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Dreaming' of the past

By Bob Farris

Each autumn brings to the sportsmen the season they've patiently awaited each year. Fall brings the changing colors, expressed in many magnificent colors from coast to coast, along with all the hunting season, which we've all longed to experience.

Fall also brings that time of year which calls for all the various winterizing preparations. One of these functions is the changing of antifreeze in all of our vehicles. My primary focus of this writing is that of caution!! Most antifreezes are extremely toxic and usually lethal if ingested by either humans or animals. Our canine friends have a craving for the sweet taste of antifreeze and very few survive its damaging renal effects.

I still wake-up in the middle of the night, remembering a most wonderful friend and hunting companion, Haverhill's Axcell. Each time the memories of her bring tears to my eyes and consistently chokes me up. I don't know how long one feels the pain from losing such a special friend from an accidental poisoning; but for me it's been nearly a year and I still miss that little dog as if it just happened yesterday.

Axcell displayed herself as a special pup at the

very beginning. I'll always be grateful to Bodo Winterheldt for allowing me to have his pick of the litter; and himself choosing another, so that my first Pudelpointer would be the right one. When tested in natural ability at my first NAVHDA test, she received a Prize I with a perfect score. Later she would earn a prize III in both utility prep and utility.

Axcell had 2 litters of pups before her untimely death. Both litters earned NAVHDA breeder's awards. 12 of her offspring were tested in natural ability and all 12 pups earned prizes (6 of these receiving a prize I). Three of her pups have already earned a utility prize (2 of these earning UT prizes before the age of 14 months).

Axcell certainly has left a positive impact behind her in the progeny that still lives to test the true meaning of a versatile hunting companion; but for me, all I have left are the memories of her excelling on the chukker slopes of Hells Canyon or her relentless pursuit of swamp roosters along Idaho's Boise river.

Ironically, the picture submitted shows Axcell with the last bird she ever retrieved. She's buried in that exact spot with a well deserved headstone honoring her as "The Queen of the Swamp."

I hope that while hunting this season, all sportsmen will remember the dangers of antifreeze intoxication, and take special precautions when around farm outbuildings. Antifreeze is no less toxic than cyanide when encountered by your hunting companion.

Happy hunting,

Bob Farris



Photo by Bob Farris