

2004

## Michael Lardy

In his youth, Mike Lardy's family had Brittany Spaniels and Golden Retrievers. Hunting for ducks, pheasants, and grouse with his father, Henry, an avid sportsman, was an important part of growing up. After graduating from the University of Wisconsin-Madison with a degree in Wildlife Ecology he went to the University of Idaho where he earned a Master's degree in Wildlife Resources. When a government hiring freeze made wildlife management jobs scarce, Mike spent the winter of 1981 training with the late Jim Kappes in Texas. Upon returning to Wisconsin, several people approached him about training their dogs and thus he began a career as a professional dog trainer.

Mike has trained retrievers that have won twenty National Championships. Seven National Championships and one Canadian National Championship were handled by him. One National Championship, nine National Amateur Championships and two Canadian National Amateur Championships were handled by his clients.

In 2004, Mike ran his record-breaking 34th National Finalist. In addition to the 34 National finalists handled personally by Mike, numerous Handjem-trained dogs have been Finalists with their owner-handlers or with Mike's assistant, Dave Smith.

Dogs trained at Handjem have attained over seventy-two Field Champion titles and Mike's clients have made close to that number of Amateur Field Champions. Nine great dogs, partly or primarily trained at Handjem Retrievers, have been elected to the Retriever Field Trial Hall of Fame: Bunnie, Lottie, Tank, Harley, Abe, Hattie, Maxx, Babe and Gus.

Mike writes a training column for The Retriever Journal and conducts periodic workshops designed to help individuals train their own dogs. In 1995, Mike conducted a retriever training seminar to benefit the Bird Dog Foundation. A video of that seminar was the basis for his first training video - Total Retriever Training. That video and subsequent sequels have provided thousands of amateur trainers with the information they need to train and compete with their retrievers in hunt tests and field trials.

Mike served as the secretary treasurer of the Professional Retriever Trainers Association for many years, where he spearheaded the effort to have the PRTA become a trial giving club. Mike chaired the PRTA's first field trial in 1989, and has chaired two more of their events in recent years.

In 2004, Mike was Captain of the first American Retriever Team to compete in Great Britain at the International Gun Dog Event.