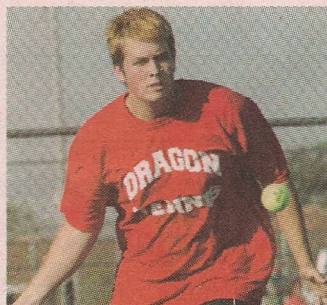


LITTLE ORPHAN ANNIE: LORE AND HISTORY

Presentation Sunday will describe the legends surrounding Riley's famous character Page 5A



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Daily Reporter

Since 1908

Greenfield, Indiana

These dogs Will hunt

A team of bird dogs
and their devoted
handler will compete
for a prestigious award

Phil Hinchman gets a kiss from Bessie, one of his Boykin spaniels. "Bessie is the top of the charts for me," Hinchman said. "She is the fastest bird finder I know." The little brown retrievers fit neatly into individual pens, custom built in the back of Hinchman's pickup.



Tom Russo /
Daily Reporter

Erin Meyer
Staff writer

Hancock County

The national bird dog circuit can be a dog-eat-dog world.

Hunting buddies John Shaw and Phil Hinchman of Hancock County will be among approximately 80 bird dogs owners from around the country to compete in the Bird Dog World Championship in Iowa at the end of October.

Together, Hinchman and Shaw will run four Boykin spaniels.

Also known as gun dogs, bird dogs fall into two categories — pointers and flushers.

Hinchman's and Shaw's dogs are flushers.

Eager to please, the animals bound through brush or murky pond water to force the game to flight.

Once the winged pray has been flushed, the dog will sit and wait for the shot to mark the fallen bird for retrieval. When given the command, it races to the spot, takes the bird in its mouth and delivers it to its master.

The clock stops when Hinchman has the third bird in his hand.

"This is all a game of speed," he said. "The minute you start to the minute you have the third bird in hand."

To qualify, Hinchman ran four dogs and won first, second and fourth place at a recent qualifying event, guaranteeing



Tom Russo / Daily Reporter

The agile dogs are timed on the speed with which they can flush a bird and retrieve it when it is down. The dogs have to flush and retrieve three birds.

his dogs Bessie, Dixie and Abby a place in this year's race.

"Bessie is the top of the charts for me," Hinchman said, of his prize Boykin spaniel. "She is the fastest bird finder I know."

More than a hunting partner, Hinchman's dogs make great pets.

The bond between man and dog is evident in the animals' ever wiggling tail end and their proclivity for wet-nosed kisses.

"There is a very tight bond with these little guys," Hinchman said. "The Boykins really love to be with you and please you."

They have become something of a family affair.

His first Boykin, Riggs, was a gift in 2001 from his brother, an avid hunter.

Hinchman said he and Riggs surprised his brother when they won fifth place out of 47 doubles teams that first year. He has been hooked ever since.

The following year, 2002, Riggs won dog of the year in Wisconsin. He is a past

national champion and won dog of the year for the most points earned again in 2004.

Shaw placed fifth out of almost 500 dogs last year. This year's event will be televised on the Outdoor Channel in January.

"There is a very tight bond with these little guys. The Boykins really love to be with you and please you."

Phil Hinchman,
describing how his spaniels, Bessie, Dixie and Abby eagerly chase after game. His dogs are so good at flushing and retrieving felled birds that they'll compete in a world meet

Coming up

The Civil War Letters home

A terrifying jo