

Speaker and Sponsor Bios

Greg Blair

Area Manager - PET - Nestle Purina PetCare - Bird Dogs (a NAVHDA Sponsor)

I consider it an honor to work for a company that drives my passion for bird dogs. Supporting many of the world's best dog owners and trainers is a real honor. This dedication has resulted in 1000's of Purina fed Champions and Hunt Test winners over the years.

The area of coverage that my team supports is all pointing dog field trials, hunt and versatility tests across North America. I have participated in field trials and testing for over 20 years. In addition to continuing to handle my own dogs competitively, my dogs have won a National Amateur Invitational Championship, National Shoot to Retrieve Regional Championship and a High Point Dog of the Year, multiple years in different national associations.

When called upon I have dedicated my time to various national bird dog association boards, judged walking and horseback field trials, and been the chairperson for numerous weekend, regional and national championship trials – all across the country.

Our family lives in Wisconsin and has owned numerous dogs over the past 25 years, from a German Shorthair Pointer, English Pointers, English Setters, and a Golden Retriever to a few small house dogs. We also currently own two Tennessee Walkers – Traveller and Petey – which we use for field trialing and trail riding.

Paul Coenen

Banquet Emcee

Paul has been a professional educator for 32 years. He finds the psychology learned in his career helps him be an effective trainer. Utilizing methods learned in education he looks to provide the maximum opportunity for dogs to be successful and then catches them doing the right thing. He then provides positive reinforcement. Paul states, "We feel our training methods keep the dogs interested and happy while also providing the guidance they need."

Paul patterns his career, life, and training from the book, 'Whale Done,' by Ken Blanchard where catching people doing the right thing and providing positive feedback is a successful method of getting people to do the right thing and feel good about what they're doing.

Paul and his wife, Angie, live in Richland Center, WI where they train dogs and raise puppies at Hurricane Kennels. While Paul and Angie have had some success achieving several Versatile Champions since 2012, they both credit the help they have received from numerous NAVHDA friends that have shortened the learning curve...

Greg Cronkhite

Founder Dakota 283 (a NAVHDA Sponsor)

Greg Cronkhite grew up in Northern Illinois and was introduced to pheasant hunting by his father and uncles in the early 70's at the age of 10. One great hunt and he was hooked for life! Since then, Greg graduated from Northern Illinois University and went on to work in several plastic related businesses culminating in starting Sterling Technologies in 1998 with his wife Jane. Sterling Technologies is a custom rotational molding company located in Erie, PA where many of the early projects developed included military transfer cases and other military related products. In 2003, Good Ideas was born as a product development and marketing company specializing in rain barrels, compost bins and raised bed gardens. Most of these products were manufactured by Sterling Technologies.

As Greg's obsession for upland hunting continued through the years, he decided to develop a line of gun vaults, kennels and feeding systems using his knowledge of military specifications to market to his fellow dog owners. The result of this became Dakota 283 which formally started in 2014. Today, along with being national sponsors with NAVHDA, Dakota

283 also sponsors several other organizations like Rough Grouse Society and National Kennel Club. He is excited to tell you about what is new in the world of “Unparalleled Pet Protection” with his update on Dakota 283 through a review of the current products as well as what is coming soon!

A.J. DeRosa

Co-founder of the Northwoods Collective (Project Upland)

A.J. DeRosa is a co-founder of the Northwoods Collective. A New England native, he made his first mark in the outdoor industry with the critically-acclaimed book *The Urban Deer Complex*. He later went on to create the award-winning platform *Project Upland*. From directing network television to shooting short films, A.J. aspires to create innovative creative content for the outdoor industry. He is passionate about bringing new demographics to experience and better love the outdoors.

Bob Hauser

NAVHDA Vice President

Bob Hauser was raised in central Iowa, hunting and fishing for as long as he can remember. Now retired, this Iowa farm boy spent most of his professional career as a faculty member and administrator at the University of Illinois, Urbana-Champaign.

Bob has been a NAVHDA member for 35 years and a judge for 30. During the mid-1980s he was a co-founder of the Central Illinois Chapter, which eventually morphed into the current Spoon River Chapter. He served on the NAVHDA Executive Council as Secretary for five years and as Director of Testing for three years from 1988 through 1995, and then shifted more of his attention toward family (two children) and career. Since then, he continued to remain active as a handler, judge, and clinic leader. Bob is now serving as Vice President.

Benjamin C. Jones

President and Chief Executive Officer of the Ruffed Grouse Society (a NAVHDA Conservation Partner)

Ben Jones has been President and CEO of the Ruffed Grouse Society since June 2018. Prior to that, he was Habitat Division Chief for the Pennsylvania Game Commission where he oversaw habitat and access management across millions of acres of land open to public hunting. Ben earned a bachelor’s degree in Forestry Wildlife and Fisheries from Penn State, a master’s degree in Wildlife Ecology from Mississippi State, and a PhD in Natural Resources from the University of Tennessee. He resides near Harrisburg, Pennsylvania with his wife Michelle, three children and the family’s English setter. He is an avid outdoorsman, hunting at every available opportunity, with a passion for introducing the next generation to the hunting lifestyle.

Matt Kucharski

APR, President Padilla,

Matt is a seasoned public relations, strategic communication and marketing professional, helping clients across a wide range of industries build, grow and protect their brands and reputations. Throughout his nearly 30 years in the field, he has been a continuous trend watcher, learner, educator and innovator – helping the agency and clients stay ahead of “what’s next.”

Matt has planned and implemented strategic communication, brand building, and reputation management programs and projects for a wide range of Padilla clients, from global Fortune 500 enterprises to promising category challengers. Clients benefitting from Matt’s experience include Rockwell Automation, Mayo Clinic, Blue Cross Blue Shield of Minnesota, Be The Match, Tyco Retail Solutions, 3M, Valspar, Microsoft, Cisco and numerous others. He has extensive expertise in brand and reputation management, message development, thought leadership, integrated campaigns, new product and service launches, and major company transformations. He leads and facilitates brand strategy sessions as well as customer advisory council meetings.

In his spare time, Matt is an adjunct faculty member for the Master’s in Strategic Communication program at the University of Minnesota and sits on the boards of Pheasants Forever, Greater Twin Cities United Way, and the Minnesota Chapter of the American Heart Association. He is a member of the Arthur W. Page Society “Page Up” program and an accredited member of the Public Relations Society of America.

Karl Gunzer**Director, Purina Sporting Dog Program**

Karl is the Director of Purina's Sporting Dog Program with more than 25 years of working with dogs and people who share a passion for the outdoors. Karl's team sponsors and attends more than 300 sporting dog events and championships every year and manages Purina's relationship with conservation organizations like Ducks Unlimited, Pheasants Forever and the Ruffed Grouse Society.

Prior to joining Purina in 2013, Karl owned and operated High Spirit Retrievers and built a successful business training and handling dogs to compete in retriever field trials. Karl had the top Derby kennel in the US in 2007 and 2012 and won more than 40 Open Stakes and 60 Derby stakes. Competing in eight National Championships with more than 24 dogs, he trained five National Finalists and a two-time Canadian National Champion.

When he's not working sporting dog events, Karl is likely fishing, hunting, working cows or training dogs with his wife Cyndi at their home in Lexington, TX.

Emily lehl**R3 Coordinator for the Wisconsin Department of Natural Resources**

Emily Lehl was hired as an R3 Coordinator for the Wisconsin Department of Natural Resources in July 2018. After graduating with a B.A. in Conservation Biology from the University of Wisconsin-Madison in 2011, Emily spent two years with the Aldo Leopold Foundation as a Land Stewardship Fellow. She is currently finishing her Master's degree in Environment & Resources at UW-Madison, where she evaluated the Wisconsin DNR's hunter recruitment programs and explored how women can be better retained in the hunting community.

Jason Leyendecker AuD**Owner of Audiology Concepts in Burnsville and Edina, MN**

A graduate of A.T. Still University, Arizona School of Health Sciences in 2010, Jason started working in a private practice in Edina, Minnesota. He served as lead audiologist until June of 2017, when he purchased this practice, Audiology Concepts. Audiology Concepts currently has two locations and 7 providers (4 AuD and 2 HIS and one student doctor of Audiology). The primary focus of this practice is audiology and hearing devices and has a separate tinnitus clinic. He does have a passion for hearing protection as he is a hunter and shooter himself.

In his short tenure Jason has served on several committees and is a board member for the Minnesota Sight and Hearing Association. Jason has also been an adjunct assistant professor for A.T. Still University since 2016 teaching the tinnitus management course. When not at Audiology Concepts, you can find Jason spending time with his family in the great outdoors of northern Minnesota.

Rehan Nana**Outdoor Sponsorship Specialist for Garmin International (a NAVHDA Sponsor)**

In his role at Garmin, he is responsible for maintaining and enhancing outdoor-oriented partnerships. Prior to joining Garmin, Rehan worked professionally in conservation at both the state and national level promoting and protecting the North American Model of Wildlife. When not working, you can find him training or hunting with his red setter, Anne, for a variety of upland game.

Scott Olson**Retired Manager of Southdale Optical Shop**

Scott was born and raised in Minnesota. Upon graduation from high school he enlisted in the Army. After two years, including a tour of Vietnam as an Infantryman with the 1st Cavalry Division, he returned to Minnesota to attend college. He decided to go into the optical business and spent the next 43 years in optical manufacturing and retail in several locations. Scott was the original optical store manager for Target stores and then transitioned into the small business sector. He spent 20 years at Southdale Optical; helping make it one of the most successful optical shops in the Midwest by specializing in active wear glasses and optics for fashion frames. His expertise in fitting continues to be sought after as the new computerized lens become state of the art. He is a life member of the NRA and Purple Heart Association.

Terry Petro

Field Consultant - Bird Dog Group

Terry is a life-long Minnesotan, currently residing in Ramsey, MN. He has been hunting Ruffed Grouse, Woodcock, Pheasant and Deer since he was the “flusher” for his dad while Pheasant hunting back in the early 60’s. Terry got into bird dogs in the late 70’s with a German Wirehair, followed by Brittanies, Shorthairs, Setters, Pointers, and he now has three Drahthaars. All of his dogs have been trained and tested within the NAVHDA system, each obtaining the Utility title, and Fannie, his older Drahthaar going through the NAVHDA Invitational.

Terry spent 35 years in engineering and in management with Robert Bosch. The hunting and fishing was on weekends and vacations until his retirement in 2008. On his last day at Bosch he received a call from Bob West of Purina. Not for congratulations, what are you going to do now, or anything of the like. Bob simply asked Terry for his social security number! Bob said he wanted to get Purina’s claws into him before someone else did. Terry has been a Field Consultant since then and is responsible for the pointing dog testing groups such as NAVHDA, AKC Hunt Tests and the JGHV German testing system used by breed clubs such as Drahthaars and Kurzhaars. He also works the Purina booth at Pheasant Fest every year.

Terry is a volunteer Huntsman for the National Grouse and Woodcock Hunt held in Grand Rapids, MN each October. He guides Grouse and Woodcock hunters in October for Pineridge Grouse Camp. He makes two if not three trips to Kansas for Quail each winter, and occasionally heads south of Tucson for Mearns Quail. In the spring Terry volunteer bands Woodcock for the USF&WS on the Sherburne NWR. In the summer, Terry is a NAVHDA Senior Judge and Clinic Leader, and assists others at training events for the Minnesota Chapter of NAVHDA. And once in a while gets out in a boat to do a little fishing!

Dr. Joe Spoo, DVM

Co-owner Best Care Pet Hospital-Sioux Falls, SD (STILL DOUBLE CHECKING HIS TITLE)

A native of northwest Iowa, Dr. Joe Spoo is a 2001 graduate of the Iowa State University College of Veterinary Medicine and has lived in Sioux Falls, SD for the past 15 years. Dr. Spoo’s passion is the canine athlete and he believes in a cradle-to-grace approach to managing the canine athlete. Dr. Spoo is a Diplomate of the American College of Sport Medicine and Rehabilitation and the only such specialist who has committed his career to hunting dog health and expanding our field of knowledge of these amazing athletes. In addition to his practice responsibilities, he has an active consulting business serving sporting dog owners and the sporting dog industry. He also manages a website (www.gundogdoc.com), a comprehensive resource for all things gundog related. Dr. Spoo has been an avid supporter of NAVDHA and was the original secretary of the Midwest Tri-State Chapter.

Julie Towers

Chair of the NAVHDA Youth Committee

Julie Towers is a wildlife biologist that became addicted to pointing dogs during graduate research on grouse. An original member of the NAVHDA Bluenose Chapter in Nova Scotia (1993), a judge (2005), a senior judge (2015) and a member / chair of NAVHDA’s Youth Committee since 2017.

Julie Towers graduated from University of Toronto and University of New Brunswick with Bachelor and Master of Science degrees in Biology. She then trained and worked as a wildlife biologist in the field of population ecology, wildlife habitat, and the interactions of forestry operations and wildlife. She has also worked in the private sector and ran a biological consulting business in British Columbia. She has many years of experience in government and public administration working for New Brunswick Fish & Wildlife Branch, the Canadian Institute of Forestry and has held positions as Senior Policy Advisor, Manager of Environmental Assessment, Director of Wildlife and Executive Director for Forests, Parks & Wildlife with the Province of NS.

Marilyn Vetter**NAVHDA Past President**

Marilyn joined NAVHDA in 1990 after she and her husband Clyde bought their first GSP and she's been involved at the chapter and national levels ever since. Her mentor and friend Bobby Applegate recruited her to get involved with the *Versatile Hunting Dog*, first as a writer, then as editor and eventually the Director of Publications. She served as NAVHDA's Vice President for several years, President for one term and currently serves as the Past President. The EC has asked that she help craft the organization's long-term strategic plan in her current role.

When she's not working, Marilyn is an avid upland and waterfowl hunter and thoroughly enjoys the time she spend with her GSP's she and Clyde raise. Marilyn also serves on the Board of Directors for Pheasants Forever and Quail Forever and numerous professional organizations.

Howard Vincent**President and Chief Executive Officer of Pheasants Forever and Quail Forever**

Howard originally came from Duluth, Minnesota where he graduated from the University of Minnesota, Duluth with a Bachelor of Accounting degree in 1979. He worked in public accounting for 7 years including his time with the national accounting firm of KPMG Peat Marwick where he was the Supervisor in charge of Business Advisory Services for the Twin Cities area.

He came to Pheasants Forever (PF) in 1987 as their first Director of Finance. He has also held the position of Senior Vice President and Chief Financial Officer before PF's National Board of Directors appointed him President and CEO in January 2000. In his time with PF, it has grown from a \$1 million to an \$89 million dollar organization with 750 chapters in 40 states and 150,000 members. PF also continues to have an efficiency rating of 90+% and has been rated 4 stars by Charity Navigator for six consecutive years.

Howard is a National Board of Director of the Wildlife Management Institute, the Council to Advance Hunting and Shooting Sports, the Theodore Roosevelt Conservation Partnership, the American Wildlife Conservation Partners, and served two terms as a Member of the Wildlife Hunting Heritage Conservation Council. This Council gave direction and guidance to the Secretary of Interior and the Secretary of Agriculture on national conservation and hunting related issues.

Most recently Howard has been recognized as a finalist for the Beretta/SCI Conservation Leadership Award for 2018. This Leadership Award honors those unique individuals that represent the ultimate embodiment of the hunter-conservationist philosophy and demonstrate a lifetime of commitment to wildlife conservation and education. Howard and his wife Wendy have been married for 38 years and live in White Bear Lake, Minnesota where he enjoys chasing the wily ringneck with his two sons, Marco and Ian.

Terald J. Wilson**Owner of Ugly Dog Hunting Catalog (a NAVHDA Sponsor)**

Terry lives in Hinesburg, Vermont with his wife, Nancy Anisfield, and their four hunting dogs. His two daughters also live in northern Vermont with their families.

Terry is the president and CEO of the Ugly Dog Hunting Company, a direct mail and web-based upland wingshooting supply business which he founded 18 years ago. Prior to that, Terry worked in several different industries, including 10 years as Director of Purchasing for the Rossignol Ski Company's North American Operations.

In his service to conservation, Terry is a Ducks Unlimited Diamond Life Sponsor and Sponsor in Perpetuity. He is a Gold Patron of Pheasants Forever and a Patron of Quail Forever. On the Ruffed Grouse Society's Board of Directors for 11 years, Terry also is a member of the RGS Gullion Circle and has chaired the RGS Green Mountain Chapter for 15 years.

Terry is actively engaged with the North American Versatile Hunting Dog Association as a Life Member and national testing judge. He and his wife started and funded NAVHDA's Youth Endowment Fund in 2014.

Rich Wissink**Vice President of Education and Outreach for Pheasants Forever and Quail Forever (a NAVHDA Conservation Partner)**

Rich joined the PF/QF team in 2007 after a 17-year career as a Wildlife Biologist with the Wisconsin Department of Natural Resources. Working for PF/QF has provided him the opportunity to integrate several of his passions (wildlife habitat, upland bird hunting, sharing the outdoors with others) into a career. Rich lives in northern Wisconsin with his wife Shelli. They have three adult sons, one granddaughter and three bird dogs.