



As a youth growing up in Minnesota, my hunting experience was primarily waterfowling on northern rice lakes, chasing ruffed grouse through thick forests, and an occasional pheasant adventure. Most often, my father and I hunted without a dog, and when dogs were present, labs and pointers prevailed. Ten years ago after my profession brought me back to Minnesota, a friend talked me into attending a spaniel field trial where I witnessed in action the most incredible working dogs on the planet. Shortly afterward, I brought home my first springer pup intending to recast my occasional upland pheasant hunting into a more dedicated endeavor. One thing led to another and my little black & white springer FC AFC CFC Sumner Kaysee, took me on a seven year ride across the US and Canada hunting, field trialing and being that proverbial best friend; an experience that I'll treasure forever. Although I am exceptionally proud of her trial accomplishments, my favorite memories have little to do with ribbons or trophies, most revolve around sunny days spent pheasant hunting in South Dakota or chilly mornings in northern Minnesota hunting grouse. Since Kaysee, I've enjoyed raising and training more than a few prospects, and I continue to campaign my occasionally successful contestant, Peaches. However, no matter how successful others may be, it seems they never quite match up to the first.

I'm honored to have been chosen to judge the 2009 Amateur National along with Kathy Nestor. I wish every one of you the best of luck and look forward to seeing you in the field.