppy around the course and gained the runner-up placement for his first win, and it will certainly be a positive memory for the rest of his life.

Following the announcement of winners on Sunday, I shared with the group how the Mid-Carolina Club and its members have greatly enriched my life. They have also been positive role models for Marian during her formative years. Perhaps the best moment of the trial came as we were driving out of the grounds. We observed a beautiful Derby-age pointer standing in the bird patch near the end of the course. As the handler approached, I recognized him as Hall of Fame member Gene Casale, who is still running his own dogs at close to 90 years of age. Folks, when you are at the Mid-Carolina FTC, you are in the company of the giants in this game.

May she continue to host bird dog fanciers for another 50 years!

Mid-Carolina Field Trial Club

By BOB WHITE

THE Mid-Carolina, the oldest club in South Carolina, had its fiftieth anniversary trial on November 20-21. The weather, which is paramount for any trial to be successful, was perfect. Cool in the morning and warming in the afternoon. Perhaps a little too warm since a number of dogs started out looking good but faded as the braces went on.

On Saturday evening there was a handlers' dinner served after a cocktail hour. The dinner was "low country boil," a true Southern dish.

Both days saw a lot of family members out for the nice weather. These same people stayed for the evening festivities. The diners' numbers swelled to over 50 family members joining the handlers. It has been some time since we had that many stay after the running. Many comments the following day indicated how well everyone enjoyed the dinner get-together. You only have one 50th anniversary, so you might as well make the most of it.

Charles Young and Marion Yarbrough spearheaded the gathering using their

expertise in cooking the vittles. We had special hats made up to mark this occasion. Seventy-five were ordered and they were all sold. Each judge was given one.

Judges for the trial were as advertised. Hall-of-Famer John Ray Kimbrell looked at the Shooting Dog and Derby. Dr. Billy McCarthern joined him for the Shooting Dog, and his son (birthday boy) George watched the Derbies.

Not announced, but equally important, the judges for the Puppy Stake were Dr. JoJo Denton and Charles Young. It was great to have these two men (JoJo is current president of the club) to handle what I consider the most important stake of the trial. Far too often the duty is given to greenhorns who do not have the experience necessary to determine the quality of puppies and whether they can move up to Derby successfully. Needless to say all these men have a wealth of experience. We were lucky to have such an experienced panel to help us commemorate the special occasion. Thank you, gentlemen.

As usual there was a lot of help during the trial. Lee Stevens and Bobbie Simp-



Amateur Shooting Dog Winners with owners, scouts and club officials. In foreground, from left: Wade's Strong Medicine with Kyle Crisp, Klee's Sweet Pye with Marian Huggins and Clayhill Bopper with Brenda Ballentine.

son did the bulk of the work putting out the birds. We put out 120 birds for the two days. It is the club's intention that every dog has the opportunity to point birds. Unfortunately Mother Nature sometimes puts a crimp in our style and turns off the scenting conditions. That happened on Saturday. However, she turned them back on Sunday whence the winners came. Herb (the encyclopedia of field trialing) Campbell was our stake manager again with an assist from his grandson. Herb had the dogs on the line and ready to go as the judges were ready. He is unbelievable in his knowledge of people in field trials.

H. C. Robinson, proprietor of the Hard Times Café in Cassatt, fed the hungry crowd both days. His food is always looked forward to. Witness, nothing was left after the Saturday lunch. We had a hungry bunch of trialers and friends.

Others helping before, during and after the trial included Charles Young, Marion Yarbrough, Rendall Ray, JoJo Denton, Andy Denton and Lett Carroll. Many hands certainly make light work. Thanks to all for their assistance.

My thanks to the judges for sitting down with me to give their comments on the winning dogs and others. In general they indicated that there were several dogs to choose from and that it was a close call in naming the winners.

THE WINNERS

All the puppies placed ran races as you might expect in order to place. Of those placed there was very little between them. First was Luke, handled by Kyle Crisp. Second place Roger was handled by George Kimbrell's young son Jack who beat out his father George who settled for third with Gone Fishin. Another Kimbrell joining the ranks of field trialers.

The Amateur Shooting Dog was hotly

contested, especially the top three. The judges felt there was very little to separate them. As you might expect it was the little things that they used to separate first from second and second from third. Rick Hulse's Wade's Strong Medicine had a strong race with three spaced finds produced by hunting the edges. He maintained a forward charge, found on point after being out of sight. Klee's Sweet Pye has run these grounds before. Marian Huggins has been a regular participant of our trials since she was ten years old. Now a junior in high school she still maintains an interest in field trialing. She was accompanied by her parents, with her father doing the scouting for her. Pye had two finds and a good shooting dog race. Perhaps not as strong as Medicine, but well applied. Bill Britt had his winning pointer Clayhill Bopper at the ready. Bopper also had two good finds. Judges characterized his race as "popping along." Eye pleasing but not as strong as the first two. Nevertheless a good win. Anytime you are in the top three out of thirty starters you are doing a good job.

Some others pushing the winners were: Itchie, Klee's Ben, Racing Kate, Patsy. All in all a stake worth watching whether as a judge or in the gallery, which for a weekend trial often had quite a few riders.

The Derby was won by the red setter Justified. The judges virtually said he ran away with stake. They indicated this dog is extremely fast. He is not only fast but is outstanding on his bird work, very stylish. He was always to the front and maintained his speed throughout. He is owned and handled by Dr. Roger Boser. Tim Ruff's Cottonwood Reward Bandit was second with a classy race. His potential as a shooting dog was evident with a good Derby find. His race was

consistently forward. Railway Danny, handled by who else but that octogenarian Gene Casale, took third with a classy race, but not as wide as the first two.

Gene is still in the saddle while he is only two months from 90. Incredible. It is always good to see Gene. He comes down to Pinewood, S. C., during the winter months. He still helps out with the field trials in Connecticut and rests from those duties here in the South.

Well, that's our 50th anniversary trial, complete with good judges, good dogs, friends and family enjoying the camaraderie of the field trial fraternity. Weather cooperated to make it complete. Just doesn't get any better than that.

**Cassatt, S. C., November 20 — One Course
Judges: Dr. JoJo Denton and Charles K. Young
AMATEUR PUPPY — 7 Pointers**

- 1st—COOL HAND LUKE, unreg., male, by Elhew Fibber McGee—Caladen's Rock The Rail. Caladen Kennels, owner; Kyle Crisp, handler.
2d—ROGER, unreg., male, by Caladen's Rein Dancer—Caladen's White River. George Kimbrell, owner; Jack Kimbrell, handler.
3d—GONE FISHIN, 1621788, male, by Caladen's Sawmill Struttin—Caladen's Cash. George Kimbrell, owner and handler.

**Judges: John Ray Kimbrell and
Dr. Billy McCathern**

- AMATEUR SHOOTING DOG — 23 Pointers,
1 Setter, 1 German Shorthair and 5 Irish Setters**
1st—WADE'S STRONG MEDICINE, 1561583, pointer male, by Hales Running Coop—Hales Nellie Pearl. Rick Hulse, owner and handler.



JUSTIFIED First in the Amateur Derby

- 2d—KLEE'S SWEET PYE, 1573698, pointer female, by Calico's Thrillology—Guard's Rambling Belle. Marian Huggins, owner and handler.
3d—CLAYHILL BOPPER, 1588421, pointer male, by Big Bopper—Tally Ho Kay. W. T. Britt, Jr., owner and handler.

**Judges: George Kimbrell and John Ray Kimbrell
AMATEUR DERBY — 9 Pointers, 2 Setters
and 1 Irish Setter**

- 1st—JUSTIFIED, 1619859, Irish setter male, by Breakstone—Come Back Judy. Roger W. Boser, owner and handler.
2d—COTTONWOOD REWARD BANDIT, 1614569, pointer male, by White's Solid Reward—Millie's Joy. Tim Ruff, owner and handler.
3d—RAILWAY DANNY, 1619888, pointer male, by Rail Dancer—Caladen Elhew Sarah. Eugene Casale, owner and handler.