OUTDOOR LIFE cable channel, which features upland hunting now and then. It all may sound simple, but that is because you cannot train a dog to love birds and hunting. It takes a level of “willing cooperation” that you can foster but not create if it is not there in the first place.

Kathy goes on emphasize that the Curly would be a very different dog without the upland elements in his makeup. If we, the owners of Curly-Coated Retrievers, do not provide some way to test for those elements, they will be lost. If we never put on a hunt test or run field trial stakes at our specialty, there is no loss or risk to the breed, because those field events are readily available elsewhere—as are agility, obedience, and rally trials. If we do not do upland at our specialties, there is no meaningfull way of sustaining this breed's versatility. We chose this breed, and as a result, we have a distinct responsibility to protect and promote everything that it is—not just the parts that people enjoy playing with the most. It is up to us to do this breed justice. No one else is going to do it for us!

Thanks, Kathy, for sharing your field expertise with us.

I would like to add that the CCRCA Field Committee is aware of the importance of upland work. One of our Field Committee members, Buck Buchanan, is presently working on updating the UWC (Upland Working Certificate) rules. He is also writing the rules for our new level, the UWCX, (Upland Working Certificate Excellent). I am hoping that these two levels of upland field work will be offered at our May 2018 national specialty, which will be held in the Philadelphia area. Also, our very special Curly event for field training, Curlyville, in Tennessee, for the past few years has offered the three levels of Curly working field levels—WC, WCX, and WCQ—and now, hopefully, we shall soon be able to offer our own training tests for upland work.

—Ann Shinkle, annshinkle@aol.com
Curly-Coated Retriever Club of America

GOLDEN COMFORT AND COMPASSION

They are sometimes referred to as "second responders"—Golden Retriever therapy dogs who travel the country to offer furry comfort to the victims of tragedy and natural disasters, wherever that comfort is needed. Their mission: to help heal the deep emotional wounds you cannot see.

Last November, as they have done on countless other occasions, the LCC (Lutheran Church Charities) K-9 Comfort Goldens traveled to Sutherland Springs, Texas, to comfort the families of the victims, the injured, the church congregation, and the first responders who tended the scene of the worst shooting in Texas history.

LCC President and CEO, Tim Hetzner, accompanied eight ministry teams from Texas, Oklahoma, and Indiana, to spend a week serving the community that was in mourning over their loss. Comfort dogs Pax, Phoebe, Abner, Damaris, Elijah, Gabriel, Barnabas, and Rufus and their handlers arrived to provide a furry shoulder to cry on, friendly paws to hold, and prayers for comfort, peace, and understanding.

“We had boots and paws on the ground within 24 hours,” Hetzner said. “The dogs have a sense. They know when someone is hurting. They will edge over to someone if they sense it.”

Petting, hugging, and cuddling, it’s all part of the job. People often start crying when they hug the dogs.

“Crying is a key part of the body healing itself,” Hetzner said. “And the dogs are content to just sit put and soak up the tears.”

There are things the dogs do that humans just can’t. When you’ve been through a disaster, many humans feel like they have to say something, like ‘You’ll get through this.’ We all say stupid things. But dogs don’t say stupid things.”

“Dogs are good listeners,” he continued. “They’re confidential, nonjudgmental. They’re safe. Many times people will talk to the dogs before someone else. They relax when they’re petting a dog. When they relax, they start talking about what they’re going through. And a key part of the healing process is to be able to talk about what you’re going through.”

The K-9 Comfort Dog resume spans more than a dozen major disasters in the U.S. In