

## **2024 NAVHDA EC Annual Meeting Recap**

### **Jim & Bobby Applegate Award**

We received 4 nominations this year. The winner was chosen by a committee composed of two EC members (Coenen, Otto) and three members at large (Roy Ames, Karen Nowicki, Patti Carter). The committee chose Phil Swain as the recipient of the 2024 Jim and Bobby Applegate Award.

### **Ed Erickson case discussion**

Removed Ed Erickson from NAVHDA's membership pending the outcome of a criminal trial.

### **Strategic Priorities: Past Progress, Future Goals.**

***NAVHDA's first Strategic Priority will be to continue to strengthen the organization to build a better, more sustainable NAVHDA for the future.***

#### **Past Progress:**

- Since 2021, NAVHDA's overall membership increased by 2.4%. Importantly, this increase was disproportionately represented by dramatic increases in Youth, Female, and Spousal members. Youth Membership increased 9%, Female membership increased 12%, and Spousal membership increased a whopping 28%!! These numbers are encouraging and suggest that the membership has done a fantastic job making the NAVHDA experience welcoming to all!
- During this same period, Life membership has increased 21%, and Membership Renewals have increased almost 23%!
- We now have 108 local Chapters (and counting), an 11% increase since 2021.
- To support this growth in Chapters, NAVHDA developed the New Chapter Support Program and the Chapter Mentor Program.
- Over the past 6 years NAVHDA has developed a number of Committees that have greatly expanded membership involvement in Organizational decision-making. These Committees include the Invitational Committee, the Registry Committee, the Promotions Committee, and the Judging and Testing Committee

#### **Future Goals:**

- Continue outreach to membership to solicit ideas for additional programs that will address emerging member needs.
- Building on the fact that Youth, Female, and Spousal membership numbers have never been better, NAVHDA should continue to welcome like-minded individuals from groups that have historically been underrepresented in our membership.
- Create additional opportunities for Chapters and members to be involved in Organizational decisions.

- Review workflow in the Central Office and hire additional staff to meet the growing demand for infrastructure support and to take advantage of emerging, contemporary digital solutions to some of our current procedures.

***NAVHDA's second Strategic Priority will be to continue to provide the best testing system possible.***

**Past Progress:**

- Over the past several years NAVHDA has offered a record number of tests with a record number of dogs tested.
- Since 2021 there has been a 10% increase in Judges and a 50% increase in apprentices.
- Results of our 2023 Member Survey suggest that 86% of respondents are "Very Satisfied" with the NAVHDA testing system, and 89% were "Very Satisfied" with their overall experience with NAVHDA Judges!
- NAVHDA developed the Apprentice Judge Incentive Program to partially reimburse Apprentices for out-of-pocket expenses after they have been approved.

**Future Goals:**

- Develop ways to make Test Secretaries' jobs easier by automating some of the paperwork required to hold a test.
- Continue to develop programs to recruit and retain new judges.
- Review the current standards and elements of the UPT test.

***NAVHDA's third Strategic Priority will be to continue educating members to get the most out of their dogs.***

**Past Progress:**

- NAVHDA produced a tremendously popular Natural Ability test video.
- A Utility Test video will be launched at the upcoming Annual Meeting.
- The Training Seminar Assistance Program was developed, which helps smaller, new, or inexperienced Chapters pay for training seminars.
- A special, bonus "Training" Issue of the VHD was published in July 2022 with over 20 articles focusing on training techniques for dogs at all levels of development and skill.
- NAVHDA introduced a formalized Invitational Aims and Rules Clinic focusing exclusively on better communication of the expectations and training techniques for the Invitational.

**Future Goals:**

- Develop new, "digital" ways to foster communication between chapters.
- Improve the "New Member" packet to better acquaint members with all that NAVHDA has to offer.
- Encourage Chapters to guide and support new members in their progression from NA to UPT/UT training.

***NAVHDA's fourth Strategic Priority will be to continue to expand our branding and communication.***

**Past Progress:**

- Our website is continually being enhanced and optimized and has had a record number of engagements ("hits") over the past several years.

- NAVHDA's Social Media presence (Facebook, Instagram, YouTube) has skyrocketed, increasing our visibility and recognition internationally.
- Increased communication through annual membership surveys.

**Future Goals:**

- Expand digital presence to additional Social Media platforms.
- Train existing and future Central Office staff in contemporary marketing techniques.
- Build on our current strengths of promoting NAVHDA through Corporate Sponsors and Conservation Partners.

***NAVHDA's fifth Strategic Priority will be to enhance our Information Technology Infrastructure to address contemporary opportunities and member needs.***

- Revamp the NAVHDA store, including outsourcing apparel sales to increase availability and choices.
- Streamline member and litter registration.
- Enhance the user interface on our Test Records and Pedigree search pages.
- Develop "Members Only" and "User Portal" functionality to the website.

**Managing Directors Report**

- New office staff- The office has hired a new replacement for Cheryl, who retired on December 31<sup>st</sup>. Her name is Daysiln (Daisy)
- Eli expanding her role into marketing- Eli will slowly begin taking on Marketing tasks while taking classes and further developing her skills. She will also take over the role of Invitational coordination.
- Moving forward with the company Ameriprint to be NAVHDA's apparel vendor for a trial period of one year.
- Logo- Logo has been updated.

**Create a Managing Directors' regional team to improve communication across regions  
Enhance NAVHDA's new member welcome packet.**

- Highlight current NAVHDA benefits. (Membership value proposition)
- How to Navigate NAVHDA website such as when to register for tests.
- Safety tips: Weather safety (refer to different articles or import those articles into a how-to section., See intern section)
- Behavior expectations
- Work with Chapter's to develop their own new member's packets

**Create Guides for chapters**

- Sample bylaws
- Welcoming suggestions.
- Best practice page, for all chapter-sharing ideas.
- 501 c3 assistance.
- Ideas for chapter development. i.e. requiring volunteering.
- Subgroup within chapters to train and learn.

- Guide for running training days.
- Test secretary newsletter or section on the web for updates/ assistance.
- Update/revise the code of conduct/handling of dogs for NAVHDA members

**Collaborate with the youth committee to create new initiatives on the international level**

- Create a manual available for Chapters to duplicate/ Reproducible items for chapters on the web.
- Youth leadership group.
- Youth presence at the annual meeting.
- Youth volunteering at the Invitational.
- Presentations and info geared toward youth at the annual meeting.

**Create more opportunities for Chapters/ Members to be involved with International**

- Recruit a French-speaking Canadian to disperse information and act as liaison to EC .
- Offer translation of documents in French
- Host Chapter President's meetings quarterly and work on increasing attendance and involvement. I have the year's schedule I will send out.

**Legislative Proposal**

**The Legislative Committee** includes Dave Trahan, TJ McKenzie, Bridget Nielson, and Terry. NAVHDA International has joined both the Congressional Sportsmen's Foundation and the Sportsmen's Alliance. More to come on Legislative alerts and possible opt-in process.

**Treasurer**

- **Total revenue increased \$4120 over 2022**
- **Expenses \$121,945 greater than 2022**
- **Net Revenue \$185,678 increase over 2022**
- **Membership renewal up 4.4%**
- **Lifetime membership increased 2.2%**
- **Sponsorship is up 31% this year**
- **Testing fees are up 12%**
- **Magazine income Increased 17.5 %**

**Expenses**

- **UT video %5830 extra for Video Extension**
- **Invitational cost \$32,943 more, due to adding an extra day and some grounds work**
- **It added \$44,500 for custom software and store upgrades**
- **Plaques for lifetime members**

**Overall Financial health**

- **Nearly \$307K in checking**
- **Operating Reserve fund is \$305K**
- **Current Assets 2,039,107**

**Investment funds**

- **Lifetime membership fund \$1,118,891**
- **Youth Fund \$275K**

### Track to Wing Update

- 14 Applications Received, 10 track chairs granted
- Applications for hunters with mobility challenges.
- Cost per chair around 22K.

Applications for 2024 can be submitted now through March 31<sup>st</sup> to [track2wing@gmavt.net](mailto:track2wing@gmavt.net)

Letter sent out to each Chapter with information about the program

### Invitational

#### 2023 Stats

- 177 dogs ran over 5 days
- 82 dogs passed
- 41 Failed in only one event
- 245 volunteers, short 45 volunteers
- 29 judges
- Youngest dog was 2.28, oldest 9.93

**Reminder: Entries close at midnight on Friday, March 1<sup>st</sup>, and Dog's DNA must be completed and sent by that time.**

2024 Invite September 11-15. hosted by the Iowa Hawkeye Chapter.

2025 Invite September 11-14. Hosted by Ohio Buckeye Chapter

2026 Invite September, Hosted by the Zia Chapter, Pending water rights

### Annual Meetings

2025 Annual Meeting-Montana Jan 30-Feb 1

2026 information will be sent out this month.

### Registrar

**Total number of Dogs registered 4661 is back to 2020 levels (expected from Covid Bubble)**

**Total number of litters registered is 631 (also expected)**

#### Revisions to our Inactive Kennel Names Policy:

**In 2021, the Registry updated one of our policies that would not allow the re-use of an inactive kennel name that had registered pups using that kennel name.**

**The reason for the policy was prior to this, kennel names were reused, and produced pups which could make things very confusing for someone researching pedigrees, and it could lead someone to believe a dog is from a particular line when in fact it was not.**

**Since this change, we have received a number of complaints and have been working to find a solution that would protect the integrity of the NAVHDA database yet still allow the re-use of inactive kennel names with some specific guidelines.**

#### Proposal:

**1.Allow the re-use of inactive kennel names for breeds not associated with the previous owner of the kennel name.**

**2.If someone applies for an inactive kennel name for the same breed as the original owner, an application must be submitted to the Registry Committee for review.**

3. Decisions will be determined by history of breeding, achievements and NAVHDA participation by previous kennel name owner and person applying for kennel name.

#### **Breeder Awards**

It is no longer necessary for members to submit applications for a NAVHDA Breeder's Award. All levels are now automatically awarded.

Provide an option for members to add photos of their dogs to their on-line pedigree

Last year we discussed providing members the ability to add pictures to their dog's pedigree. This gives those researching the database the ability to not only research dogs pedigrees, test scores and progeny reports, but also to ability to see what the dog looks like.

#### **Publications**

##### **Stats**

- 2023 VHD published 50 feature articles by 42 separate authors
- Average page length 34(32 in 2022)
- December 2023 (invitational issue was 40 pages!

##### **Website Highlights**

- 436,000 page views
- 135,000 unique visitors
- 50,000 visitors to the registry
- 30,000 Test Calendar
- 27,000 Invitational page
- September averaged 1700 views per day

##### **Social Media Highlights**

70% of members use social media

189 posts in 2023 (107 in 2022)

Reached over 600,000 people in 2023 (426,000 in 2022)

Most popular was the Pudlepointer breed of the week post

60% of members use Instagram

Over 100 posts

11,600 followers (10,400 in 2022)

1100 post shares of Monday Morning recap

#### **Promotions**

##### **Garmin**

##### **Discount Card Program**

- 20% Discount off Dog Products
- 2023 – 427 of 550 Cards Used (77% usage rate)
- 2023 – Over \$38,000 in Savings to NAVHDA Members

##### **Ruffland**

##### **Discount Program Exclusive to NAVHDA Members**

- 15-20% Discount of various products

Conservations partners PF/QF and RGS were discussed in detail. Past history, previous agreements and partnership benefits were discussed to determine NAVHDA's intended direct forward with PF/QF and RGS.

Ruffed Grouse Society (RGS) has indicated they are no longer interested in providing financial support to NAVHDA through the previous Co-Promotional agreement, and that they have an interest in a more basic relationship and partnership going forward than what was previously in place. This agreement has been in place in some form since 2017. Communications with RGS has been ongoing since expiration of the previous agreement with hopes that a new Co-Promotional agreement could be formed which is mutually beneficial to both parties. After several attempted contacts and communication throughout part of 2022 and 2023, a new agreement was not agreed upon for the calendar year 2024. During the expired time period of the previous agreement, NAVHDA has honored and provided all promotional components of the agreement to RGS. The NAVHDA Executive Council unanimously voted in support of a proposal brought forward by Andy Doak, Director of Promotions. NAVHDA will now extend an offer to directly partner with RGS on specific habit and conservation projects that can demonstrate a direct benefit to NAVHDA members. Proposals from RGS will be considered on an annual basis. Discussions with RGS are ongoing with respect to this new approach focusing more on wildlife conservation and habitat, rather than marketing and promotional items through a formal agreement.

NAVDHA and Pheasanst Forever & Quail Forever (PF/QF) have had a Co-Promotional agreement in place from 2019 through part of 2022. This agreement included various Co-Promotional, marketing and advertising items with the intent to be mutually beneficial to both parties. During the agreement NAVHDA also provided \$15,000 per year in financial support to PF/QF for three years. The agreement expired in late 2022, and during calendar year 2023 NAVHDA honored multiple marketing and promotional benefits to PF/QF, as did PF/QF to NAVHDA on various items. One of the primary goals for NAVHDA though the previous agreement was to see new NAVHDA members brought into NAVHDA as a result of the PF/QF Co-Promotional agreement. Limited increase in NAVHDA membership was seen as a result of the agreement, and the NAVHDA Executive Council determined that limited tangible benefits and limited return on NAVHDA's financial investment was seen through the previous agreement. During 2023 discussions and re-negotiations of a potential agreement took place between NAVHDA and PF/QF, with the hopes to determine a new Co-Promotional partnership agreement that was mutually beneficial to both parties. No formal agreement was made in 2023 for the calendar year 2024. The NAVHDA Executive Committee unanimously agreed that regardless of no formal agreement in place it is important to continue support for PF/QF and their mission. The NAVHDA Executive Council unanimously voted in support of a proposal brought forward by Andy Doak, Director of Promotions. NAVHDA will now extend an offer to directly partner with RGS on specific habit and conservation projects that can demonstrate a direct benefit to NAVHDA members. Proposals from RGS will be considered on an annual basis. Discussions with PF/QF are ongoing with respect to this new approach focusing more on wildlife conservation and habitat, rather than marketing and promotional items through a formal agreement.

#### Judging

- Placing the gun on the ground (recommended rule change) motion passed
- Unshading the cooperation box on the UT remaining by the blind making it a secondary(recommended rule change)

- **Prior knowledge of aggressive dog behavior, modify the current language to reflect the addition of written reports of behavior as updated**
- **Changes to the UPT test to more of a Gun Dog test (more to come)**

### **Reminders**

- Chapters, please make sure that someone is responsible for reimbursing judges before they leave the grounds. This is an ongoing problem which is certainly not intentional by the chapters but puts judges in an awkward situation.
- The blind must be 3-sided and at least 36' tall. This is a minimal expectation and has been communicated several times.
- There must be at least 6 decoys and no more than 10. They must be off the shoreline to mimic an actual duck-hunting scenario.
- Only factory poppers and blanks can be used such as Fiocchi, Kent, or Winchester. Hulls with just a primer or not permitted.

### **Testing**

Testing numbers 23 vs. 22

NA 2506 vs. 2682

UPT 131 vs. 100

UT 971 vs. 914

Total: 3608 vs 3696

Testing dog's average age:

NA 11.9 months vs 11.9 mths

UPT 3y vs 3y3m

UT 3y 6M vs 3Y9M

Testing news and reminders

1. You need to use an out of region Judge every 4<sup>th</sup> testing weekend
2. Judging teams need to be comprised of three judges with one being an approved senior judge (14 2-judge tests in 2023)
3. Positive feedback on the Utility Test Healing event
4. Shotgun popper and shells need to be factory-loaded
5. 110 Tests have already been approved for 2024
6. Currently 13 tests are scheduled for the 3<sup>rd</sup> weekend of August.

### **Information Technology**

We have a new Member Portal currently being tested at several chapters. It is set to roll out in April. Some things it includes:

- Ability to see your dogs all in one area,
- See all test scores
- Add 7 pictures per dog

- Test sign up, test secretary to receive immediate information. With notes of payment and time stamps.
- For judges they can see all the tests they have judged, as well as all scores
- You can see pedigrees and click on other dogs registered within your dogs pedigree to see their stats

#### **1. Review of Chapter Motions & Discussion**

1. Motion One submitted by the Volunteer Chapter States: It is proposed that the NAVHDA Apprentice Judge Program wording be revised to allow the apprentice to step out of the judging team while the said dog or handler is running as referenced in paragraphs 7& 8 below then rejoin the team for the rest of the day. **Of the Delegates present seven voted in favor and 22 voted against. Motion failed among the delegates.**
  2. Motion two submitted by Inland Empire: To provide a standard template website to all the chapters. Chapters would customize the website as they see fit. **Delegates present nine voted in favor and 21 against. Motion failed among the delegates.**
  3. Motion three submitted by Inland Empire: To add a secure login discussion forum to the NAVHDA International webpage. **Eleven delegates voted in favor and nineteen against. Motion failed among the delegates.**
2. **Discussion Issue submitted by Yankee chapter:** Judges should not have to cover the cost of sending in their score cards. NAVHDA should provide “Business Reply Mail” preprinted envelopes for our judges to mail their cards back to the main office.