



# NEWSLETTER

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

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## The Harold Ridgeway Spring 2021 Field Trial

As everyone knows the 2020 Fall Field was cancelled due to inclement weather. Since we weren't able to pay tribute to Harold in December we want to carry it over to this year's Spring field trial. The Spring field trial will, once again, be hosted by Gates Shaw at his Brierfield Farm on March 6th. We would love to have a full field of participants! Please be sure to thank Gates for his continued support, friendship, and willingness to share his property! If you would like to register your dog, please contact Bob Carr (205) 902-4156 or Frank Harris (205) 595-0203.

Please register by Thursday, March 4th at the latest.

### Registration Fees:

**Puppy Class (Up to 12 months old): \$35**

[Class dependent on number of pre-registered pups]

**Derby Class: (Up to 36 months old): \$40**

**Gun Dog: (Open to any dog): \$45**

**Senior Dog: (Dogs over 8 years old): \$45**

[Class dependent on number of pre-registered dogs]



### Directions to Gates Shaw's Farm

- Take I-65 and Exit at the Montevallo & Calera Exit onto AL Hwy 25.
- Go South on AL Hwy 25 through Calera, Montevallo & Wilton (about 13 miles total) to Bibb Co. Hwy 65 (about 7 miles from Wilton).
- Turn Right onto Bibb Co. Hwy 65 and go about 1 mile to Carlton Pass.
- Turn Right onto Carlton Pass and go to the dead end. The gate at the dead end is the entrance into Gates Shaw's Farm. Go through the gate to the designated parking area.

### From the Treasurer's Desk

#### Welcome to our Newest Member

Donn Fizer  
Indian Springs

I hope that you and your family are well and that you are having a happy new year. Look at your printed mailing address. If you see "12-21" after your name, your AQH dues are up-to-date. If not, your 2021 dues are due. Please make your check out to Alabama Quail Hunters and mail it to me at 2245 Pine Lane, Hoover, AL 35226.

Thanks, Bob

### It Started with a Pup | By Robby Thomas

On October 28, 2020, outlaw country singer/songwriter, Billy Joe Shaver passed away at the age of 81.

Billy Joe's signature song, "I'm Gonna Live Forever", was how my good friend, Harold Ridgeway, lived his life until the end.

I first met Harold at an Alabama Quail Hunters meeting when it was held at Lloyd's Restaurant when I moved back to Birmingham, AL from Atlanta, Ga in December 2001. Over the next few years, it was just a casual acquaintance acknowledgement.

Then, at one of our Alabama Quail Hunters meeting in the spring of 2008, Harold announced that one of his dogs had one female pup and wanted to know if someone had a pup

*Continued on page 2*



## Fun Times at the Cullman Lease

Bob Combs, Thurman Campbell, Bob Carr and Frank Harris enjoyed their outing recently at the Cullman lease.



### *It Started with a Pup* Continued from page 1

that could keep his pup company as a playmate. I spoke up and let him know that I had a young daughter, Molly, that was one of the best puppy raisers that you could ask for and will keep it for him until it grew up. After the meeting ended, Harold approached me and wanted to talk. We spent an hour in the parking lot talking about bird dogs, hunting, field trials and land management. Well, I must have made an impression on Harold as he let me pick up the pup that week and invited me down to his farm in Marion, Alabama.

Later that week, I met Harold at his kennels in Chelsea, AL to pick up the 7-week-old pup. There was this energetic female pup with her dam in the pen. My daughter, Molly, immediately went in the pen and scooped the pup up. I asked Harold about the breeding on the pup's mom and sire. The mom's breeding was a known fact, but the sire was a bit cloudy. "It could be one of three male dogs" according to Harold. There was a dog in his kennel that was a known escape artist. As chance would have it Walter did not secure the latches on each of the kennels and that male dog opened the latches on all the kennels and let the other dogs out. Well, at that time it did not matter as this was going to be Harold's pup.

That evening, I noticed the pup had a limp and on it's left rear leg there was a knot. Concerned, I called Harold and told him about the pup's leg and that it needed to be checked on. The next morning I took it to my vet and had the leg x-rayed. The vet called me back into his office and showed me the x-ray. He said the femur bone was fractured when it was 2-3 weeks old and has since healed. He said as it gets older the leg will be shorter and will never be able to be a field trial dog or be able to hunt.

I brought the x-ray of the pup's leg to Harold that Saturday since we made plans to go to Marion, AL. Harold glanced at the x-ray and commented, "let your daughter keep her as a pet, she will never fit in my kennel as a hunting dog". Not what I wanted to hear since I already had 2 of my field trial dogs retired from field trialing due to injuries. I did not need another lame dog. But Molly was elated that she could keep Sadie (Molly named her since she did not have a name).

Later that afternoon, Harold showed me his property and wanted my advice and assistance in transforming the place to work and train his bird dogs. And from this weekend, a 12-year

friendship was borne.

Over the next several years, we worked tirelessly to transform the overgrown property by limbing the planted pine trees, bush hogging, discing, brush control, prescribed burning. In a few years, we had the property transformed. Native grasses reappeared, partridge peas in abundance and the ragweed. Now, we needed birds. Harold purchased 5 of these large Phantom Quail Recall pens and were strategically placed on the property-spaced out 400-500 yards. Also, Harold had 5 Covey Base Systems that were placed on areas along the course. During the years, Harold bought his quail from a quail breeder in Browns, AL which was only 5 miles from the property. Later, when this Quail breeder retired, Harold started getting his quail from Robert Strickland south of Selma, AL.

Every weekend Harold would bring down a set of 6 dogs to work, but 3 were always on the wagon, Ike, Levi and Liz. By the month's end, he had rotated through his kennel of hunting string. As most of you folks know, Harold was an avid "Texas" quail hunter and held a hunting lease in Texas for years until the quail dried up in early 2004-5. Harold educated me on why you need that many dogs when hunting in Texas. "Every plant has thorns and/or stickers that will tear a dog up. I bring a dozen dogs out and by the 3rd or 4th day, the dogs are beat up and worn down by the environment, I head back home and swap



out for the next set of dogs.”

When it came to the dogs, Harold’s kennel was full of the top line of bird dogs in the country. He realized to hunt the Texas ranches, you needed dogs that were tough, had endurance, range wide, and have excellent noses. His string of dogs was prominently out of Rock Acre Kennels. He obtained several dogs through Dean Lord in the early 2000s, a prominent (HOF) professional shooting dog handler/trainer. Several of the dogs were out of a field trial champion dog named Rock Acre Blackhawk (HOF). Blackhawk became one of the prominent breeders of the field trial dogs and later elected into the field trial Hall of Fame. Harold had 4 females that were out of Ch Rock Acre Blackhawk and Elhew Katie Lee, Ru Ch Blackhawk Bess, Ru-Up Ch Southern Tweed, Blackhawk’s Amy and Blackhawk’s Meg. During this time, Harold met and became good friends with the owner of Rock Acre Kennels, Cecil “PeeWee” Cole.

Harold also had in his kennel (which he obtained from Rock Acre Kennels) dogs that were out of Rock Acre Blackhawk were Ru-Ch Rock Hawkeye (Hank), and Ru-Ch Rock Acre Tomahawk (Rowdy). There was another dog, Rock Acre Blackhawk, in Harold’s kennel at the time named Ridgeway’s Rex out of a female obtained from Rock Acre Kennels. He had another dog in his kennel named Brutus out of his best hunting dog Tap Jack. He also had another dog from Cecil Cole, named Rock Acre Samson. Cecil Cole ran Samson in several field trials and won RuCh at the National Amateur Derby Championship.

When the quail population plummeted in Texas. Harold let his Texas lease go in the mid-2000s, and then Harold focused more on his farm in Marion, AL. Harold had a passel of aging dogs that were in their prime that were slowly passing by sitting in the kennel. Knowing in his heart the quail will rebound he needed to have some young dogs and started raising pups out of two of his Rock Acre Blackhawk females, Blackhawk Meg and Blackhawk Amy. He bred them both to PeeWee Cole’s champion and Rock Acre Playmaker. And later to PeeWee’s up and coming champion Rock Acre Powder Keg (heavy breeding in the Miller line of dogs). The first litter whelped out of Meg in April 2006, Harold kept 3 pups, Levi, Ike and Liz. Since he no longer went to Texas, Harold reached out to long time professional trainer Buddy Smith (Memphis, Tn) to assist in raising and training the pups and sorting through them.

Buddy Smith, being a strong advocate of the Miller (Ferrell Miller) line of dogs, made arrangements for Harold to acquire a female out of Ferrell Miller’s top champions for a brood female. Harold named this dog- Ridgeway’s Peggy Sue. The niche cross between the Blackhawk bred dogs and Miller dogs produced some of the top field trial dogs and hunting dogs that are still prevalent today.

I know all the above information is a lot to digest, but I will soon get back to the pup, Sadie.

For a year I worked with Harold on his place as well as assisting him with working both his and my dogs. Little Sadie, now a year old, with 3 good legs was hanging with the rest of Harold’s dogs and showing out. As all of you know, Harold did not let any of his young pups go. He kept them until he decided which one, he wanted to keep. After consulting with Buddy Smith he would then let Buddy sell the others. I approached Harold and let him know that if Sadie had 4 good legs that she would still be in your kennel. But Sadie has all the qualities we want in a bird dog and we need to find out who the sire was. I wanted to raise my own pups to replace my aging bird dogs. Sadie’s dam was the Miller female, Ridgeway’s Peggy Sue. Harold agreed, and had the 3 male dogs still in his kennel DNA tested to see if a match to Sadie’s DNA. When the American Field sent the DNA results back that none of the 3 males were a match, we were disappointed. Harold conferred with Walter and realized there was a 4th male in his kennel at the time of conception and that the 4th male since passed away eight months later. That dog was Rock Acre Samson.

The next year, 2010, I bred Sadie to Harold’s Ike dog. And that mating produced a fine litter of pups. I offered Harold his pick of the litter, but he declined. A few made field trial prospects and the rest made hunting dogs.

I did a repeat breeding with Sadie and Ike and the results were even better. Again, I offered Harold his pick of litter and again he declined. My brother Paul and I still have 2 from the 2nd Ike and Sadie litter (8 yrs old)- Burt and Copper. I did breed Sadie one last time in June 2017 to Randy Peel’s field trial dog. And from that litter I believe I have one, Sandhill Lil Juney, that I am sure Harold would be proud of knowing that she was out of his kennel.

Sadie is fast approaching her 13th birthday. Arthritis has set in and can no longer handle the cold. But the desire to hunt quail is still there. I took her out a few weeks ago and set out some quail for her. She still has that radar of a noise and still points with style. And while not one to retrieve, she did bring the downed bird back to me. As long as Sadie is able, I will let her have her 10 minutes of enjoyment each weekend to hunt and find a quail. And, I am sure that Harold would have wanted that way!

Last week, I was with Fred Rayl at the Florida Open All Age Championship getting ready to run Juney. Fred and I were reminiscing about Harold and the dogs that Fred trained for him. That brings up a part 3 for the fall article- Penny and the Renegades (Bubba, Smokey and Boyd).



Sadie



Burt



Cooper



HR Wrangler



Juney



# MEMBERSHIP INFORMATION

Date \_\_\_\_\_

Name \_\_\_\_\_

Address \_\_\_\_\_

Home Phone (\_\_\_\_) \_\_\_\_\_ Office Phone (\_\_\_\_) \_\_\_\_\_

Cell Phone (\_\_\_\_) \_\_\_\_\_

Email Address \_\_\_\_\_

## 2021 DUES — \$15

*Check payable to "Alabama Quail Hunters"*

Call Bob Carr, (205) 902-4156 for more information.



2245 Pine Lane, Hoover, AL, 35226



Alabama Quail Hunters

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