

Training Day in the Catskills

by Stan and Saira Kay

The day began at 5 am. We loaded the truck with the necessary training gear and the latest addition to our SM family; 5 months old Hunting Hills' Lizzie (call name Bree). We were on the road by 5:45 headed for upstate New York. We arrived at Mark Bulvanoski's Fallbrook Run just before 8 o'clock. Mark is the club's representative for the Northeast Uplands region and arranged the training clinic to help us and our young pups prepare for the Natural Ability test. First order of business was to meet and greet. Our dogs of course wasted no time in getting to know one another. In attendance was Ben Nugent with 1 yr old Caj, Mark's Leica (19 weeks), Caja and Bou. Caja and Bou are experienced dogs and later helped with finding lost birds. As most of you will agree, it's always a treat to see and be amongst other Small Munsterlanders and their human companions.



The first training session was tracking. Mark is well equipped with his own supply of birds. He took a pheasant and off we went to a field down the road. We were in the field by 9 am as promised per Mark's invitation laying out the day's events. Mark helped set us up for the track with a feather pile and showed us how to walk the pheasant beyond the cover.

The Gallery



FallBrookRun's Cai on track



Saira sending Bree on track

When training young dogs for the track, it's important to know which way the wind is blowing in order to set the dog on the down wind side of the scent trail to give the dog the best chance at starting the track. I walked Bree up to the feather pile which got her all excited. With Mark's coaching, I first tried to get her focused by leading her a few feet into the track before letting her go. She stayed on track with little deviation. Not bad for a second time at it. We all took our turn at setting up and working our dogs on the track. All were successful.

Next we moved on to field search and pointing. In addition to planting quail, Mark spread some bird feathers in a few places in the field. He explained that this helps the

dog start to distinguish between new and old scent. I later saw what he meant when Bree came across some of these feathers. My first reaction was to want to pull her away from them as I knew there was no bird. Mark said to leave her alone and let her figure it out and she did. She nosed around a bit and with a little encouragement continued searching. She located a bird and then there was the point. It was awesome. Mark showed me how to handle the check cord to hold Bree so as not to let her get too close to the bird and keep her calm/still on point.



Leica Vom Forstweg



Bree on point



Styling Bree

We flushed the bird and let Bree chase a bit, then called her and pulled her back before she could catch the bird. Next up was Caj. He's a few months older than the other pups and once on point Mark showed Ben how to work on steadiness after flushing the bird. Leica, just a few weeks younger than Bree was very intent in the field. She was focused and seemed to know her job. It was really a site to see. When everyone was done it was Caja and Bou's turn to find the flushed birds to be collect by a net. Any birds that weren't located and netted had the opportunity to return home to the quail call back pen that Mark has set-up near the field. As it turned out, some birds did return by the next day. Lastly we headed for a near by lake for water work. Bree was hesitant to get in the water. She was in the water on a previous occasion and dunked. Stan tried getting her excited with a bumper. We didn't want to force the issue that day, but I think the day is coming

when one of us needs to get in the water first. Stan helped our first SM, Bella, get started swimming by holding her buoyant and slowly letting her go.



Kleine Munsterlander Vorstehendes at play



Caj, Leica and bumper



Leica on point

Caj got in the water after the bumper thrown by Ben. Mark suited up in his waders and Leica got in with him. She seemed a little unsure at first but Mark encouraged her by showing excitement. Mark mentioned that keeping things fun at this young age is the key. The hard stuff will come later. He also mentioned getting the pups exposed to different water conditions is good. Not all water is going to be inviting/desirable. Try different locations and different conditions. The setting where you end up testing could be very different from where you routinely train. After an educational day it was time to relax and let the pups just run around and burn up some energy. I'd say the day was very productive. We're always learning more and more through these types of training clinics and I want to thank Mark for having this one and sharing his knowledge and experience.

North East Uplands~ newsletter

Hope you enjoy Saira's summary of the training days events and consider joining us for the next one we will have.

October 28th we are planning the start of a woodcock- grouse hunt to take place in the Tioga State Forest of Pennsylvania, the Wellsboro area to be exact. Each morning we meet at the Wellsboro Diner (in the center of town) at 6:30 am, so come join us and stay

for the special celebration at the Antler Inn on Oct 31st of one of our group who will be 81 that week and an old friend of many SMs and their owners. To find out more about this hunt and notify the group of your plans to attend please email me at fallbrookrun@copper.net.

We hope to see you there, enjoy

Mark Bulvanoski