



MERRIMACK VALLEY NAVHDA NEWS

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April 2018

Upcoming Events

The weather is getting warmer, the snow is just about gone!

Please make sure you mark your calendars for the following:

- ◆ **April 14 (Saturday) will be the HELDCA Cleanup Day.** Sharpe's Farm, Little Frost Rd, Hopkinton, NH. Bring gloves, rakes, loppers etc to help get the grounds ready for the upcoming training season. **Rain Date April 15.**
- ◆ **April 21 (Saturday) Training at Sharpe's at 9am.** Check the webpage for further information. See the [March Newsletter](#) for info on what to bring/pack.
- ◆ **May 5 (Saturday) Training at Sharpe's at 9am.** This will be the last training day before the Spring test!
- ◆ **May 19-20 (Saturday and Sunday. Must attend both days) is the Yankee Chapter Handlers Clinic.** Green Point Wildlife Management Area in Dresden, ME. Reach out to the [Yankee Chapter](#) for more information.
- ◆ **May 25, 26 and 27— Spring Test!!! 8am at Sharpe's Farm.** Your dog must be registered to test. Volunteers will be needed on all 3 days. More information to come!
- ◆ **June 9 (Saturday) Training at Sharpe's at 9am.**
- ◆ **June 15-16 (Saturday and Sunday. Must attend both days) is the Merrimack Valley NAVHDA Handlers Clinic.** This will be at OnPoint Kennels, 101 Coffeetown Rd, Deerfield and will be run by David Trahan. More info to come!

Picture of the Month



These two pups are littermates who were at their first clinic!

Useful Information

Helpful Hints for Your First NAVHDA Clinic— By Crystal Randall

With so many new faces at the first two clinics this year I wanted to pass along a bit of the knowledge that I have learned over the last year in terms of NAVHDA outdoor clinics to help ease some of the uncertainty many could be feeling.

An email will go out a couple of weeks before each clinic requesting that members email in their bird order. You will be asked what type of training that you are doing (NA, UTP, UT), how many dogs you are running and how many of each bird you would like to order. **Editor's Note: You should have received this email for the April Clinic on April 10th. If you did not please email mvnavhda.editor@gmail.com**

The list of birds with pricing is as follows:

For April training; chukars are \$12 each, pheasants are \$21 and ducks will be \$17. ***These prices are subject to change*** Quail will be unavailable until the end of July.

Brian Silva will respond to your bird requests with a number, you will need this number when you go to pick up your birds at training. If you do not get a response within 48 hours, you may want to reach out to Brian to make sure he saw your order.

If you are new and testing NA, you generally order 3 chukars and a pheasant. As for UTP/UT, you will want to incorporate ducks into your training. If your pup has not been exposed to birds yet, 1 or 2 chukars should suffice. (You can tether your birds or instead of flushing, pick them back up and reuse them.)

Preparing for the clinic is a simple matter. There is a list in the [March Newsletter](#) of things to bring along. I've simplified it here:

- Tie out stake
- Rubber Boots
- Bug Spray
- A water bowl
- A jug of water (Many of us bring way more than we need so if you forget don't worry)
- Sports water bottle (To offer your dog water while working in the field)

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- A hunter orange hat or shirt (You can buy one at the clinic!)
- A long lead (20-30 feet)
- Lunch!
- A towel
- A chair
- Dog Waste Bags (Please clean up after your dog!)
- Bird Bag with clip to close (you can use a clothes pin or large binder clip)

There will be down time for you and your dog, so plan accordingly.

You should plan to arrive at least 30 minutes before the clinic is scheduled to begin. When turning onto Little Frost Road you will notice houses line the road, GO SLOW out of respect for the families who live there. You will take a sharp left after turning onto Little Frost Road, follow this down to where the road ends and the dirt road begins. You will turn right into the training area and should see signs that state you are entering the training area where live fire will be taking place. As you drive the dirt path to the training field, you will follow it to the left. Please keep your speed down as you will encounter mud puddles and potentially a vehicle heading towards you as they leave training. Eventually you will end up at the parking lot! If you came early, you should find plenty of parking, if not, you may have to pull off to the side of the road coming in.

Once you have parked and checked on your pup, you will want to get in line to register and pay for your clinic fees and birds that you ordered. Cash is always great but checks are accepted. (If you pay by card, you will have a \$1 handling fee added.) The order in which you sign in that morning is the order that you will be listed for training. You will be directed to the bird trailer where you will give your name and number and receive your birds. These are now YOUR responsibility! Extra birds are not available, so if you lose one and get another one, you could be taking someone else's bird that they have paid for. If you ordered more than 1 type of bird, having multiple bird bags would be handy. If you wish to keep live birds you can bring a small kennel or cage to keep them in.

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To keep things moving smoothly, have your dog ready, your bird bag handy and listen out for your name to be called. You will start at the top of Field 1 (the one behind the pavilion). When it is your turn, you will hand your bird bag to the designated bird planter and they will place your birds and once they have cleared out of the field, you can start working your dog. You will have an experienced handler work with you in the field and if your dog has been conditioned to shooting, you can request a gunner. If your dog has not been exposed to gunfire, let the experienced handler know.

After all NA dogs have gone through their field portion of training, you will move down to the water. The water is located past the parking lot and down the hill. Your dog will have a chance to swim and retrieve bumpers from the water.

These clinics are run by volunteers! You do not have to have any knowledge in running your dog to volunteer! If your dog has completed their run for the day or you are closer to the bottom of the list, ask what you can do to help. You can learn a lot by just volunteering and working with others and their dogs.

Have fun working your dog, learning the tricks of the trade and meeting new people.



From the Editor

A Word (or two) about Tick Protection

It is April and we're starting to find ticks after we've been in the woods or fields. I won't go into the science behind ticks, or the disease they can carry as I believe most of us already know these things. I also won't go into how to protect your dog but I would like to give some suggestions about protecting ourselves from ticks.

I'm not expert but I have spent thousands of hours in the woods in the last 50 odd years. As a Deer hunter, I start scouting for deer and their movements in January. I look for travel corridors, bedding areas, food sources etcetera. This continues right through until September when the Archery season for deer starts. Once that starts, I'm typically sitting in brush piles or sitting in or near a bush for hours a day and believe me, I know where the ticks are! In addition to deer hunting, I train my dog and I fish the many lakes and streams in New Hampshire and Maine.

The CDC recommends using a topical application of bug spray containing at least 20% Deet. If you trout fish, then you know that the black fly in New England laughs at those of us with 20% Deet. When I know I'm dealing with black flies, I use Ben's Bug Spray which contains 98% Deet and I have used it for over 35 years. Despite what you may have heard, Deet is safe. Just go on over to Google and type "Is Deet safe?" and hit enter. There are articles from Popular Science, Consumer Reports and several others. Deet can be used on your skin and also on your clothes. An important fact is that Deet is a true repellent. It does NOT kill the pests that it repels.

Many of you still won't want to use Deet for any number of reasons. So, what can you do? I use a product from Sawyer called Permethrin. **An important note about Permethrin it is toxic to cats. If you own cats, I suggest not using it at all.** (It is safe for cats once it dries.)

Permethrin is applied to your clothes. I spray a pair of pants, a shirt, a sweat shirt, socks and any non-rubber boots I may use and my hats. Permethrin will kill ticks. It will also kill most insects that comes into contact with it, so it's useful on mosquitos and black flies. Be careful though, it will kill honey bees and as conservationists we all need to be aware of that if we're going to use this product. Since I started using this product 3 years ago, I have not found a single tick on my clothing when coming out of the woods. Best of all, there is no odor.

Cont. So that takes care of your clothes but what about exposed areas of skin? Sawyer also makes a product called Picaridin that can be applied to your hands, face and other exposed skin. When we train in the heat of the summer, I use it on my legs and arms so that I can wear shorts and a t-shirt.

In addition to these chemical solutions, I suggest always wearing a hat, tucking your pants into your socks or boots and wearing long sleeves. Whenever you come out of an area where there are ticks, check yourself over from head to toe and make sure you check your dogs too.

A word about ticks and your dogs. The tick prevention we use on our dogs typically requires that the tick bite the dog. At that point the tick will die. Because of this, your dog may get into your vehicle or house and ticks may drop off them. Make sure you check your dog completely before they are brought into your car or house. A quick way to check them is with a lint roller. Use a new sheet on the roller and roll it across your dog several times and it should help to remove ticks that may be crawling on them.

Useful Links

The Pudelpointer Chronicles— <http://swettdl.blogspot.com> is a great blog written by none other than our former editor Dennis Swett.

Bird Dogs Afield with Paul Fuller— <http://birddogsafield.com> is one of our sponsors and done by members Paul and Susan Fuller. Lots of videos and articles! If you're looking for some training tips then this site is a must see.

The NAVHDA Website— <https://www.navhda.org/> Most already know this site but make sure you look here for info on testing, other chapters, youth programs etc.

NH Fish and Game— <http://www.wildlife.state.nh.us/>

ME Fisheries and Wildlife— <http://www.maine.gov/ifw/index.html>

MA Fish and Game— <https://www.mass.gov/orgs/departments-of-fish-and-game>

VT Fish and Wildlife— <http://www.vtfishandwildlife.com/>

Granite State Dog Recovery— <http://www.granitestatedogrecovery.com/> - Hopefully you never need them but you should have their info stored in your phone.

Membership at Large



AMIGOS UPDATE -Ryan Sullivan

Last year towards the end of March (2017) Andy, Conor and I made our way to the quaint town of Chazy, New York to try our luck at hunting Snow Geese. We saw loads of pictures and videos of people shooting hundreds of birds and leaving with pounds and pounds of goose meat so we thought, how hard could it be? Well we quickly learned that sitting in a cold muddy field from 5am until 5pm wasn't really that enjoyable. It was so miserable that we could only make the best of it doing what we do best; making fun of each other and the other people we were hunting with. But that could only occupy us for so long.



Tough Going

Our very first day of Snow Goose hunting was in a blizzard. As you can see from the photo to the left, our chances were minimal. We carried on into the next day where the conditions were much better but there were still not many birds, so we spent the time making fun of each other. The only geese that flew in that day were met with the awesome explosion of 7 shotguns each carrying 7 rounds.

Even though we didn't shoot many birds that trip, we managed to still have fun. So, what better way to celebrate then to do it all over again the next year? Last month, we loaded up the trucks and, once again, drove to the quaint town of Chazy, NY.

We went into this year with much lower expectations and figured that there was no way we could get skunked TWO years in a row. We also decided that the only thing better than laying in the mud for 2 days was laying in the mud for 3. So, we extended our trip and got to NY on a Wednesday night. We met our guide and got out into the field Thursday morning. Conditions were much better this year and we were starting to see large groups of Canada and Snow Geese. I looked up and saw a flock of close to 150 Snow geese coming in for a landing. I thought to myself "This is it! We finally get to shoot a ton of geese!" Then something caught my eye. There was erratic movement coming from the layout next to me. Well, one of the fellas that was put in our group clearly started to panic and in the midst of what I saw as a ballet/ribbon dancing routine reaching for his gun he must have caught the eye of one of the lead birds. Just as quickly as they had come in, they performed a prompt 180 degree turn and flew out. I pulled up my gun to shoot as directed by the guide and all I felt was a "click." My gun jammed. "Sweet start" I thought to myself. Afterward, We gave the dancer the appropriate nickname "Mr. Magoo" and politely reminded the rest of the group that we were hunting geese, not getting ready to break down a door at 5am on Black Friday looking to score a 60% discounted LED TV. We ended up shooting a few birds that day and finished on a positive note.



Andy



Conor



Ryan



The next day when our guide was introduced, I couldn't help but feel that we'd have better luck. His name was Ryan, so he had to be good. We set up our own decoy spread on a fresh field. The day started off with flocks in the thousands of both Canada and Snow Geese flying right over head. We not only had a chance to shoot a few geese but we also got to see a major migration. It was a sight we will all surely remember! "Mr. Magoo," fortunately, was in a different group, so we didn't have to worry about him breaking out into his "Thriller" dance as the geese were flying in. We shot some nice geese and ended up with a nice blue goose that is currently in the hands of the taxidermist.



The Three Amigos

You may notice the awesome amount of Sitka in this picture. (Minus Andy's weird pants.) We felt that, overall, this helped our chances and quite frankly may be the only reason we shot birds this time around. The next day we decided to only hunt the morning. No action but plenty of geese flying into the field next to us. Long story short, even a guided hunt, in an area known for massive amounts of birds, is never a guarantee. We went into it the second time knowing what our chances could or could not be. A week after we left this year a massive amount of geese were taken. You just never know.



Taken the week after we left.

Merrimack Valley chapter Officers and Appointees

Contact List

Member	CHAPTER OFFICERS	Email
Carol Trahan	President	carolt@onpointkennel.com
Terry Long	Vice President	longdrivered@yahoo.com
Gus Gouzoules	Treasurer	baysiderun@myfairpoint.net
Phil Thayer	Secretary	vtbirddogs@gmail.com
Bob Fee	Director of Testing	bobf@metrocast.net
David Trahan	Director of Judging	davidt@onpointkennel.com
Joanna Korte	Test Secretary	joannakorte@gmail.com
Brian Silva	Director of Training	bks1117@hotmail.com
Casey Matthews	Director of Gunners	matthewscasey0@gmail.com
Member	APPOINTED CHAPTER POSITIONS	Email
Andrew Gallant	Youth Activity Director	agallant028@gmail.com
Chris Pope	Delegate At Large to HELDCA	chpope@comcast.net
Beth Mello	Membership	mvnavhda.membership@gmail.com
Mike Trull	Webmaster	webmaster@mvnavhda.com
Wayne Randall	Newsletter Editor	mvnavhda.editor@gmail.com
TBD	Merchandise Coordinator	mvnavhda.membership@gmail.com
Terry Long	NH Wildlife Federation Representative	longdrivered@yahoo.com

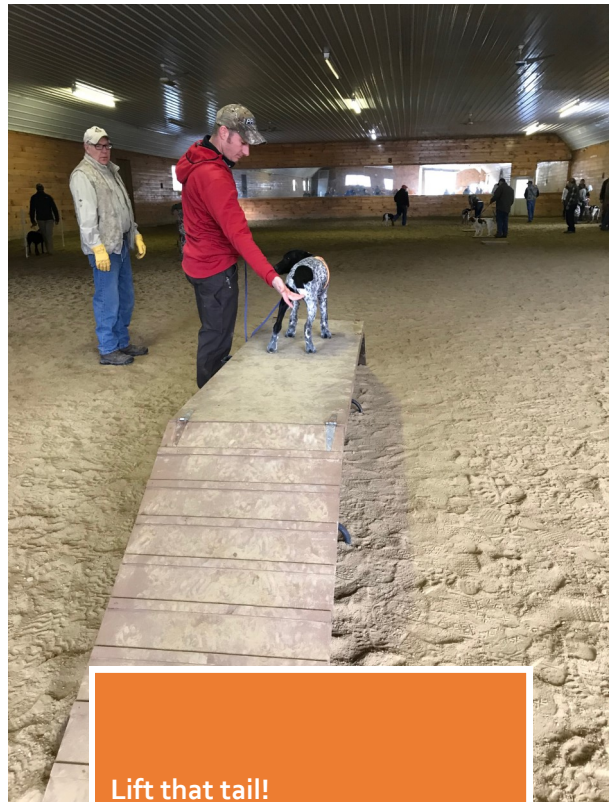
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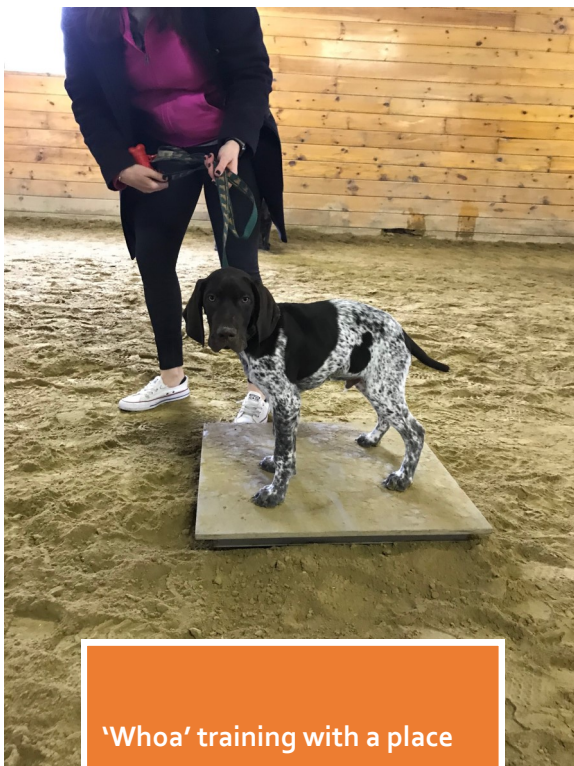
Indoor Clinic Pictures from March



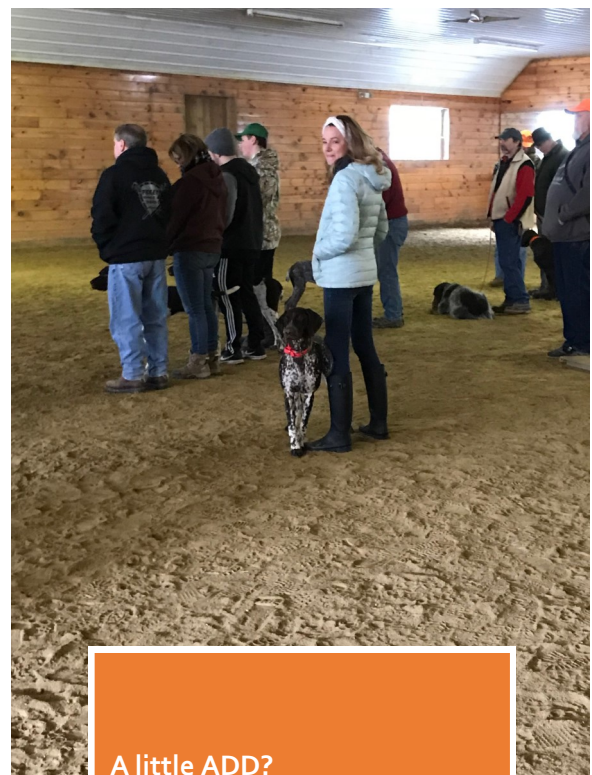
Waiting patiently in line



Lift that tail!



'Whoa' training with a place board

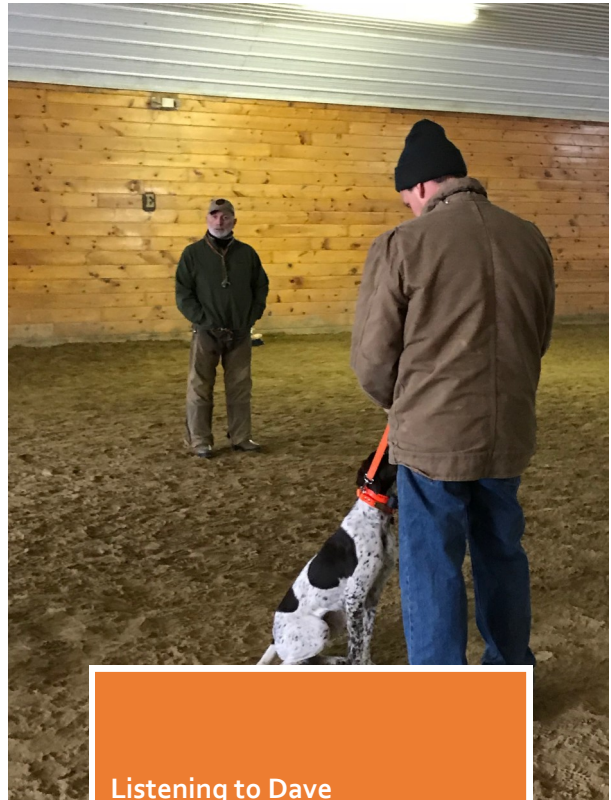


A little ADD?

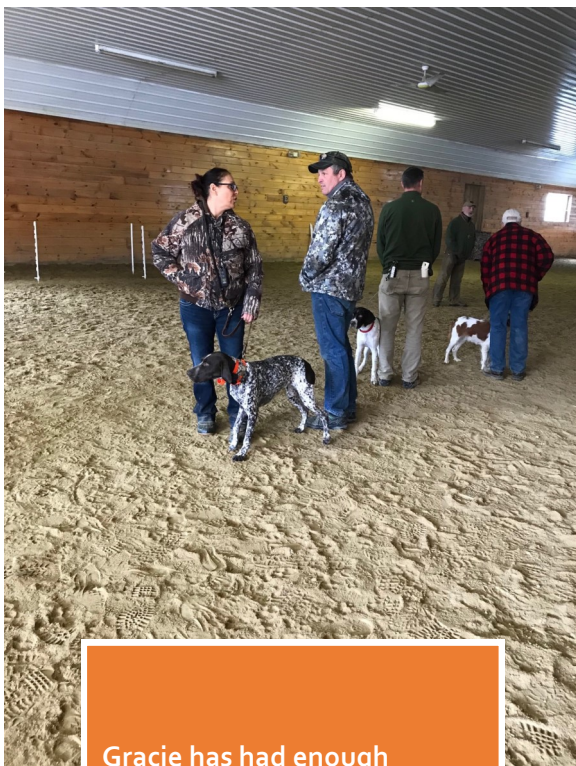
Indoor Clinic Pictures from March



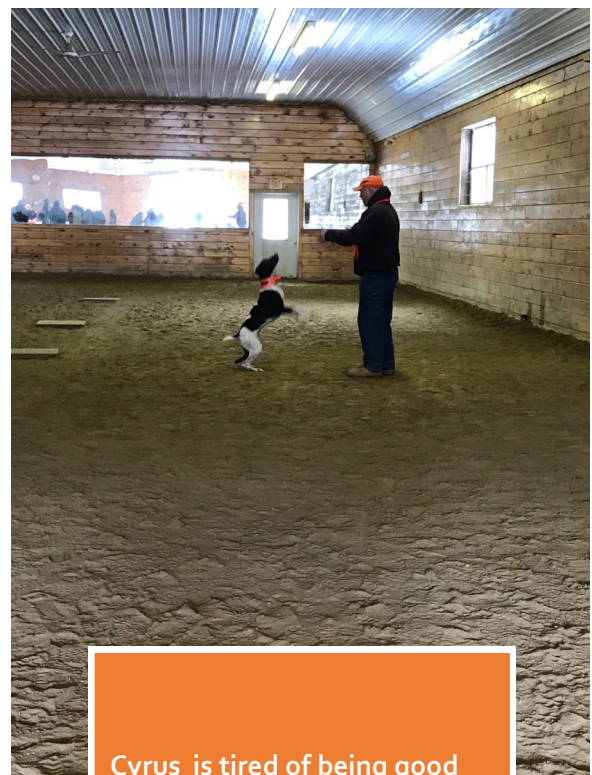
Cyrus having a chat



Listening to Dave



Gracie has had enough



Cyrus is tired of being good

Coming Soon!

