



The

Old Hemlock Letter

*An Exclusive Publication Dedicated to the Continued Development of the
Old Hemlock English Setter*

Volume X, Issue I

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Greetings:

I hope each of you had a good fall season and wonderful holiday. Our season in Ohio continues to be merely hunting memories of what once was. I hope to get in as much preserve hunting as my wallet will permit over the next couple months. Now we can all start thinking about the Old Hemlock Reunion, coming up in March...this will be number 11. Details can be found on the attached registration sheet. Please note the dates and the change in recommended lodging. I'd like to encourage everyone to attend. A special thanks to Sue Buckley for updates to the Directory and to Bob Rose for arranging the Reunion details.

We want to welcome some new Family members who received puppies from the Krol litter. Mike and Mervy placed OH Shaman with Eric Scott, Durham, NC, OH Timberdoodle with Eric Jonsson, Wilton, CT, and an as yet unnamed female with Roy and Sally Sisler, Delliner, PA. Three more pups went to former OH owners, Willy and Helen Carter, Eric and Denise Shelagowski, and a "Dream" of a girl stayed with the Krols. Congratulations to all the puppies for finding such great homes.

Those of you who may not have heard via email, LeJay Graffious has started an Old Hemlock Foundation webpage at www.oldhemlock.org. This is a work in progress, but already it features dozens of photos of Old Hemlock and the recent GBE Celebration at WYU. The site should provide news of Old Hemlock and the plans of the Foundation. Please check it out as LeJay will be looking to us for critique and contributions in the way of news and information.

Hope the recent winter storms are letting up on you all.

Best,

Roger



The Legacy Continues by LeJay Graffious

On June 29, 2008, the clicking of OH Setter claws returned on the oak floor boards at Old Hemlock. OH Black Willow is right at home with the ghosts of setters past. Helen Ann and I have been blessed having her in our lives. Jeff and Kendra Kauffman gave her a great start, with dedication to her health and acclimating her to the world of sound and smells.

In the field, I am continually amazed at the innate ability programmed in her Old Hemlock/Discoverly genes. I have been around setters since meeting George in 1974, and was only peripherally responsible for Manton after 1998. To observe her young mind develop and watch her

run through the woods and fields hunting naturally continues to amaze me.

As all OH Setter owners do, we followed George's guidelines in *Troubles With Bird Dogs* and started with wing pointing. Her instincts locked her up and her excitement grew. At thirteen weeks, I put her on a quail from the recall pen on Old Hemlock. Her first live bird was met with enthusiasm and ownership. We had great fun with these birds for a couple weeks.

We spent six weeks on Dolly Sods prior to gun season. I would work at the Allegheny Front Migration Observatory in the morning, then in the afternoon she and I would hike the grouse and woodcock covers. I can still see her reaction to her first grouse. Willow was playing in a small run, bobbing for pebbles near an alder and red maple coppice. Suddenly a grouse flushed about twenty feet to her right. Her head snapped to see the grouse

rising. A split second later, she was in chase, and then returned to the flush point to soak up the scent with much excitement. What a great feeling to see my very own OH Setter get 'birdie.' She never returned to the bobbing for pebbles. From that point on, she was interested in hunting for scent of birds. Any birds!



Trust, an article of faith between a gunner and a gun dog.
- GBE, Old Hemlock, 1988

During our time on Dolly Sods, she flushed a dozen woodcock and also many grouse. The closest approximation to a point on a wild bird was on one grouse. On the trail that we walk daily, she once found a swamp sparrow in an alder and sedge hassock. Naturally, she checked it daily in hopes of another. On this day, her head was buried in the hassock and suddenly she raised her head with nose pointing high, wheeled to the right toward taller alders, worked the scent for about ten yards and went on a momentary point when a grouse flushed. I was surprised it was not another dickie bird! I had her on the check cord as she bolted into the thicket with me, desperately trying to keep up with her.

October brought preserve work at Hunting Hills. Raz Sisler observed her and gave me pointers. After seeing her reaction in the field and to the starting pistol, he suggested that I take my five-month-old pup out with my Parker. That afternoon, she and I were blooded on our first team effort chukar. She instantly knew what it was all about and we both had grins from ear to ear. Later in the month, she got to run with the big boys, Stonehouse and Lynford. Jeff and Gabby Leach and I shot pheasants and chukars over her.

Sadly, I have not been able to find grouse in cover around here. Oh, we have flushed one now and again on our daily walks but not on any hunts. But, our hopes remain high.

As we sit in the studio at Old Hemlock with Willow curled up on the floor, and I look at George's setters gracing the walls, they have a deeper meaning to me.

George's Wishes for Our Old Hemlock Line

By Kay Evans

For the first 10 or so issues of The Old Hemlock Letter, I had been asking Kay to write an article, but none came. After a while, it was evident that Time was not going to allow it and so I didn't mention it again. In a recent discussion with LeJay, however, he said he remembered helping Kay with a piece she intended for the Letter and that he was certain he could find it. The information therein is no longer news to us but it was so like her to focus her thoughts on George that I needed to include it here. At long last, Kay's by-line is in an issue of The Old Hemlock Letter. -MYM

Saturday, April 10, 1999

When I became responsible for George's treasures in May 1998, I gave his two remaining guns to the persons he had [named] (he had already given his fox Sterlingworth to a young friend) and arranged with Field Dog Stud Book to transfer our recorded Old Hemlock Line to Roger Brown.

Roger had written to George after reading his first book on upland gunning. Roger came to visit us in 1972. He already had a Master's Degree, had begun teaching and had bought a farm above the wooded west side of the Ohio River where he still lives among his well loved and trained Old Hemlocks. Twenty-seven years later, we have never lost touch.

When we were working on our last wills in 1988, George said that when we could no longer manage the breeding of our Old Hemlock line, we must place it in competent hands. Roger Brown knew it well, had handled his Old Hemlocks expertly from puppyhood and revered the line. Roger's acceptance then made my transfer now, easy for me.

I registered the large litter of January 4th 1998, and turned over to Roger those responsibilities for a breeding planned for the next litter. George and I had been back-ups for each other, and it then occurred to me that Roger should have one more active than a woman of 92. A perfect couple, who accepted with enthusiasm, is Jeff and Kendra Kauffman, who live on near Hanover, Pennsylvania, where Roger has visited them.



News from Old Hemlock by LeJay Graffious

As executor of the Evanses' wills, I am very close to finalizing the probate and passing the assets to the Foundation. Probate would have been easy if we were liquidating assets to a set value. Instead, the lawyers and government wanted a realistic value based on the 1998 and 2007 appraisals. How can you value objects at Old Hemlock with their historical and sentimental value? With the help of Carla Marshall, we have been cataloging the important objects. Values of objects such as the Colt pistol, muzzleloader, piano, crocks and dishes were rather easy compared to the field notes, magazines, documents, books, art and correspondence. The curator of the WVU archives recommended Willis Van Devanter. He was schooled at Yale University and Columbia University, and he began his career first as the Acting Curator of Graphic Arts in the Princeton University Library, 1956-1957 and then as the chief buyer for the Paul Mellon Collection from 1957-1973. We will be able to finalize transfer when he files his final report. As we catalog items, we get engrossed in the depth of history. When you open a book off the shelf, it contains inscriptions from the author, correspondence between authors and the Evanses, an inscription from Kay to George, or George to Kay, original art by George as a gift to Kay, or sentimental notes from one of their parents or grandparents. Mr. Van Devanter assesses it, "Most individual objects have reduced value due to their condition, but when viewed in the totality of the collections with the supporting letters, notes and correspondence, the collection is invaluable." I'm glad it is his responsibility to set the final figures. To me it is an impossible task. Too bad the government, and too many folks, think in terms of the bottom line, and not the intrinsic value.

Even though the probate is not complete, Jeff Kauffman, Jeff Leach and I have been functioning as a team executing the wishes of George and Kay. A twist on the foundation has been that to enter as a tax-exempt organization as set by Lawyer Tom Vorbach, there has to be an educational component to the foundation. After many long discussions, we have decided that the house and contents are so unique that we are going to maintain it looking like George and Kay still live there. Many who attended the June 20 Celebration and had visited Old Hemlock in the 1970's and 1980's, commented on their visit of getting the feeling that George and Kay could walk into the room at any moment. To maintain this atmosphere, we have decided to build a caretakers cottage within sight of the house but unobtrusive to the setting. Since the foundation charter calls for educational programs for students, we will use the basement of the cottage for group sessions prior to visiting the house.

I am working with various experts to maintain the look and historical value, but create a safe environment for the contents from fire, moisture and pests. The first project was to install a security system for entry and fire

protection. Next was putting a stainless steel liner and top damper in the studio fireplace. The other fireplaces were converted to ventless LP gas while George was living. Simultaneously, a certified electrician began work to bring the house up to electrical code. We still have some unanswered questions about maintaining the log structure and shingle siding.

After much distress and consultation of trustees, foresters, structural engineers and other experts, I finally had the nerve to remove two of the hemlocks closest to the house. This was very hard for me to do, but cognitively knew it was the right thing to do for the good of the house. As Tom Bowman put it, "You can always grow another tree, but you cannot replace Old Hemlock." Even though the trees have been removed, they will carry on the legacy in the form of turned wooden bowls that our Old Hemlock friends can purchase. Craftsman Clark Davidson is converting billets into hemlock bowls between 12-14 inches wide and 4 inches deep. To view or order one for your home, you can get more details on the *new* Old Hemlock website.

I have slowly been developing the www.oldhemlock.org web page. The site will be dedicated to promoting the writing and philosophy of George and Kay with the hope of continuing his readership. The web site is a work in progress. I continue to refine and add items. I would appreciate any feedback, corrections or submissions. After discussions with the trustees, Roger Brown and Mike McDonald, we will begin to publish the newsletter on line. We will withhold any information specific to the Old Hemlock Family such as the OH Gathering registrations or any article submitted that the author requests not to be posted publicly. One of the goals of the foundation is to broaden the readership of George's work. Most young folks today are very connected to the web, so if we can touch the younger generation with GBE's philosophy, we need to reach out.

On the website I have a page called "Store." Here I am listing where you can purchase items related to Old Hemlock. We now have for sale remastered videos and audio recordings in CD and DVD formats. Ordering information is available for these and the bowls here.

Helen Ann and I want to make Old Hemlock available to members of the Old Hemlock Family. If you can tolerate Pam Bowman's woodland mice, you are welcome to stay in the house or come to visit. Just contact me to make arrangements.



*To have a flame passed down to you, to keep it burning
and a hand on it.*

- GBE



There is no bond, with the exception of a perfect love affair, that can be fuller than the relation between a gunner and his bird dog.

- GBE; *The Bird Dog Book*

Old Hemlock Puppies by Mike Krol

Another lovely Old Hemlock litter has passed through our home, the miracle of nature once again witnessed first hand. Miss Beretta proved again to be a wonderful mother, and six puppies were delivered without event on October 7, 2008. Four boys and two girls, little white blobs nearly indistinguishable from one another. The first ten days pass with constant observation from us (and little sleep), for that is the "danger zone" in which puppies can be lost. Once that hurdle has been passed, a mild sigh of relief from us, and Beretta does all the work, feeding and cleaning up after them. At just past two weeks, eyes begin to open and crawling around changes to feeble attempts to get those wobbly legs working. Mama continues to bear the brunt of the work, and we watch in wonder as personalities begin to form. By 5 weeks we have 6 little dogs to deal with, puppy teeth are making feeding less than fun for Mom, and weaning begins. The transition from milk to puppy chow is rapid, as is the dramatic increase in output. Now we have 6 bundles of energy that are a joy to be with, but a bit of work to clean up after! I tell Merely, "To heck with Roger, we're keeping them all!" of course in jest, but already I am dreading the day that they will leave us. The three orange boys continue to be so identical we cannot tell them apart, and the entire litter is as uniform as any that we have raised. By six weeks the orange boys are showing just a wee bit of ticking, and we have silly litter names for all of the pups: Spot, Maybelline, Dream Maker, Freckles, Brown Eye, White Boy. Travel arrangements and pickup dates are being finalized for the new owners, and we get ready for the happy (for them) and sad (for us) day.

The first to arrive are Helen and Willie Carter, about as fine a couple as you could ever hope to meet. We have a lot of laughs as they review the candidates, take pictures, examine the fine points of each pup...but at the

end of the day their hearts were set on a blue male, and Spot goes to Virginia. Eric Scott has next choice, and arrives one day later – as he walks in our door, he says he already likes the looks of Freckles based on the pictures he received – and who could not? Freckles is one handsome dude. We descend to the basement where Eric is engulfed with five white beauties, and then the darndest thing happens: Brown Eye (who also has a bright blue eye, something that will likely stay with him forever) goes to Eric, lies down at his feet, and starts to fall asleep. Merely, Gray and I look at each other and say, "Whoa! He's never done THAT before!" Eric says that he'll have to ponder his decision a bit more, and the following morning returns to the house, saying there is no question, which is the right pup for him, Brown Eye is going to North Carolina. It was perhaps the clearest example of a dog and man meant for each other that I have ever seen...welcome to the Family, Eric! Two days later, Scott and Denise Shelagowski arrive from Michigan, and Freckles is their pick. Scott owned an Old Hemlock years ago, and we are delighted to re-welcome he and his lovely wife back into the clan. Both are talented people, with Scott's gun stock work something to behold (he brought two American classics for me to admire and drool over), not to mention the man makes a pretty mean jam! Denise has a small business making floral arrangements from dried flowers, and had Merely been home instead of at work (supporting my retirement) I'm guessing they would have had to extend their stay for a few days longer. Freckles leaves for Michigan, and a few hours later Eric Jonsson arrives from Connecticut. Of course there is only one male remaining, and Eric is delighted to take White Boy home. Willie and Helen said on their visit that you could have put all six pups in a barrel, closed your eyes and grabbed one, and have been happy as could be with your choice, and I think they were right. Again, we welcome Eric into the fold and hope you will get a chance to meet him in person at our reunion in March (ditto all the new owners.)

This left only Dream Maker and Maybelline with us, and we had our choice of the two. A very difficult decision, for both were little sweethearts, adoring of our attention, and perfect in every way. At six weeks of age we as a family had agreed on Dream Maker, primarily due to the fact that she was a perfect belton...Maybelline had that heavy "eye shadow" over her left eye, causing me to give her the nickname on the day she was born. But even after the decision was made, one had to ponder if it was the right one, especially when Maybelline would jump into my arms, seemingly saying, "Pick me!" Once you've made your choice, you need to stick with it or drive yourself crazy, and the day after Eric Jonsson left I met Roy and Sally Sisler in PA to deliver Maybelline – perhaps the most difficult parting of all. However, as with all the pups, we are comforted in knowing our babies went to fine homes. And Maybelline will have a life filled with game bird contacts most dogs would only dream about – and she is one for sure that we'll see each year! Although the Sisler's have been part of our Old Hemlock Family for

many years, the placement of Maybelline now makes it "official" – congrats, Roy and Sally!

And now we have only our Dream girl with us: "Dream Maker" became Old Hemlock Autumn Dream, partly named in memory of Mark Kucera's OH Dream, dam of our very first Old Hemlock setter in 1986 (OH Blossom). Mark's Dream was as beautiful a setter as you could ever hope to see, and our Dream is equally lovely. She is smart as a whip, and totally devoted to me. I have vowed she will be my "Bowman-Buckley dog", meaning she will be as well trained as Tom and Bruce's dogs (have you ever seen better mannered in setters??). When I shared this goal with Roger, his immediate reply was, "good luck!"...time will tell, and I look forward to having you all meet her in a few months.

And so another Krol litter has been placed. We were happy to once again contribute in our small way to the continuation of the line of setters around which each of our lives revolves. We will likely do it again one day, for the experience is truly remarkable, although bittersweet at the end – it is hard to part with those happy faces that were ours for 8 short weeks. We can't wait to see them again in March.



The Pensioner and The School Boy by Mike McDonald

This could easily be his last bird season. Ten years, diabetes and cataracts, are mercifully counterbalanced by a good heart, strong will and endless desire. Old Hemlock Link was born in a large litter, during the worst ice storm the northeast could remember, he boldly entered our lives to assume Alpha status from our then resident setter who gladly abdicated. That this puppy would become my greatest training challenge to date was immediately evident... that we would eventually be as close as second skin, was not. Every skill of patience

I possessed was put to task and perhaps helped create the bond we share today – it certainly took me into his brain and he knew mine. His peak years were less than they should have been when work too frequently took me away, yet we managed. As a senior he has shown me some amazing things in the field – impossible retrieves, productive points where birds could not possibly be, and the trusting affection of a child when health problems began. He was patient with my stress and tolerated everything I asked of him. This could easily be his last bird season...just as I believed the previous two had been. He is my Pensioner.

This was his first season under the gun. At thirteen months, Old Hemlock Blue Flint has energy, curiosity and drive, all selectively held in check by training repetitions, lead cords and judicious use of an electric collar. Born in a small litter, during carefree summer days, animation fueled by endless energy labeled his personality – be it plant or animal, all things new must be sniffed, licked, carried and chewed. And, the world apparently needs more barking! He met his match in The Pensioner for whom tolerance of the younger generation has its limits and what running away fails to discourage, a growl and a nip, will. Adoration never crosses the line so rarely do I need to intercede...then only to restore a little peace and quiet. Could this pup make a bird dog as good as those others? Time will tell. For now, he is my School Boy.

In the Hearts of Their Masters...

Old Hemlock Chance; masters Willie and Helen Carter, 201 Deer Keep, Richmond VA, s, Discoverly New Copper, d. OH Blackwater, July 2007. Losing a setter is always difficult, how much more so for those still calling him "puppy". Willie and Helen had high hopes for Chance, as we do for all our puppies, and a year was simply not enough time with him.

October Purdey Boy; master Mike Krol, 5593 Buffalo Rd., Churchville, NY. 1997 – January 5, 2009. As fine companion as anyone could hope for, hard driving and eager to please. By the end of his life he was laying down on point, but still held that fierce intensity in his eyes. He sired two litters (one Old Hemlock), and his offspring grace the uplands from Maine to Idaho. He has left a void in the Krol home that cannot be filled. RIP Prudey.

I tell of grouse dogs that enriched me beyond measure and made me glad.

- GBE; An Affair with Grouse



Editor's Note;

You have to admire the work being done by the Old Hemlock Foundation and it's trustees. LeJay Graffious, Jeff Kauffman and Jeff Leach accepted an awesome task as is evident in the brief glimpse of their work in this issue of The Old Hemlock Letter. I say "brief glimpse" because this is just the beginning of what they hope will be years of preservation, growth, and sharing of the Old Hemlock life style and philosophies. What they do today sets in motion that which will need to continue tomorrow. LeJay is correct in planning for the next generation of the Old Hemlock Family – young people who may have yet to learn about George and Kay and Old Hemlock, and who may not even understand the relationships of a gunner and dog and the wonderful world of GBE in print. As I meet people through my gunning experiences, and they comment on my dogs – hearing for perhaps the first time the name "Old Hemlock" – I often see an eagerness to learn more about these dogs, George Bird Evans and his writing. The Old Hemlock webpage will be a wonderful beginning by which to guide them. If the story is not shared it could be lost in a single generation of young gunners and that would be a shame. The WVU archives make available GBE's books and manuscripts and history of Old Hemlock for research while being preserved for those future generations. The land and house provide a living connection to the special lives we emulate and which can yet influence newer generations. The Foundation and its trustees have set that in motion and for that they shall always have our admiration and gratitude.

Eventually, portions The Old Hemlock Letter will appear on the OH website. Whether it will continue to be published in its current form remains to be decided. This begins our 10th year of providing the Family with news, details and information related to our shared interest. Many of you have contributed to that effort and for that I am grateful. I hope you will continue to do so in the new venue of the OH website. It's a new age and we must adapt, especially if we are to pass on to others, this wonderful legacy with which we have been entrusted. That is what The Old Hemlock Letter is all about and that is what the Old Hemlock Foundation is about as well.

Our congratulations also go out to Jeff and Kendra Kauffman and to Mike Krol and his family for raising two more fine Old Hemlock Setter litters. We welcome a number of new family members and hope to meet them at this year's reunion.

Reunion information and registration form is included. Please note a few changes to the recommended lodging and some minor price adjustments at Hunting Hills. Complete and submit your registration forms to Bob Rose as soon as possible, but certainly before February 20th so an accurate count can be given to Hunting Hills ahead of time. Your lodging reservations will need to be made separately via the phone number provided on the attached registration form. We hope to see you all there.

Best to all,

Mike, Link and Flint