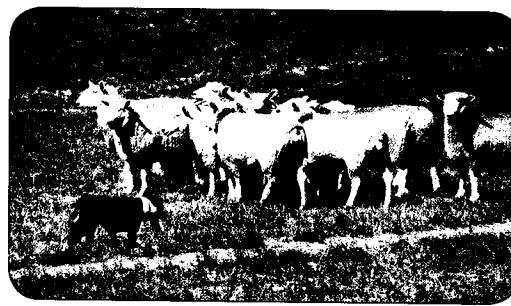




*Shedding with Nap in the Final*

Alasdair MacRae took first and second places in the US National trials at Klamath Falls over the week of September 22 - 28. His score of 594 with Nap is one of the highest ever recorded in a double gather competition with four judges. Star, with whom Alasdair came second this time on 514, was awarded 612 at the 2007 US National Finals, beating



*Star at work in the Final*

Tom Wilson and Sly on 602.

In comparison, there have been six scores of over 600 in ISDS International Supreme Championships since the fourth judge was introduced in 1984.

A full report by Kathy Gooch appears in our next issue.

Finals	Results:			
1	MacRae, Alasdair	Nap	594	
2	MacRae, Alasdair	Star	514	
3	Mills, Allen	Sis	506	
4	Calzacorta, Lavon	Tess	494	
5	Wilson, Tom	Sly	490	
6	Berhow, Bill	Mike	484	
7	Howard, Haley	Ross	478	
8	Shannahan, Pat	Riggs	465	
9	Milliken, Amanda	Ethel	432	
10	Glen, Scott	Maid	429	
11	MacRae, Patricia	Max	425	
12	Boudreau, Bud	Sam	348	
13	Howard, Haley	Bodie	332	
14	Keeton, Daniel	York	316	
15	Fisher, Derek	Ien	308	
16	Haynes, Joe	Rain	0	
17	Knox, Kathy	Tweed	0	

## The Kaycee Challenge

The 7th annual Kaycee Challenge, consisting of two one-day trials, in which 45 handler-dog teams competed, and a double lift final championship round, consisting of the ten top finalists based on combined scores, was held in Kaycee, Wyoming the weekend of September 5 - 7. Kaycee lies in the heart of sheep country, between Caspar and Buffalo Wyoming, not far from the Montana border, beyond which lay Canada. Much history is associated with Kaycee. The ill-famed Butch Cassidy and the Sundance Kid, outlaws of the old West, and popularized some years ago by the Paul Newman/Robert Redford film, ran their "hole-in-the-wall gang" not far from where the trial was held. (In fact the local pub is named the "Hole in the Wall tavern"). The event, which carried a generous purse of \$10,000 for the double-gather finalists, was part of a community festival celebrating pastoral agriculture in its diverse forms, including a youth competition for the production of the best wool, sponsored by the 4H clubs of America, and so drew a notable crowd of interested spectators and their families.

The field was an expansive hill course covered with thick and often high sage brush of an estimated 350 yards, though distance to the spot point looked longer, perhaps 400-450 yards (the Judge, Mr Bevis Jordan, from Northumberland, England, measured the distance by walking off the yardage, a less accurate method of measurement than using a chalk wheel which clicks off feet and yards as it turns, and so the official estimate of the length of the outrun may likely have been understated).

The course was well designed, with holding pen at the top and exhaust at the bottom hidden discretely down ravines and set off to the right away from the course, so as to minimize any possible draw. Still, it was hard to



*Dennis Edwards, Sundance, Wyoming winner of the double gather final round, with his dog, Ben, and holding his trophy*

avoid such pressure altogether. The course for the first trial was set with a left hand drive, so that the cross-drive moved in the direction of the exhaust pen, making it difficult for most dogs to keep a good line and workmanlike pace as the sheep tended to run toward the draw. In trial 2, a right-hand drive was established, but the sheep similarly wanted to break up the hill toward the holding pen as soon as they passed through the gate panel. Most dogs, however, were quick enough to catch them.

The sheep used were Rambouillet yearling ewes re-run only once (on the second one-day trial), while the sheep for the double gather held on Monday 7 Sept were a fresh lot altogether. Four sheep were used for each run, in the one-day trials, with a straight split required at the shed. For the double gather, five sheep were set out for each lift, making for a

## Albion Urdank

total of ten sheep to be driven around the course, shed international style and then penned. The sheep were set out by two men on horses who performed their work admirably setting and holding the sheep, while not obstructing the dog at the lift, a hard balance to establish (often horses in such situations stand either too closely to the sheep, in which case the dog must lift off of them, or too far away to hold the stock effectively, so that they drift off line).

Rambouillet are often heavy, but these yearlings, owing to youthful inexperience in encountering predators on the range (and the absence of use of a livestock guard dog to shield them in the normal course of shepherding) tended to run wildly when faced with the slightest pressure from the dog, unless the dog had a light presence. Indeed, the dogs who succeeded best were the ones whose presence the sheep felt minimally, not because their approach was necessarily more careful, but because their feel to the sheep was softer (some had to push, for instance, to maintain movement even when the general tendency of the sheep was to run). The wildness of the sheep was deceptive, however, because, artificially induced by predator pressure, it simultaneously made them oddly resistant to efforts by the dog to turn them on line when they ran and generally to assert control, giving them an unintentionally dog-broken quality.

The sheep also proved easier to line out when worked by softer dogs, though their usual tendency was to move in a serpentine fashion, especially on the drive, as a way to avoid dog pressure (a natural predator avoidance tactic). Similarly, in the shed, the sheep tended to remain quite stationary for such dogs even with the dog standing close by, thus enabling the handler to make the hole easily enough and to call the dog in. The overall flightiness of the sheep, though induced artificially by

predators, combined with the number of sheep per handler used, meant that the trial did not seek to test the power of the dog (five per handler in the preliminary trials and 20 in the final round would have been more normal; the use of re-run sheep in the latter, again a normal practice, would have made the 20 heavier as well, and so a greater challenge to move).

*Handlers at the awards ceremony*



The judge, Mr Bevis Jordan, expressed to me an awareness of just how different range Rambouillet are from the sheep found in Britain, but because of their unusual willingness to move easily off the dog and an atypical unwillingness to fight, they may have seemed more familiar to him (however deceptively), and so judged according to familiar British standards. The judging, especially in the first round, seemed unusually hard, with most scores surprisingly very low (the high score was a 75½, followed by a 75, then 60, and dropped precipitously from there to the virtual bottom). The second round saw better placings, with the winning run scoring an impressive 89, followed by an 88, yet many of the scores of the 45 handler/dog teams remained unexpectedly low. The double gather scores appeared more normal, if still a tad low (see the trial website for final results: <http://sheepindustryfestival.net/index.php>). It was difficult for handlers to see where the points came off, especially as scores were provided only at the end of the day and without benefit of a breakdown by phase of work. It is generally customary at handler association sanctioned trials to post scores as quickly as possible and to provide such a breakdown.

Nevertheless, handlers and spectators alike (of which there were many from the local ranching community) enjoyed the competition enormously, with the late posting of scores, however uncustomary, having the salutary effect of concentrating handlers' minds on the running, instead of worrying about the placings. This was the first time this trial carried USBCHA sanctioning, so that handlers could earn points toward qualifying for the national finals, with the result that entries seemed higher than in previous years, however generous the size of the purse remained. Many thanks to Lisa Cunningham for her heroic effort in organizing the trial; to Mary and Gregg Cunningham (no relation) for the superb hospitality they offered in providing a sumptuous handlers' dinner just prior to the trial; and to Bevis Jordan for his hard work judging



*Bud Boudreau of South Dakota and Texas at the pen*



*Traditional shepherds' wagons*

difficult sheep as accurately and as consistently as he was able; to the set out crew on horseback and their helpers working the pens who did yeoman work, as well as to the exhaust team who worked tirelessly, efficiently, and quickly to remove sheep from the course following each run; and finally to the ranching community of Kaycee, Wyoming whose Sheep Industry Festival provided a grand venue for this trial. With a few minor tweaks of presentation, handlers can look forward to a new major trial in the future, perhaps one to replace the LeBar trial of Douglas, Wyoming, which has sadly left our trialling calendar with the passing of its host, Georgene LeBar.

## News from Africa



### South African National Trial 25-27 September

Mark Trollip

This year we were very fortunate to have Meirion Jones officiate our National. Meirion was joined by his wife Llinos on the long trip south. Elsie Jammy, our current President played hostess to the Jones' for the first few days of their visit. The journey to the venue would take them three days, all of 1600 kilometres and allow Meirion and Llinos to experience some of the diverse farming activities of our country. They spent some time with Wally and Kathy Ward on their vast sheep farm in the Karoo and witnessed Angora goats being clipped on the farm of the world renowned Billy Colborne.

The championship venue was the beautiful farm Grootvlei in the Overburg region of the Cape Province where Andrew and Pippa Philip manage a flock of over 1000 Dorpers as



*2009 South African National Champion Henry van der Merwe*