

I pen these words on the Monday morning after I have that tired but extremely happy feeling that I always have when I return home and have time to reflect on the activities in Parsons, Tennessee at the annual St. Jude Benefit Hunt and Show. Since today is the day I must submit my column to C&H Publishing, I have chosen to give you my St. Jude report in capsulated form. Here goes:

Youth Galore! There was an abundance of youth at the 36th annual St. Jude event. Beginning with the AKC Youth Hunt on Thursday night which drew 40 entries and was won by Gavin Massengill of Scotts Hill, TN in the senior division and Lee Derryberry of Parsons, TN in the junior category, and continuing through the weekend, the fairgrounds was jam packed with youngsters! There were two very special young ladies at the event that won the hearts of the crowd and illustrated perfectly why the Decatur County Volunteers have worked so hard for 36 straight years to collect donations for St. Jude Children's Research Hospital.



St. Jude patient Emma White has an aggressive form of brain cancer and is getting great treatment at St Jude, due partially to the efforts of coon hunters who support the annual St. Jude Coon Hunt.

Emma and Olivia steal the show! For the last two years, the opening ceremonies on Thursday

night have featured St. Jude Children's Research Hospital patients that are local kids. Last year we met Olivia Parks, and her mom Amanda brought her back this year, sporting her new beautiful curly hair to report that thanks to St. Jude she is doing very well. Her reports are very good and we are so thankful. We also met St. Jude patient Emma White of Parsons along with her mom and dad, Blake and Kelley. Emma was diagnosed with Glioblastoma multiforme (GBM), the most common and most aggressive of the primary brain tumors. Emma's mom told *The News Leader*, a Parsons newspaper, "Organizations like the Coon Hunt and individuals that donate money are the reasons Emma is getting top notch care."

Hunt Off generates lots of excitement in the woods and at the clubhouse! For the first time in the history of the St. Jude Coon Hunt, a runoff of the top four winners from Friday and Saturday nights was held. Double cast winners were considered first and there were five hounds that won two casts in this year's hunt. Kelley Deere, a Decatur County Volunteer, accompanied the cast and called in play by play action for those that awaited the outcome at the fairgrounds. It was an exciting time and a definite hit with the hunters at this year's St. Jude hunt. Mike Creasy, a longtime competitor and local St. Jude Hunt supporter stepped up as Hunt Director this year and I had to smile as Mike told Field Rep Jimmy Phillips, "It's a lot different when you are on this side of the microphone instead of sitting out there." You did a great job, Mike.

Zeroing in on \$4 million! Prior to the 36th annual hunt, the Decatur County Volunteers have raised \$3,806,000 for the kids at St Jude. All weekend long speculation ran high as to whether the 2011 event would put total donations over the 4 million mark. It will be some time before all contributions will be tallied and \$194,000 is a lot to collect in one year given the current economic picture. But, the crowds were very strong this year and there's still plenty of time for clubs to check their treasuries and to send a check to the Decatur County Volunteers.

Alabama coon club has raised \$204,000! A regular practice at the St Jude Coon Hunt are the periodic PA announcements of contributions by various organizations. Regulars in that category are the members of the Clark Washington Coon Hunters Association in Alabama who make the trip to Parsons to present their donation for the kids at St. Jude. This year they brought a check in the amount of \$9,336.00 to run their overall contribution total to \$204,000! What a great effort from a great bunch of folks from the Great State of Alabama!



Members of the Clark Washington Coon Hunter's Association: Back row, left to right: Jason Sullivan, James Hill, W.W. Moore and Jim Hill. Front row: left to right: Sam Hoven, Andrew Parnell and Larry Parnell.

Bedwell's Hatchie River Max wins big at St. Jude Hunt! Max is a small, two-year old American English coonhound, hardly weighing forty pounds soaking wet and he hates crowds. Worse, he hates having his photo taken. It follows then that Max must have had a terrible time at the St. Jude Hunt because he had to endure countless photo sessions on Thursday and Saturday nights. But Max had a great time in the timber around Parsons as he treed real live raccoons all three nights. He won the Youth Hunt Senior Division with Gavin Massengill handling on Thursday with 225 plus, posted a 150 plus-point cast win in the World Qualifying Event on Friday night, won his early cast with 375 plus and placed third on Saturday night and topped it all off with the win in the Final Four on Saturday! Way to go little man. You proved good things come in small packages.

Coonhounds At The AKC is our official vehicle to advise you of what's going on in the Coonhound Events Department at the AKC, the world's largest purebred dog registry. This column also appears online at www.akccoondogs.org should you need to consult it and you don't have your copy of American Cooner at hand.

Clubs may now hold up to four AKC licensed events in a single month. The AKC Board of Directors has approved our request to permit clubs to hold up to four dates each month provided the third and fourth dates are given approval by the Coonhound Events Department. Prior to the Board action, two events was the maximum the club could hold. Clubs may apply for the dates by contacting us toll free at 1-888-436-4486. We will be happy to serve you.

State, Breed and Gold Medal Leaders – Those of you that have caught the fun and excitement of the AKC races will be happy to hear the announcements we will have for you next month. We are combining some of the races to make them more exciting and we will also be announcing new sponsorship for one of our major programs. We just have to finish the paperwork. State and Breed leaders traditionally receive a jacket from AKC and are invited to the AKC National Championship. The program we will announce will essentially have those elements but with some exciting new twists.

AKC National Championship and Celebration of Coonhounds Show in Greensburg – May is the month for the 2011 AKC National Championship and the exciting new Celebration of Coonhounds Bench Show at the Decatur County Fairgrounds in Greensburg, Indiana. We hope to see many of you there. The hunting is great in and around Greensburg. The host clubs, Clifty Creek Coon Hunters and Rushville Coon Hunters, are chock full of good coon hunting guides that will put you in coon. The facility is great and the time of year is great for the National Championship. Come on down to Greensburg and join us!