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-Doug McGuire

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West Region

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-David Markham

Vice President

-Brook Douglas

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Treasurer

Carolyn Kurth

Communication

Director

Mike Heard

2026 MAI

Stoughton, WI

June 20-28 2026



President's Message:

Greetings,

Welcome to the New Year!

During this time of the year, we look back at the past year with our family, friends, and the accomplishments of our canine companions. It is also the time of year that we look ahead to the coming year of what we want to accomplish with our retrievers, like the MAI.

The end of February is a key time for the Master Amateur Retriever Club as it marks the end of the qualifying year. The June 2026 MAI event will be in the state of Wisconsin. Check the website for event information and look at the qualifying list.

This past year, Entry Express has updated the qualifying list page to be updated when the local hunt test secretary enters the results. This will greatly help you to know if you are qualified. Please Note: this is still based on you choosing your name when you enter a test. Do Not: type in your whole name. Start typing, then choose your name. Most of the qualification problems come from mistyped names.

The next membership renewal year is now open! You don't have to wait to be ready to for the 2026 MAI event and you do not need to wait till March, start early. March 1st 2026 will be the start of the next qualifying year for the event in 2027, remember you must be a MARC member before you start qualifying. This can be done through the Master Amateur Retriever Club website, masteramateur.com, go to the membership tab and scroll down to find options.

Our club has been able to sustain itself for ten years from the support from members like you. I see many more years to come for the club. We find our members to be involved, concerned, helpful, and want to continue to preserve the sport for future amateurs. Thank you!

Looking Forward,

[Jace Tramontin](#)

Entry Express Makes Improvements for Tracking MAI Passes

Recently Entry Express implemented several enhancements to Master Amateur Invitational qualification tracking and reporting, providing members with greater visibility into their progress toward meeting requirements.

Problem: Infrequent updates of the qualifier list has resulted in avoidable telephone and email inquiries from members.

Solution: The processes for capturing pass counts, confirming Master Hunter (MH) and Master Amateur Hunter (MAH) titles, and updating the MAI Qualifier list on the MARC website are now fully automated with nightly updates.

When: 10/17/2025

Problem: Owners not updating titles on their dog's profile page or typing the title as part of the dog's name is resulting in a significant number of dogs (85) not being recognized as Master Hunter titled (MH) and thus as qualified.

Solution: We now determine MH and MAH status based on the pass counts reported in Entry Express. 6 MH passes or SH + 5 MH passes. SH is 5 SH passes or JH + 4 SH passes. JH = 4 JH Passes.

When: 10/17/2025

Problem: Owners not adding the handler's name to their dog by selecting from the dropdown list is resulting in the handler not being recognized as a club member, thus the pass is not counted.

Solution: We went back to March 1 and corrected several thousand records, not all MARC members, where the handler identification was NULL

When: 10/17/2025

REMINDER:

Use the dropdown list feature when selecting the handler for the hunt test events you enter.

DO NOT RETYPE YOUR NAME each time you enter an event.

Problem: Not all clubs use Entry Express to handle their entries requiring results from these tests to be manually tracked and appended to the Entry Express results.

Solution: For clubs that do not use Entry Express the qualification process will require – if the club wishes to participate – that the secretary use the Entry Express portal to record the event entries PRIOR to the start of the event and then within 48 hours of the conclusion of the event to record event results. Upon doing so, event information will flow to the clubs qualifying statistics within Entry Express. The club will be charged a fee of \$6.85 per master dog entered with a minimum of \$250.00 for handling the qualifying process, which will be paid at the time of entry. Verification requires that the hunt test secretary also provide to Retriever News/Entry Express a catalog of participating dogs and designate those dogs that are amateur handled. There is no additional fee for clubs that use Entry Express.

When: 10/31/2025

Problem: There is no Entry Express report that shows MARC members what each individual dog needs in order to be qualified for the MAI.

Solution: The MAI Qualification report is now available on Entry Express, allowing MARC members and board to monitor or review a dog's progress toward qualification. In addition, each dog's current-year MAI pass count is displayed on the dog's biography page.

When: 10/27/2025

GET INVOLVED!

[Doug McGuire](#) West Central Director

I've been active in retriever hunt tests for more than 30 years. During that time, I've seen tremendous changes take place in the sport, driven by numerous different factors. Early on, I watched the popularity of the sport explode, driven in large part by the advent of the Master National.

I started to write out a synopsis of the changes that have resulted, but anyone who has been playing the retriever hunt test game for more than a couple of years doesn't need a painful recap of the Bad Old Days. So, I'll keep it simple.

I believe that the retriever hunt test game is at a tipping point, the result a convergence of several factors. Some of those factors should come as no surprise to anyone who has played the game for a while: the fact that it's usually the same few people in any given club who do all the work involved in putting on tests, the fact that suitable grounds are becoming harder to secure, the fact that we're all getting older, and just general burnout.

But a new factor has the potential to make things very much worse, very quickly: the reaction to AKC's decision to require all judges to take a training class centered on prevention of child sexual abuse and human trafficking. As of December 31, 2025, any judge who has not completed the training will be removed from the list of active judges. As of December 1, 2025, fewer than 72% of active retriever hunt test judges had taken the training. If that number doesn't freak you out, I'm guessing you've never been the person tasked with finding Master judges for a hunt test.

Unless something changes, we're looking at clubs across the country not being able to find enough judges to put on tests. Want to earn a Master title on your dog? Oh well. Want to qualify for the Master National or the Master Amateur Invitational? Too bad, so sad. The pool of Master judges has been shrinking for many years, for many reasons, but now almost a quarter of licensed judges are on the brink of taking themselves out of the game.

So, what can you do? **Get involved!** Lend a hand at your club's events. Work with your club to host an AKC judge's seminar. Take a seminar and become a judge. This sport we all love is driven by amateurs, who are obviously the backbone of this club. If you've ever thought you might like to step up to the judge's chair, there's never been a better time than right now.

From the Eastern Region

[John Dawber](#) Eastern Region Director

Thank you to everyone who made the 2025 "Maine Event" Invitational a huge success! From the Landowners Mike Coutu and Dave Mosher, the Board of Directors, the outstanding group of workers, the judges, the handlers and all the way to our fabulous dogs, thank you so much! The grounds were all they were said to be – SPECTACULAR! Our judges made the week fun. Yes, the tests were challenging, but the judges reminded us to have fun, and we did! Congratulations to the teams who qualified. We are proud of you!

As we are preparing for the 2026 Master Amateur Invitational, currently, there are 370 dogs qualified to run this year's event being held from June 20th through June 28th, 2026, in Stoughton, Wisconsin. We are hoping for every qualified dog to run at the 10th Anniversary of the MAI. We are looking forward to seeing all of you in Wisconsin.

2026 MARC Board of Director Elections

[Dave Markham](#) West Region Director and Nominating Committee Chair

In 2026 there are three open board positions that are up for election. These three positions are for the following regions:

- East Region Vice President (4-year term)
- Central Region Director (2-year term)
- West Region Director (2-year term)

The four regional directors constitute the Nominating Committee for the election process. Beginning in late February, MARC members will receive notification of the board elections and opening of the nomination process. The membership has 30 days to submit nominations, which should be submitted to your region director. Any MARC member in good standing can run for a board position in the region they reside.

Following the close of nominations, the Nominating Committee will review the nominees to ensure they meet the qualifications to run for a board position and are willing to accept the nomination. In mid-April a voting ballot will be emailed to all MARC members with voting to close at the end of April.

In 2026, all members may vote for the East Region Vice President but only members residing in the Central Region can vote for the Central Region Director and only members residing in the West Region can vote for the West Region Director.

The results of the election will be announced at the Annual Meeting to be held prior to the Master Amateur Invitational in Stoughton, Wisconsin. The three new board members will take office 30-days after the annual meeting which is late July 2026.

If you are a MARC member living in the East, Central, or West regions, please consider running for a board position. If you would like to learn more about the roles and responsibilities of the position and serving on the MARC board, please contact Mark Fredrick (East Region VP), Wilson LeJeune (Central Region Director) or Dave Markham (West Region Director). All Board of Director contact information is on the MARC website under the tab Region Information.

SURVEY RESULTS

2025 President's Master Amateur Invitational Participant Satisfaction Survey ([Click Here](#)) is available on the masteramateur.com website under the MARC Community Documents page.



NEW TO THE BOARD OF DIRECTORS

[Brook Douglas](#) West Region Vice President was elected at the 2025 MAI Annual Meeting.

For the past 15 years, I've been deep in the world of retriever training. My wife and I have been lucky to own five Black Labs—Steeler, Jet, Chica, Dizzy, and Milli. While Steeler and Chica are no longer with us and Jet is officially a "couch potato," Dizzy and Milli keep us busy. Training as an amateur is only possible with a great community, and I'm so grateful for the friends and training partners who have helped me along the way.

Home for us is a small farm in Northwestern Oregon, the perfect base for hunting, fishing, and running hunt tests. I'm heavily involved in the local community through five different PNW clubs and recently stepped down as President of my local club. One of our proudest moments was last year's 6,500-mile road trip to the Master Amateur Invitational in Maine, where we were thrilled to bring home some hardware. I hope your hunting season was a great one, and I'll see you on the road to the 2026 MAI in Wisconsin!

Brook, Carolyn, Jet, Dizzy and Milli

[Rex Gibson](#) was appointed West Central Region Vice President after Kevin McGinnis stepped off the board to pursue a professional retriever trainer role.

TIME TO RENEW YOUR MEMBERSHIP

We are hopeful that the bugs have been fixed in the system and the membership renewal process should run smoothly this year. Please read and follow the directions to the letter listed on the membership page ([click here](#)) on masteramateur.com. Reach out to your regional director if you need help.

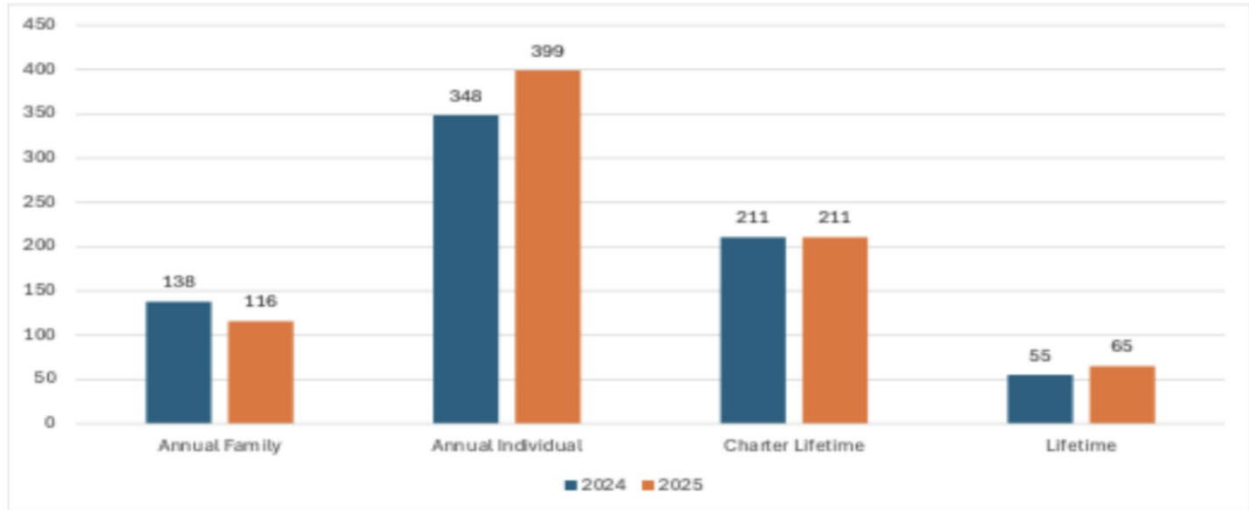


TENTATIVE SCHEDULE OF EVENTS for the 2026 MAI

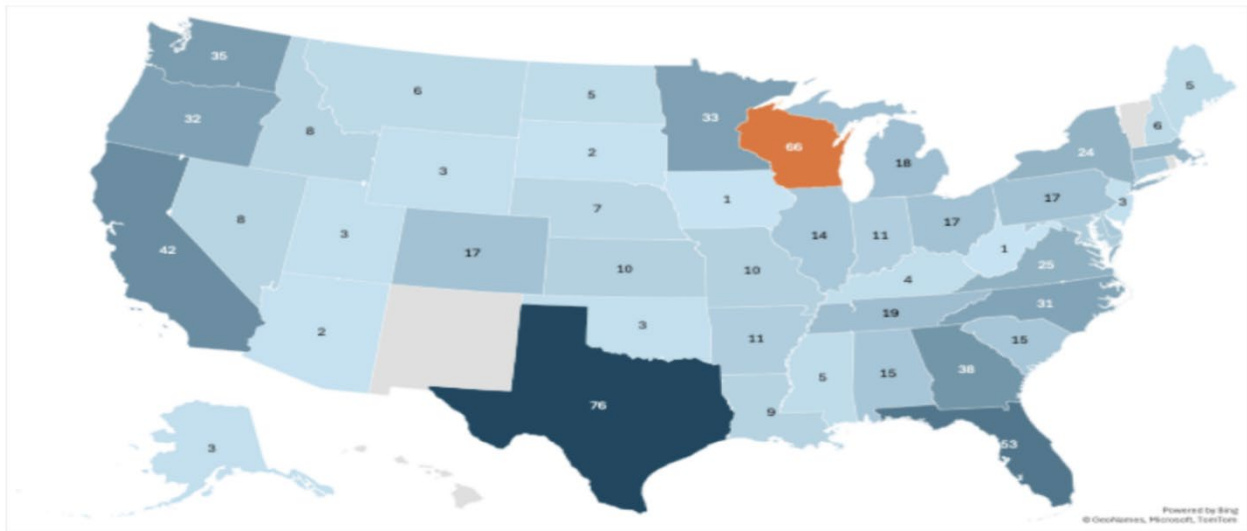
Sunday June 14th	First Training Property Draw	Sleep Inn and Suites 4802 Tradewinds Parkway Madison WI 53718
Saturday June 20th	Opening Day Ceremonies <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Merchandise Store Opens• Handler Check In and Registration• Bitch Check• MARC Annual Meeting and• Mandatory Handlers' Meeting• Bar Opens• Dinner Served• Raffle• First Dog to Run Determined	Jefferson County Fair Park 503 N Jackson Road Jefferson WI 53549
Sunday June 21st	First Dog to the Line	Madison Retriever Club Grounds Clubhouse Hook Lake Property 1821 Labrador Road Oregon WI 53575 Gallagher Property 970 Gallagher Lane Stoughton WI 53589 W Property 1427 County Road W Stoughton WI 53589 Stoughton Property 2837 Hogie Road Stoughton WI 53589
Tuesday June 23rd	Workers' Party	Coachman's Golf Resort 984 County Highway A Edgerton WI 53534
TBD Awards Ceremony and Closing		

End of 2025 Membership Information

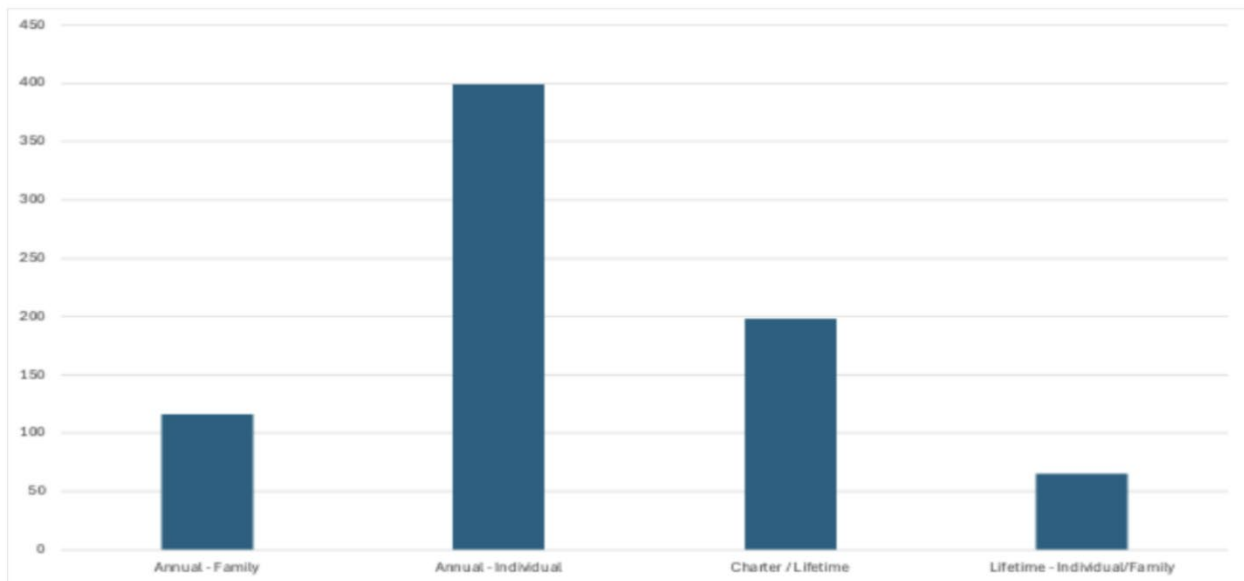
MARC voting members eocy 24 vs eocy 25



MARC voting members by State eocy 2025



MARC Voting Membership eocy 2025



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Submitted by

[Mike Heard](#)

Communication Director

