



MASTER AMATEUR RETRIEVER CLUB

2019-2020 ANNUAL REPORT

April 18, 2020

The Master Amateur Retriever Club by-laws call for an annual meeting of the membership to be held in conjunction with the annual Invitational. Due to the unfortunate cancelation of the 2020 Invitational in Corning, CA caused by the COVID-19 pandemic, the opportunity to convene was not possible. The following report is intended to provide the information that would have otherwise been presented at the annual meeting in Corning, CA.

The Year in Review

2020 - Most of us are familiar with the supposed Chinese curse, “May you live in interesting times.” Well, 2020 has certainly proved interesting and challenging and we all know folks that have been affected by the COVID-19 virus. More unfortunate, many of us have lost friends and loved ones to the epidemic. Our hearts and prayers go out to all who have been impacted.

The decision to cancel the 2020 Invitational was a very difficult one. The Board of Directors gave very deliberate thought and sincere consideration to the ever-changing information that was available. Discussions were had and opinions were heard and through it all you should be proud of the resolve and foresight shown by your Board in making that decision. At the time consideration was being made, widespread “shelter in place” and travel restrictions had not yet been implemented, but the Board was driven by an abundance of caution and concern for our members. Sadly, events have proven that decision was the wise course.

2019 Butte- On a positive note, however, looking back to 2019 the Club has much for which to be grateful and proud. The 2019 Invitational in Butte was in all aspects a success! The after event survey showed just how much folks enjoyed the event. You can see the survey results here: www.masteramateur.com/uploads/6/9/7/0/69703295/2019-mai-survey.pdf

Many thanks to all who participated, worked and supported the event. A special call out goes to the Treasure State Retriever Club for their hospitality and hard work.



Chatter in the Gallery



Sunrise Over Butte



MAH - The awards ceremony at Butte saw the initial award of the Club title Master Amateur Retriever (MAR) and the newly recognized AKC title Master Amateur Hunter (MAH3). The names of those dogs and their handlers are enshrined in the Club's "Hall of Fame." You can see them here: www.masteramateur.com/maihof.html



A very proud moment for all is the fact that after only three years the AKC approved the MAH title. This is a true testament to the efforts of the Club and the hard work and dedication of the amateur handlers and their dogs. Congratulations to all who have earned this title.

LRPC - In 2019, the Board initiated the Long-Range Planning Committee (LRPC). The LRPC consists of the president, two board members and three non-board members. The purpose of the committee is to review and monitor the club's activities and make recommendations to the Board on the operations of the Invitational and long term strategic initiatives. The current focus of the LRPC is long-term financial management and membership value. Any suggestions are welcome and should be sent to your Regional Director or to the Club email: masteramateurinfo@gmail.com.

Membership and Finance - MARC continued to grow in 2019 and the Club's finances remain strong. However, membership through the first quarter of 2020 is below that of last year. No doubt the uncertainties and event cancelations caused by the COVID-19 virus have had an adverse impact on the Club's growth. You can review the reports here: [2019 Financial Report](#)

Elections - Elections were held, as usual, by electronic ballot for the offices of president, West-Central vice-president and directors for the Central and West Regions. All members may vote for the president and vice-president, members in each region vote for their director. The results were:

President: Dr. Fred Nusbickel is elected and will begin his term on June 1, 2020.

Vice-president West Central: David Christianson was unopposed.

Central Director: Gordie Schlichting is reelected.

West Director: Dr. Ted deLooze was unopposed.

A Message from Fred



*Incoming President Fred
Nusbickel*

I have participated in Hunt Tests for 28 years, and after retiring this past year, I felt that it was important for me to give back to this sport we all love. As your incoming president, I pledge to each of you that I will do my best to uphold the standards and principles of this organization. I wholeheartedly support the difficult decisions the Board of Directors have made because of this unexpected pandemic. I ask all members to exercise patience and to understand that the Board is working tirelessly to get us through this difficult time. I am optimistic we will all prevail and again hear those magic words "dog to the line".

JOHN O. BLACKBIRD MEMORIAL AWARD

The 2020 recipient of the John O. Blackbird Memorial Award is Julie Cairns. MARC is honored to present this award to a person who has significantly contributed to the hunt test program in a multitude of ways throughout the years. You can read more about the award, and about Julie, here: [John O. Blackbird Memorial Award 2020](#)



Julie and Semper Austin Mini Cooper MNH BN**WCX

Old Business – None.

New Business - No new business was submitted by the membership.

Hunt Test Committee – 2020 has been rescheduled. The announcement was made April 15, 2020 as follows:



In early March the Board made the difficult decision that, due to the COVID-19 pandemic and subsequent concern for the safety of all participants, the 2020 Invitational scheduled to be held in Corning, CA, April 19-26, 2020, had to be canceled. Since then the Board has searched for alternatives for the event. After considering all available options, and given the uncertainties created by the pandemic, the Board has determined that the best alternative is to *reschedule* the 2020 Invitational in Corning, CA for April 18-25, 2021. All dogs that qualified for the 2020 Invitational are automatically qualified for the *rescheduled* 2020 Invitational, as well as the 2021 Invitational. Dogs that qualify during the 2021 qualifying year – March 1, 2020 to February 28, 2021 – are also qualified for both events.

The originally scheduled 2021 Invitational will take place as planned in Emporia, VA and will begin May 16, 2021. Dogs qualified as above may enter both events. Passes at each event will count as two credits for the 2022 qualifying year. A dog that passes both the *rescheduled* 2020 Invitational and the 2021 Invitational will have four credits toward the 2022 Invitational.

The Board will continue to monitor events and advise of any changes that circumstances may require.

2021 Invitational



As one might imagine, planning a national event is laborious and takes much time and effort. The Invitational is no different and the planning of the 2021 Invitational has been in the works for over a year. Prior to the beginning of the 2021 qualifying and membership year, the Club confirmed that the Invitational would be in the East region. The Hunt Test Committee selected the Steve Ferguson Memorial Retriever Grounds for the event and an agreement for the use of the grounds was signed early in 2020. The property is the result of years of work and dedication to the sport of retrievers by Steve Ferguson. Steve was an accomplished amateur handler in the Field Trial game and a great source of encouragement and support to all amateur handlers. It is a most fitting tribute to Steve's support of amateurs that the 2021 Invitational will be held on these grounds. You can learn more about the grounds here: www.fergusongrounds.com



The “Snake Island” gives the judges lots to work with. Along with such technical water there are ample natural looking ponds.



The North Field is one of four distinct areas within the approximately 350 acres of Ferguson. Each area has multiple water and land options. The property offers rolling elevations and natural cover. All sites are accessed by gravel and dirt roads.

Closing - Normally we close the annual meeting with a “Good of the Order” – an opportunity for members to ask questions, express opinions or just talk about their Club experiences. Since we can’t gather together I’ll use this space to share some of my thoughts with all of you.



Bob Swift and Lyle

It has been an honor to have served as Club president through these formative years. And it’s been a pleasure to observe how amateurs, and so many in the retriever community including professionals, corporate sponsors and the other national clubs have come together to support the Club’s mission. You, as members, have much to be proud of and much to look forward to. The past few months have been a challenge and the coming months will continue to challenge the Club, our sport and our nation. I’m confident that we have a strong and capable Board of Directors and Officers who will continue the growth and advancement of the Club. In the scheme of things our dog games are irrelevant to the pain, suffering and loss that the COVID-19 epidemic has caused, and will continue to cause, but our dogs give us such pleasure and hope for a better day. With their love and the support of our community we’ll get through this. So please, be safe, hug your friends and family and especially, hug your dogs.

“Guns up, dog to the line.”

Bob Swift