



NEWSLETTER

OUR GOAL: To Promote, Preserve, and Experience One of the Greatest Southern Traditions Known... Quail Hunting.

DECEMBER 2005 • Published Quarterly • Jim Bradford, Editor

So, You Want Some Hunting Land?

How many times have you sat with good friends, sharing a cup of coffee while discussing great hunts of your younger days and, even more importantly, dreaming out loud of even better hunts to come? How many times has the question of actually having a "birdy" place to hunt and train your puppies been mentioned in the same sentence with the comment about winning the lottery? Of course, excluding that elusive lottery check, the stark monster of reality quickly raises its ugly head, the multitudes of real-world roadblocks come crashing upon you, and you find yourself derailed. We find ourselves with lots of talk and enthusiasm but no hunting/training land. Yet once in a great while you find that even the biggest roadblocks can be negotiated if the desire is strong enough.

Enter SUPERMAN, Frank Harris! Yes, AQH President Frank Harris has done the impossible and done it without inflicting more than nominal physical and emotional damage to those around him. Frank, acting on the loudly proclaimed desire of many club members to have a good training spot for their dogs, has rallied the guys, harnessed all the aging energy, and has gotten the job done. This is the end of the story. Everyone lives happily ever after, right? RIGHT. However, one must read on to find out the par-

ticulars of this story of success in the face of all obstacles.

I've long said that quail hunters are some of the finest folk walking the face of this earth. The time and energy they devote to their cherished sport is akin to that of Hannibal crossing the Alps. Most of us "high mileage types" are on the energy conservation plan and a project of any size takes us longer today than it did thirty years ago. Frank Harris, master of logistic coordination, factored in all the variables and found that he could get just enough spit and fire out of us "over-the-hillers" to do the job.

Locating a suitable block of land for the lease was the greatest challenge to his plan. He gave this job to Bob Carr. Then, each AQH Board Member provided their opinion as to what they wanted from the lease. Compiling the list and formulating a good useable set of rules came together much easier. This was due in no small part to the participants generally being of one mind and realizing that the rules were not to build an unnecessary burden for members but rather to make each member aware of their personal responsibility to comply with all facets of the lease.

Next came the on-site preparation. You can use your imagina-

tion about the site prep work with the sweat and briars. Yet, the work got everyone very excited about the land, the surrounding community, and the great potential of the resource. Getting into the community to meet our neighbors and introduce our club was important. We wanted our neighbors to know that we intended to be good tenants and equally good stewards of the land. As far as hunting clubs go, AQH wants to be the "poster child" for how a good lease arrangement should work. Frank Harris and I visited some of the neighbors and had a delightful time. We were made to feel right at home and, once we visited the local eatery (great food), we knew we had found a home!

This lease is going to be great! I am proud to be a member of AQH, a club that cares enough about quail hunting to work hard and find land to pursue our dream. Membership in the leased land is currently full. If there is continued interest from other AQH members and if this lease works as well as we think, we just might find ourselves out looking for more, bigger and better land so we can get more of our AQH membership involved. Until that time, continue to dream, hunt safe, and take a kid hunting with you.

Mike Barlow

Editors Notes..

Jake (1990-1995)

An Era has passed on and so has Jake. We called Dr. Mark Miller to the house and his life was brought to a peaceful conclusion. The only regret I have is that we probably should have called him sooner.

He was given to us by Coach Butch Barker and he came to be a combination house dog and field trial participant. We had open spaces all over North Shelby County along Hwy 280. Jake found his first covey in a new subdivision off of hwy 119 just past Lake Purdy. He also once found a covey in Brook Hills, but that was a long time ago. His formal training was at a two day Delmar Smith Seminar at Grand Junction but mostly he was trained at Selwood Farms on half day hunts with experienced guides and older dogs.

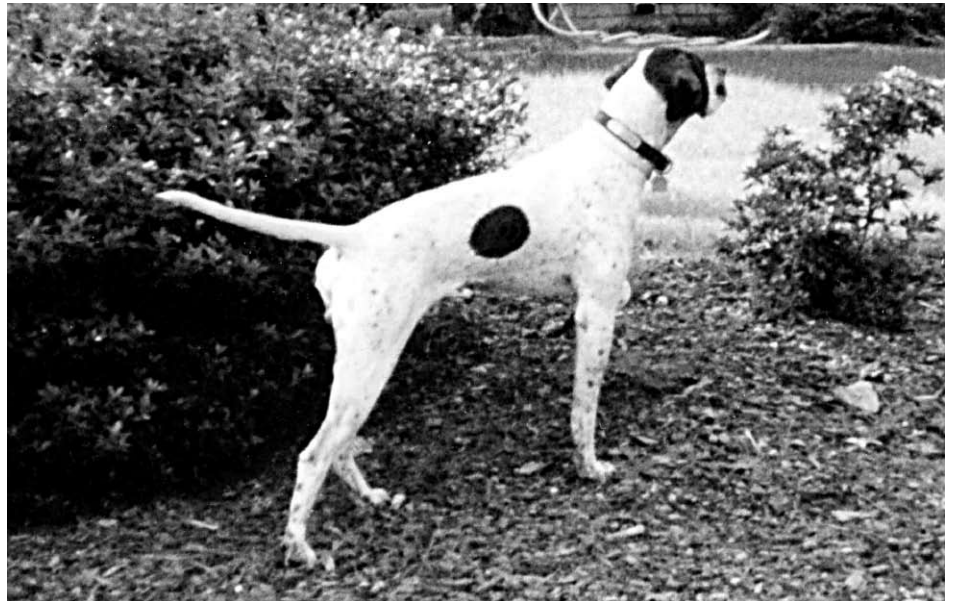
My intention after he arrived was to have the best trained dog in Alabama. That did not happen. He had his own ideas about hunting and was quite comfortable hunting by himself. We both soon found out that he could take more punishment than I was willing to dish out. He also knew who the real boss in the house was as he minded Brenda much better than me.

This produced a natural hunting dog with very few of my prints on him. He found his first wild covey before he had ever been exposed to a pen raised quail.

From that moment on he knew his purpose for being.

But the hunting instinct was strong and quail were not usually available. He would spend hours in the summer digging for and occasionally catching ground squirrels.

His only experience with an electric collar came when we installed an invisible fence around the yard. The collar worked fine until he decided to leave the yard. When he



wanted to leave, he would simply charge through the fence. When he returned, he would lay outside the boundary until I took his collar off and led him back in.

His breeding was mostly Gun-smoke as you can tell from his picture. But because of lax handling of the registration process we were unable to obtain papers. He was an outstanding physical specimen and possessed speed, power and agility. He also had a good nose though in foot field trials he had a tendency to out run it. He did have one weakness in that because he mostly hunted alone, he was hesitant to back though he would if necessary. He never interfered with another dog.

I am sure that some modern purist would point out that his tail is not at 12 o'clock. But to me, his point with head held high and his tail pointed between 1 and 2 was as stylish as any dog I have ever seen with beautiful symmetry .

Although he usually averaged only about three trials a year, He competed in every form of trial that I know of and won or placed in his fair share despite many mistakes by his amateur owner. He competed in 11 out of 12 AQH Spring Trials with 2 wins and several placements. At age 13, he was still competitive in the All Age. When he turned 14 we started a senior division in which he did not place in despite a great start.

Keeping him within a 20 acre field

was difficult but that was where he usually competed. With his speed and range, he should have been strictly a horseback dog. He liked to run big even when he was 15 years old. When hunting in open country, it was necessary to strap on a beeper collar since he was usually out of sight. His enthusiasm for hunting was unmatched and contagious.

Jake helped raise a lot of babies in our extended family . He also traveled a lot with me to schools around the state. Most of the kids thought he was a dalmation.

Many motorist on Meadow Brook Road hit their brakes to watch his beautiful points standing in my front yard like a statue for incredible lengths of time.

Because of him, I was brought back into a great sport that I had left 12 years earlier when a previous dog had died. Thanks to him I have had the opportunity to work and fellowship with an outstanding group of individuals that are putting forth a winning effort to reverse the decline wild birds and participation by quail hunters.

In 1990, quail hunters had probably the most defeatist attitude of any group any where. We blamed the state, deer hunters and the coyote for all our problems and no one was doing any thing to make it better.

We have since learned through events like the Quail Shortcourse and many talks by biologist that we basically have a habitat problem

HEY FOLKS

On your behalf, I attended the Alabama Quail Council meeting in November. The purpose of the Council is to coordinate the efforts of quail recovery according to the Northern Bobwhite Conservation Initiative (NBCI) guidelines. Gary Moody with the Alabama Department of Wildlife and Fresh Water Fisheries was instrumental in establishing the Council. Gary lead the council through its first year. Kim Price, the Editor of Covey Rise is the newly elected chairman of the Council for 2006.

The Southeastern Quail Study Group will have its Alabama meeting

in August 2006. Plans are currently being made for this meeting. The Southeastern Quail Study Group consist of wildlife biologists, landowners and other parties interested in the Bobwhite recovery. The group will meet in central Alabama and tour a quail plantation. AQH will be called upon to help with this meeting.

I wish to extend a warm welcome to Quail Forever into Alabama. I applaud their plan to restore bobwhite quail populations through habitat enhancement. Quail Forever has established a chapter in Alabama, in the Dothan – Headland area, called the Wire Grass Chapter.

Covey Rise provided gifts to AQH as door prizes and the lucky winners

were Terry Burdette and Harry Puryear. Thanks Covey Rise.

The AQH lease in Cullman is at its membership capacity. Interest from AQH members is good. The initial workday resulted in all boundaries being marked. The hunting preserve license has been granted.

I hope you each have had a Merry Christmas and please, remember our service men and women serving in Iraq. Enjoy your bird hunting season.

Frank, President

Treasurer's Desk

Merry Christmas and Happy 2006 to all!! With the New Year, everyone's 2006 membership dues become due. If you have not yet paid me, please send me your check made out to AL Quail Hunters, 1901 Morgan Road SE, Bessemer, AL 35022. Your annual \$15.00 dues are income tax deductible. Email me any questions to coalcarr@bellsouth.net or call me at (205) 424-1381.

Thank you,
Bob Carr, AQH Treasurer

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Editors Notes..

that can be overcome on a local basis with money and time.

We are also having great fun with released birds on preserves and in many field trials that are run nearly every weekend. Many of us enjoy the monthly meetings when we get together and listen to great speakers and swap many stories about our hunts and our dogs. There are government programs to promote habitat renewal and there is Covey Rise Magazine which is making a big difference.

Finally at age 15 and 4 months, his back legs went out on him one at a time. Just 2 months earlier he had become the first dog to ever compete in both the senior and all age division of the Fall Trial. He did not place in either but was going strong at the completion of both braces.

We tried spinal surgery and one came back for a short while and then went out again. He was in no way feeble at the time as his appetite was strong and he could travel great distances on his front legs with me supporting his body.

This morning he could no longer travel in a straight line as he constantly circled to the right. We knew his time had come and the call that we had been dreading had to be made. We will always be grateful for Dr. Miller and his comfort-

ing manner in which he reassured Brenda, Myself and Jake that we were doing the right thing.

At this time, I would like to thank everybody that humored me by listening to Jakes latest exploits and helped me look for him when he disappeared for 1-3 days at a time. I'd also like to thank those that called me when they found him.

Certainly, I want to thank his Vets starting with Larry Brit and ending with Tony Wright and Mark Miller. They took outstanding care of him helping him survive snake bite, bee sting, eye problems, auto collision, cuts, punctures, tumors, skin problems, fever and other minor ailments.

Jake was one dog that made a difference. It also occurs to me that in the last 15 years, most of our members have lost at least one valuable hunting partner. I know it is never easy, but I believe it is harder when the dog you lose is your only one and you have lived with him for so long.

But life goes on. I hope your season is going well with lots of finds and exceptional handling by the great dogs that you are fortunate to own. I truly believe that we have all been blessed by our exposure to this great sport. Hopefully, by the time you read this, you will have celebrated a Merry Christmas and are looking forward to a happy New Year. JB

New Members

We have several new members to welcome. They are:

Scott Gilpin
from Vestavia

Scott Hutto
from Talladega

Chris McDaniel
from Pinson

Tack Mims
from Pelham

Danny Mobley
from Heflin

Dale Smith
from Talladega

Dewayne Smith
from Sylacauga

MEMBERSHIP INFORMATION

Date _____

Name _____

Address _____

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New Member

Renewal

2006 DUES – \$15.00

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Call Jim Bradford, 991-8635 for more information, contact...



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