From the Publisher's Desk

Welcome to the April/May 2026 issue of Bird Dog & Retriever News. Thank you: subscribers, advertisers, organizations and others.

Well, we made it through the winter with no major issues other than loss Josie our aging Vizsla. I wrote about her expected replacement on this page, it didn't go so well.

Our Wood Duck houses from last year all had eggs so we expect more wood ducks this year. A few years ago I looked out my window at my corn pile to see thirteen mature male wood ducks on my corn pile. I just saw a pair the other day so they are finding their way back.

Ellen and I are trying to get to a couple of dog events a month so we hope to have some great pictures from this summer events. And pictures are coming in from all the events we donate to, so those you will be seeing soon.

We are getting in contact with our area conservation clubs so we hope to have pictures and stories of where you can get you and your kids or grandkids active in to helping our bird & dog clubs.

I'm at the end of my second year since I got my heart valve, which means a normal bird hunting season for me this fall for me.

Enough of me. We have our usual suspects writing about dogs & guns. Our calendar of events is at the peak for the year as state news is at it's lowest.

I found a great recipe for Coot since a few of you have been asking about it.

If you are having puppies or an event, email us and we'll donate to them.

Other than that get you and your dogs out, it looks like a great spring.

And you can quote me! So keep your powder dry and you and your dog in hunting shape!

See you next issue!

Dennis Guldan

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Life Health 401

Retirement

By Dennis Guldan

What does retirement mean? When should the retirement planning start? What should be the extent of planning?

I turned 65 two years ago. It is time to retire right? Well it makes a difference what retirement means. I can quit my REAL JOB working Aerospace Right? But did I still want that food stuff for me and the dogs? Did I want gas for the SUV? How about the cable bill?

At 65 doesn't social Security kick in? Yes at 60. Oh, you wanted FULL social security? That's 65, for health care, another 20-some months for full pay benefits. I was 65 in Feb of 2024, but full money benefits start in Dec of 2025. And I will get my first check at the end of Jan 2026. But that is TWO years after everyone knew it was, when you turn 65.

Waiting for that first check, Big Money! Wait once, the State AND FEDERAL are taking taxes on MY MONEY… who need I call about this. But THAT'S why I have that 401K thing right? To fill that cash void, we are cooking with gas NOW! Wait once, the 401K is Taxable and it increases my income to a HIGHER taxable level No one told me that!

Well at least I have more time to get out and run dogs and hunt. Well except my legs and strength is no longer there. So, two days of walking the South Dakota Prairie might now take a week for the same distance. And make sure you pack your meds.

OK the money part is the easy aspect! Let's talk dogs. Vizslas live to about 13 years give or take. Springers on the other hand fifteen. Any idea what happens to your dogs after you pass? That's a lot of stress on relatives and dogs.

You REALLY need to start planning this stuff when you turn 40. Well, we didn't. We had Josie our Vizsla put down in December. My Vet was in tears Josie was



such a sweetheart. So now we have a nine-year-old springer who should have 5+ years left. Sadie lost her best friend and now walks the house alone. So, we needed a plan, ever so late.

The plan was to rescue a senior Vizsla. It would be a litter mate with Sadie for her last 5-6 years. Which we thought would be a walk in the park. I posted and emailed in January looking for a senior Vizsla. When I ordered a pup from Jim & Linda Busch of Illinois I knew two years in advance. With rescue it could be any hour, any day.

This past weekend we had a very rare unplanned weekend. On Thursday the text came: I am currently fostering a eight year old Male Vizsla, are you interested. I said we are interested what are the specifics.

We have always had female dog for several reasons. First is temperament, females are usually more mellow. Second is males like to run and visit girlfriends. And third is the lifting legs peeing on things. Two out of those three happened.

It was two days of texting to get specifics. Tracer was made available because his owner died prematurely, and his Jack Russell and Tracer were taken to the local rescue kennel. The kennel has a list of breed contacts, called Cindy for Tracer the Vizsla and the rescue starts. Cindy was in Nebraska we are in Minneapolis. I said can we meet in Des Moines Iowa a five-hour drive for us on Saturday Morning. Cindy agreed. We were to meet at the observatory in the park.

We made my truck ready for the Saturday trek. Up at 4 AM our truck was thankfully divided into two dog sections. We put Sadie on the back seat in front of the dog pen. We did so to keep from there being conflict from the dogs. It seemed right but was perhaps the biggest mistake we made.

So we arrived at the observatory in Des Moines about an hour early at 9 AM. We turned into the observatory parking lot, which on the map was a 200-acre field. Well, it turned out to be a parking lot with ten-foot

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cyclone fence with multiple "No Dogs" signs. I'm a strong believer in signs from above, we didn't start off so good. We drove back to the freeway to Roosevelt High school the green field we had hoped to introduce on.

Fifteen minutes after we got to Roosevelt High School Cindy pulled in. Cindy and I greeted each other, then out jumped Tracer about 2-3" taller than the largest Vizsla we had ever owned. An impressive animal. But other than a bit of a gray beard and little thing on his eyelid he was a beautiful specimen of a Red Dog (Vizsla). Cindy and I briefly talked, and we gave her a donation for the rescue though she never asked for any. I thanked her, first for doing rescue and second for making this happen. Then she took Tracer who she had only rescued two days prior, for his pee break.

We then went for "The Moment" Ellen bought a great stairway for the back of my truck with 9" tall stairs into the truck, great for aging animals. We put Tracer in the back of my truck behind Sadie. Not a peep, from either dog. Here is where we screwed up.

We then SHOULD have taken them to the grass twenty feet apart and slowly walked together. When we rescued Jersey, again from Iowa all three dogs happily rode in the back of the truck all the way home. I/We thought nose to nose separated by a fence was the same. That mistake cost us about 15 hours of driving and a lot of stress.

On the way home we walked the dogs once, but NEVER TOGETHER. Just to be safe! HUGE MISTAKE! I looked for a book on how to do the greeting of new "older" dogs… couldn't find one.

No growls in the truck on the five hours home. When we got home, I took Tracer in the house first with a leash on. From the time we picked up and dropped off Tracer he always had a leash on. I let Tracer go anywhere he wanted in the house and in front and in back where we feed fifty geese and mallards. No issues.

Then I told Ellen I would sit on the couch with Tracer, and she could bring in Sadie on leash to the family room. As soon as Sadie entered the room with Ellen, Tracer growled. The first growl I had ever heard from him. Ellen sat 20 feet away on a second couch with Sadie, she was petrified as the growling continued.



We had two dog boxes ready to go before we left and put Sadie securely in one, to protect her life. The Ellen & I turned on the fireplace and we played ball with Tracer the first Vizsla we ever had that liked to play catch. He was all calmed down, well until I went to pet Sadie when Tracer started growling again.

We calmed down Tracer again and I went upstairs to get wine. Upon stepping back in the room Tracer growled at me.

Ellen and I tell a Come-to-Jesus story about dogs. At a springer hunt test a good lady trainer friend ran her dog in the first leg. If the dog could of, I believe when the tests started the dog would have flipped off the owner. The dog ran an absolutely terrible test, and totally ignored a VERY competent trainer. She came off the field with a leg pass, apologized for her dog and said WE need to have a COME-To-Jesus' talk. The training session lasted less than a minute. She found a grassy area laid her dog down and laid on top of him, grabbed his snout and said the magical words. Which turns out to be anything as long as they know, YOU are the boss. An hour later the pair were running the next leg, and it was like she had a different dog. By grabbing the snout and laying on her dog, she established or Re-established dominance.

That is EXACTLY what Tracer needed but lacking a dog attack suit and mask I could not GIVE Tracer what he needed. Thus, HE was the dominant of the house, not me.

I looked at Ellen and said we can't keep him. She agreed, we called Cindy who made me promise if anything went wrong, I would bring him back. I called her, explained the situation and asked her if she could meet us in Des Moines the next day, same time and location.

We put Tracer in the Den for the night. Sadie slept with us, and I feared leaving the bedroom in case Tracer got out. In the morning when we opened the den, I did NOT know if I was going to get bit. Tracer growled and bit the door as I opened it. We let him walk the house a bit and then straight to the awaiting truck and trip back.

I think he knew he screwed up because there were a few whimpers on the trip back. Other than that the end of a 1200 mile trek, the trip was uneventful. Cindy arrived minutes after us and was very apologetic. I just said please don't. I thank you for trying to save this dog. Tracer was fine going with Cindy but NOT overjoyed as we expected to be returned to mom. Rescue is tough business and costly. And we can't say enough good things for the people that have the heart, time and money to do it. If you have room for Tracer, call me up, my number is on the bottom of the page. If you have an 8–9-year-old mellow Vizsla we can rescue we are interested.

This puts us full circle to retirement. What's going to happen to your dogs? In Tracers case his owner died early. Maybe, maybe not with plans for his dogs. Tracer lost his owner, was put in a public dog kennel, then moved to Cindys then to us the same week. He was scared and pissed. And had Tracer been nice about it, he would be with us now.

So next time you think about retirement, think about: your dogs, your family, your guns, your life it's more than money there is a lot of things to address and plan for.

There's always dogs looking for their forever home.

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