



# NEWSLETTER

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

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## AQH Announces New Board Member- Sloan Walker

*The passing of Harold Ridgeway resulted in an opening on the AQH board. Sloan Walker was nominated and approved by the board. Below is brief bio from Sloan. Congratulations Sloan!*

I grew up in the small town of Roanoke, Ala in Randolph County. I had a great childhood...played outside a lot. I hunted, but mainly only deer. When I was in high school my older brother and I got a Weimaraner male dog and quickly discovered that he loved to point. The only problem was that he only pointed cats! Any stray cat that came through the yard found himself in peril with that 80lb male dog. I will say that even though he never pointed birds, he was steady to flush on the felines! As high school came to a close life started getting busier and time for deer hunting started to wane as I found myself moving to Auburn University to go to school.

In Auburn, I worked at the Auburn Fire Dept while attending school. I graduated in Building Science in 2000. Right before I graduated from Auburn I met my lovely bride, Brandi. Brandi and I were married in 2002, and Birmingham soon became home for us. We have 2 children, Major 10 and Meritt who is 6. I work for RA-LIN and associates and we do construction/program management mainly for public schools and municipalities.

About 10 years ago my older brother and I got into bird hunting at Sellwood. His work's corporate membership afforded he and I a hunt or two a year, so we grabbed our shotguns and went. We fell in love right away! We had grown up hearing stories about how our Dad and our Grandfather chased coveys all over the fields, so we were primed for it. My brother Todd eventually got a male German shorthair that he had trained and we hunted over him at Sellwood and back home in Roanoke. I absolutely loved it. I too joined in the fun in 2018 and picked up a female German Shorthair Josey, (named after my favorite movie - the Outlaw Josey Wales). Having a gundog that hunts and part of our family has been amazing. I will always remember Josey's first point at Pat Dolan's place. My son Major was there with me and I know he'll never forget that day. Being with fellow hunters in the field and seeing it all come together in that moment between dog and hunter with God's creation as the backdrop is incredible. It's something that I wish everyone could experience. Perhaps we can increase our reach and invite others to participate in it with us.

I look forward to serving on this board, fellowshiping, and making many more memories with dogs on point and coveys on the rise!

Sloan Walker

## Lobbing for Bobs By T. Edward Nickens (reprinted from Garden & Gun Magazine (Aug/Sep issue 2021)

### Making A Difference for Wild Quail Has Never Been Easier

Jessica McGuire can hear the chuckles when she pulls out the neon-yellow softballs. "They look at me like I'm crazy," says the Albany, Georgia-based wildlife biologist, describing visits to farmers and landowners interested in boosting wild quail numbers on their properties. "And then I toss a few balls out. As biologists, we're not always good at simplifying concepts. But, once they see those softballs, they know: Either you have good quail habitat or you don't."

The tongue-in-cheek moniker for this approach is the "SHET" method, which stands for Softball Habitat Evaluation Technique. Developed by Dale Rollins of the Rolling

Plains Quail Research Foundation in Texas, it's a simple visual concept that helps explicate densely layered biology. A grown quail is roughly the size of a softball and can fly about as far as an adult can hurl a ball. A softball field-sized patch of good habitat—about two acres—should be able to support a covey of quail.

On the farms McGuire visits as the Working Lands for Wildlife bobwhite program manager for Quail Forever, she'll bowl a softball along the ground. If it hangs up in thick cover after rolling a few feet, that suggests the vegetation needs thinning in order for chicks to be able to forage.

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## Lobbing for Bobs *Continued from page 1*

Toss the ball, she says, “and that simulates the flight path of a bird. And where it lands should be near dense escape cover.” In the space of a softball field, quail need twenty-five to thirty “bases,” to extend the metaphor, or clumps of suitable cover. “It’s a great icebreaker,” McGuire says, “but it’s good science, too.”

For landowners who want to manage for wild quail, there’s more good science news than ever. Ten years ago, Andy Edwards, program manager for Quail Forever, harbored few illusions about the future of wild quail hunting. “Then, about five years ago, the science was really turning things around,” he says, “but I didn’t even want to say that out loud. Today it’s a different world.” New ideas are giving landowners ways of fine-tuning woodlands, pastures, crop fields, and even recreational properties for wild bobwhites. And while more land is always better, these prescriptions can work on fifty acres or fifty thousand.

Broadly speaking, the brave new world of quail management can be broken into three arenas for action. First is the emerging role of pollinator plants. The last decade has seen a shift away from large single-species plantings of native grasses to incorporate more stands of pollinator plants, such as bee balms, black-eyed Susans, asters, and native sunflowers and goldenrods which attract butterflies, bees, hummingbirds, and other pollinators. Plots with multiple species of flowering plants provide food and plenty of overhead cover for quail but also supply the critical bare-ground component that allows quail chicks to move around and feed.

A second component is the management of quail-friend-

ly woodlands. “In the Southeast, the emerging frontier for quail management is in the pinewoods,” says Tim Caughran, QF’s director of field operations. Turning pinewoods into home for quail requires a two-fold approach. Opening up interior patches lets sunlight stream into the woods and the flush of new growth becomes a quail mecca. Softening the transition between forests and fields is also critical. Typically, that edge is a hard line, pasture or croplands abutting the woods. Adding buffers of shrubs, forbs, and pollinator plants to “feather” the edge gradually provides not only food, but also escape and nesting cover for wild quail.

Last, and perhaps more important, landowners are no longer alone when trying to plan for wild bobwhite quail. In the past, plugging into state and federal programs meant navigating mountains of paperwork, and acting as a general contractor, of sorts, for workers and equipment. Now a fast-growing network is helping to lessen the load. Quail Forever and its sister organization, Pheasants Forever, employ more than three hundred biologists tasked with working directly with landowners. There are even strategically placed technical crews around the country to do the shovel work. And research groups such as Florida’s Tall Timbers are equally keen on sharing their knowledge base with both public lands managers and private landowners who may or may not control thousands of contiguous acres.

New knowledge is there and it’s often only a phone call, mouse click, or softball pitch away. “We are high-speed and low-drag and no strings attached,” Caughran says. “There are so many new ways to bring quail back to the landscape and we will literally sit down at your kitchen table and get to work.”

## From the Treasurer’s Desk

I hope that you are enjoying your quail hunting season thus far. Look at this AQH News Letter’s printed mailing address. If you see 12-21 after your name, your AQH dues are past due. If you see 12-22 your dues are up to date. Please make your check out to Alabama Quail Hunters and mail it to me at 2245 Pine Lane, Hoover, AL 35226.

Thanks, Bob

### Welcome to our Newest Members

Mike Brunson  
*Birmingham*

Mathew Deason  
*Birmingham*

Bradley Cain  
*Birmingham*

Dylan Stewart  
*Auburn*

Mike Cox  
*Birmingham*

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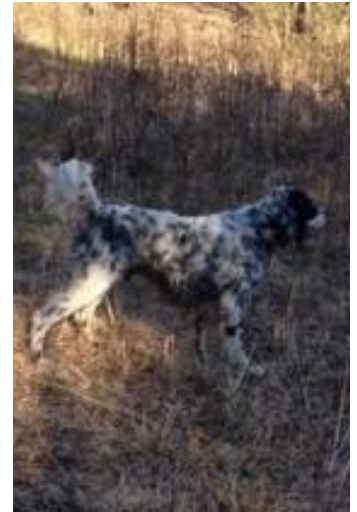
AQH  
Scholarship  
Winner:  
Dylan  
Stewart

Congratulations to Dylan Stewart for being the recipient of the \$1,000 AQH collegiate wildlife scholarship for 2021. Dylan is an Auburn graduate student in the School of Forestry and Wildlife Sciences. Dylan was kind enough to provide a very interesting presentation at the AQH October meeting. Dylan shared his research on prescribed burning, thinning loblolly pines and the use of herbicides to improve bobwhite quail habitat.

# Condolences



Longtime AQH member Harry Puryear passed away recently. Harry will be fondly remembered for his jokes, stories, and expertise on knives. Harry loved holding court at our AQH meetings and field trials. Harry will truly be missed. Condolences go out to Harry's family and his faithful dog Admiral.



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## The Harold Ridgeway Spring 2021 Field Trial Results

As you know the Fall 2020 Harold Ridgeway field trial was cancelled due to inclement weather. Thus, we carried the field trial in honor of Harold over to the Spring 2021 field trial on March 6th. We were recipients of beautiful weather and fun was had by all. Thanks to everyone that participated in and attended the Spring field trial.

We'd like to thank Gates Shaw as well for allowing us to use his property.



Below are the results from last Spring:

### Derby

- 1st - Lulu - Greg Keys, owner
- 2nd - Ox - Mack Murphy, owner
- 3rd - Retta - Pat Dolan, owner

### Gun Dog

- 1st - Merle - Pat Dolan, owner
- 2nd - Agnes - Chuck Rabolli, owner
- 3rd - Mittie - Frank Harris, owner

### Senior

- 1st - Buzz - Ellen Campbell, owner
- 2nd - Diamond - Ed Morris, owner
- 3rd - Diamond - Carlie Morris, owner





# MEMBERSHIP INFORMATION

Date \_\_\_\_\_

Name \_\_\_\_\_

Address \_\_\_\_\_

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

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

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

## 2022 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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