

GRIFFONNIER

The Official Publication of The American Wirehaired Pointing Griffon Association



HUNT ISSUE 2014

VOLUME 25 NUMBER 4

WINTER

Griffons Needed For Judges Ed Institute

by Mary Kiblan

The Wirehaired Pointing Griffon has been selected as one of the Sporting Breeds to participate in this year's American Dog Show Judges' Advanced Judging Institute. This Institute is held March 12-15, 2015 in conjunction with the 4-day Kentuckian Dog Show Cluster in Louisville, Kentucky.

For the hands-on seminar the participants are divided into 2 groups, and the AKC requires 4-6 dogs for each group. Therefore, 8 to 12 dogs are needed for the hands-on seminar. For the Judges' Ed Presentation we need two dogs. The class size is limited to 20 judge participants. Our Griffons are tentatively scheduled for March 13. The seminars are 60 minutes each.

Hopefully we can have good member participation with their dogs for this event, as this is the premier Judges Institute in the dog show world. Ideally, we can show these Judges a good cross section of our breed. We do not wish to present or showcase a certain kennel or bloodline. We can have dogs of all ages. Members, please make an effort to attend this event so the Judges can see that we are very committed to educating good judges for the Wirehaired Pointing Griffon.

Having participated in one of these Institutes before, I can tell you it is a great learning experience for all involved, not just the judges.

Anyone who would like to participate, please contact Lorraine Rothrock: samsngriffs@gmail.com, Ann Summerfelt: kentislander@gmail.com or Mary Kiblan: kiblan@q.com



Opening Day With Greenwings And Griffs

by George DeCosta

The waterfowl season had just opened and my hunting buddy, Bruce Collett, and I were excited to get our Griffs out in the wetlands. My pup, Cota, was just under two years-old and Bruce's pup, Gus, was just under four. During the off-season Bruce and I had been practicing water work with both of our pups preparation. Finally, the day had arrived and we were anxious to see if all of those hours of work would pay off in the real world of duck hunting.



Gus already had a few waterfowl seasons under his belt and was becoming a seasoned waterfowler, but Cota had only hunted waterfowl one year. Although she had done well, we were hoping that this year she would come of age and develop into a top-notch retriever.

Bruce and I had been lucky enough to draw a reservation at one of California's wildlife refuges. So we packed up the decoys, shotguns, waders, and pups and headed down south to see if we could start the season off with a bang. Unfortunately, the weather was not cooperating. We were having what most folks (other than duck hunters) love about California, bluebird days in the winter. Great weather for going for a walk, riding a bicycle, or sitting outside relaxing with your favorite beverage, but not so great for duck hunters. That's part of hunting; you take your chances, put your miles in, and hope for some success. It's not so much about harvesting game; it's more about being a part of nature, and camaraderie that develops between you and your pup in the fields and wetlands.

Eduard Karel Korthals developed the Griff to be a versatile hunting dog for the walking hunter, and to me there's nothing better than

seeing his vision come to life right in front of my own eyes almost one hundred and fifty years later. I've been an avid upland hunter for over forty years, but I only started duck hunting a few years back. Why now you might ask? Because I now own a Griff and I want to see her in action doing what her ancestors were originally bred to do. I'm sure there are some of you that relate to that...but let's get back to the hunt!

It was a dark Saturday morning, crisp and cold, the sky was clear, and the stars shined brightly. Check-in time at the refuge was 4 AM, so we were dressed and ready to get our blind assignment by 3:30 AM. Gus and Cota could feel the excitement in the cool air, and they were both wide-eyed and alert watching our every move. It was time to hunt and they knew it. As most of you can attest to, a Griff's eyes will tell you all you need to know. Gus and Cota's eyes said loud and clear, "Oh boy, let's go, let's go, let's go!"

The Ranger at the check-in station told us that there weren't many ducks coming in due to the sunny weather, but the teal were flying about, and we might get lucky and see some teal at first light. We loaded the decoys, put the headlamps on our hats, vests on the pups, grabbed the shotguns, and started out on the mile-plus hike to the blind. Both Gus and Cota were getting more and more excited and you could feel the electricity in each step they took as we got closer to the blind.

The reflection from the stars above, and our headlamp beams danced on the water as we tossed out the decoys. Our dogs stood in the water beside us as we adjusted our spread, and readied the blind for the action we hoped would happen. With the guns now loaded and the dogs in position, we stood watching the clock waiting for shooting time to start. I reached down to give Cota a rub behind her ear when the sound of whistling wings came buzzing by my head. A flock of teal had just dive-bombed our decoys. They were here and gone before we could even move a muscle. That got the adrenalin going! Both dogs looked to the sky, eyes filled with wonder and excitement, "Where'd they go, where'd they

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go, oh boy, oh boy, come on papa let's get some ducks!" Again their eyes said it all.

Darkness turned to dawn and shooting time was upon us; we were ready. Gus, Cota, Bruce and I had our eyes to the sky



watching with our nerves on edge and the anticipation of a child on their first trip to Disneyland. Then it happened again, the whistling wings of dive-bombing teal came rocketing above the decoys and over our blind. "Bang, bang, bang" went the shotguns and gone, gone, gone were the ducks. Yep, the season had indeed started with a bang, but only a bang. Both Bruce and I had only punched holes in the morning air. Oh well, I thought to myself, that's hunting. I looked down at Cota, her large brown eyes looked into mine and I read her thoughts. What the heck happened papa, we hiked all the way out here at 5 AM full of excitement, hauling decoys, kept quiet and still, waited patiently for the birds to come in and you missed!!! As I stated earlier, a Griff's eyes say it all. My height from 5'8" dropped to 3'2" as I shrunk in my mind's eye. I'm sorry girl, hang in there, I'll get one for you I promise.

As we stood in the blind watching the golden sun start to rise over the horizon I looked around me. Pup at my side, decoys floating peacefully in the water, and birds fluttering amongst the trees singing their morning songs. The coolness in the fresh morning air filled my lungs as I took a deep breath and thought to myself, I love this. Birds, or no birds, just being here in nature's beauty with my pup at my side is magnificent.

Then "bam" it happened again, the dive-bombers were upon us in a flash, "bang, bang, bang!" Then gone, gone, gone were the teal, we had both missed again. I won't type the words that were said in the blind at that moment, but I'll venture to say that nature's beauty was contradicted by our choice words that were spoken to the rear view of a flock of going away green-winged teal. Did you know that teal can laugh? I swear that I heard them as they soared away in the sunrise. I had to look down at Cota, and as much as I love looking into her eyes, I was dreading the thought of what her eyes were going to tell me this time. So I reached down and gave her another rub behind the ear and said, I'm so sorry girl, I promise I'm gonna get you a retrieve today no matter what it takes. Her soft eyes told me, "It's okay dad, I understand,

no problem. I'll be here ready to bring you the bird no matter how long it takes." Or, they may have said, "It's a pity you're such a bad shot, dad, but I understand the cards I've been dealt and I'll hang in here for you". (I'm still not too sure on this one. I'd like to think it was the first sentence.)

Again, we reloaded and stood in the silence with our eyes focused on the sky and the horizon. This time I saw them coming. Over the tree-line to my right, I caught a glimpse of zig-zagging teal racing towards our decoys. By the time I raised my shotgun to my shoulder, the flock had already dashed over the decoys and to my left. The recoil of the shotgun hit my shoulder and a single teal folded in the air and tumbled into the water. Another shot rang out to my right from Bruce's gun and another bird tumbled into to the water. I looked at Bruce and said, "Wow that was a long shot, great shooting".

He smiled and said, "Thank goodness I hit that bird, I don't think I could face my dog if I missed again".

Cota and Gus were released for the retrieve and they bounded into the water, both on a mission. I watched Cota as she swam and searched through the tules where the bird had fallen. After a short search she appeared from out of the tules with the bird in her mouth, proud as a peacock bringing back the harvest. "Good girl, good girl," I yelled out to her as she made her way back to the blind.

What her eyes conveyed as she delivered the bird to hand was priceless. "Look papa, I did it, I did it, I found it for you, here you go, didn't I do great! Come on let's do it again, let's do it again, let's do it again!"

As I rubbed her ear and again said, "Good job girl," I looked over to see how Gus was doing. He was gone, completely out of sight, nowhere to be found. After about five minutes, I was getting a little worried.

Bruce just said, "He's on a duck search, he'll be back don't worry". Sure enough, after well over seven minutes, out came Gus, bird in mouth making a straight line directly back to the blind.

"Wow, what a great retrieve," is all I could say. Bruce again smiled and said, I guess all the off-season work paid off.

We had teal buzzing our decoys and dive-bombing our blind for the next hour or so and then the action came to a halt. We stood in the blind for another three hours watching the shore birds feed in the morning sun and reminisced about all the shots and retrieves. We were lucky enough to bag seven green-winged teal that day and the pups had located and retrieved every one of them to hand. Opening day had been a success in our minds. We didn't need a limit of birds, we didn't need large ducks or geese in our bag, and we didn't need to be the best shots in the blinds. We just wanted to be out in nature's wetlands with our beautiful Griffs and had hoped to see them make a few retrieves. To us, the day couldn't have been more perfect. Those dive-bombing teal, the looks in our pup's eyes, and every retrieve to hand will live in our memories forever... although there might be a couple of shots I'd like to forget.