

The Old Hemlock Letter

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

Volume X, Issue II

July 2009

Greetings:

As always, I hope you are all having a good summer despite the wet spring in some areas and drought in others. We have a lot to report in this issue of The Old Hemlock Letter beginning with puppy news. We had a successful breeding between Jim Recktenwald's Timber's Ryman Becasse and my Old Hemlock True and have 8 puppies – 4 males and 4 females! Having been pleased with the puppies that True produced with Mike Krol's OH Beretta, I wanted to have more of his get from a different female for possible contributions to the line. Becasse moves well and is a lovely dog with good disposition and I think she and True are a good match, so this litter will produce some fine bird dogs. There seems to be a big demand for females so we now have a good selection. Larry and Vicky Catlett also plan to breed Whisper this year to Tom Bowman's OH Boswell.

We had another wonderful Reunion in March with over 40 attendees and nearly as many dogs. Roy Sisler and the Hunting Hills staff made sure we had a good time with lots of bird work, dog training and great meals. It was nice to see puppies and young dogs work the bird fields – I think we learn as much from the experience and they do. I am always pleased to see the line continue to develop with the contributions of our selective breeding efforts.

Here in Ohio, the dogs are doing well and we are getting 3 – 4 miles of walking each day. Being retired makes that a lot easier to do. I plan a trip to Michigan in mid October and then a trip to South Dakota in late October – early November.

Best,

Roger

In Memoriam

Sarah Tuttle attended our latest Reunion with her parents, Robert and Kandice. Sarah had a wonderful time and seemed to enjoy every moment. She was a joy to meet and added to the experience for all of us. When I informed the Old Hemlock Family of her recent passing, most were shocked and had been unaware that while she was attending the Reunion, she was struggling with the cancer that would take her life. I think she would be pleased to know that most did not even know she was quite ill at the time. Her unassuming manor and personality are what we all remember and that is as it should be. I cannot imagine losing a child, especially one as caring and kind as Sarah. I wish to extend condolences for the entire Old Hemlock Family to Robert and Kandice in their time of sorrow.



*"...and those were the days when grouse were here."
- GBE*

Confluence by LeJay Graffious

In the past when I thought of the word 'confluence' I would envision canoeing at the convergence of two streams or remember George taking me to the Beaver Hole for the first time, the place where Little Sandy Creek and Beaver Creek met head on at 180 degrees to each other creating an eroded bottom. I've had many memorable experiences at the Deep Hole. I have found memories of the annual July 4 excursions of George, Kay, Helen Ann and I to this area. In later years, after George's passing, we would take Kay there each summer; the last was on her ninety-seventh birthday. The most frightening remembrance was when Manton, Evans's last setter, got his foot caught in a mink trap at the confluence of these mountain streams. Manton was howling like death was imminent, and I was running through the rushing water over slimy rocks to help him.

Confluence has taken on a new meaning to me this summer. Now, it is the convergence of vision and law. The Old Hemlock Foundation directors are managing the confluence of George and Kay Evans's vision for Old Hemlock, the federal government's requirements for an educational foundation and lawyers' interpretation of these. Since George's death, there have been many changes in the guidelines for foundations. The directors are faced with many decisions to manage the development of the Old Hemlock Foundation. Some of George's ideas that were acceptable per code in the 1990s are now in conflict with each other in order to maintain tax-free status.

One of these is the preservation of the Old Hemlock house in a time period as many of us in the Old Hemlock Family remember in the 1980s and early 1990s when George was at the zenith of his writing and popularity. George winced at the idea of Old Hemlock becoming a museum. As the lawyers set up the foundation per GBE's wishes, they, rightly so, made the 1782 house the major component of the educational foundation. Many of us feel the peacefulness and solitude in the house that George and Kay developed over the years according to their vision and recognize the stimulating environment contributed to his ability to write. Many of the Old Hemlock Family members have commented that when they enter Old Hemlock they feel that George and Kay could enter the room at any time. The code requires that the house be available for tours and visitation. This triggers other federal codes like handicapped accessibility. The process becomes like "toppling dominos." Due to the visitation, which feds say cannot be exclusive such as limiting to the Old Hemlock Family, the insurance folks get involved with their inspections and requirements. One of the directors quipped, "Did you think George thought that this would be so involved?" Consequently, the directors are at the confluence of George's vision for the future and code requirements. We have been very thoughtful and collaborative in all the changes occurring at Old Hemlock. The prime requirement in our minds is to

have the least visual change possible, yet knowing some things will need to change in order to preserve the house, meet handicap access requirements and remove hazards.

This summer has seen a major preservation project at Old Hemlock, which started with exploring a few shingles that were coming off the house above the long room entry. We found a major rot problem that had nearly eaten a two feet by three feet hole in the original logs to the interior plaster. This led to the removal of all the siding shingles to inspect the house. The east wall was in good condition, but the south wall had major structural problems that we were glad were exposed and corrected. Both the north and south porches have been rebuilt to remove hazards due to rot and weakened structure. The stone walkways have been redone to eliminate tripping hazards and to comply with handicap access. As with any renovation of an old place, as we proceeded to correct one flaw, another flaw would be revealed.

I have been doing a photo documentation of the preservation project. A photo essay is available in the Photo Album section of the Old Hemlock.org website. I want to thank the other directors and my consultants for their sage advice in fielding all my questions and inquiries during this process. There is an open invitation to visit Old Hemlock and experience the home of George and Kay. I hope your visit reflects the vision that I shared with our contractor, "When you're finished, people who visit and know the place will say, 'Old Hemlock is just as I remember it!'"

LeJay Graffious, OH Director and Caretaker
June 11, 2009



Old Hemlock Black Willow

"These are the days that never end."

- GBE

An Old Hemlock Forestry "Externship"

Selections from weekly reports by Keith McDonald

Paul Smith's College, in cooperation with the Old Hemlock Foundation, granted third year Forestry student, Keith McDonald, an "externship" to help develop an educational walking trail. What follows are a few excerpts from weekly reports detailing his work and study at Old Hemlock this summer. He was required to complete 300 hours service at Old Hemlock.

Week 1

The first week of my externship in Bruceton Mills, WV has been surprisingly eventful and productive. I am learning to recognize new tree species and have also participated in a study of birds native to West Virginia.

On the first day, I awoke at home with my gear packed and ready to go. I ate a quick breakfast and finished loading the truck with cloths and supplies and began the 9-hour drive to Old Hemlock. I was proud to make the trip with very few navigational problems and was met by LeJay Graffious who helped me unload and move in. I would be staying at the Old Hemlock house, the home of George and Kay Evans.

The next morning, the alarm clock rang at 6:00 a.m. and I began my first assigned task; using a compass and GPS to mark the location of an educational/recreational trail that I would be constructing throughout the summer. The trail would go through several different stands of forest on the Old Hemlock property and connect to a neighboring 4H Camp. The topography is confusing and after about a mile I decided to follow a small stream which the map indicated would lead to the 4H Camp. It took me through a stand of Eastern Hemlock, which I marked as a waypoint on my GPS. I then programmed a heading back to my first waypoint by the road and marked the trail with orange flagging as I traveled.

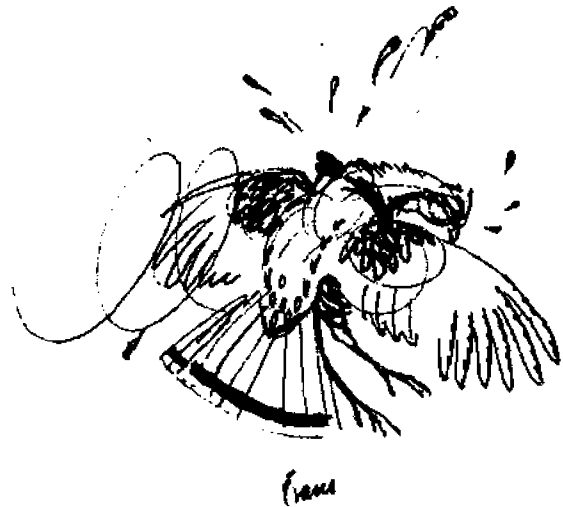
At 5:00 a.m. the next morning, rain changed our plans for bird survey work, so I decided to walk the property to identify some of the native tree species I was not familiar with. I found several and collected samples to take back to the house for later identification. They included Shagbark Hickory, Spicebush, Cucumber tree, Hawthorn (different in appearance to ours back home) and White Oak, which has leaves that appear differently depending on how much light they have.)

Day four, I spent entirely on the trail with bucksaw and pruners and cleared 1/5 mile of trail.

The fifth morning, LeJay invited me to accompany him on a bird study on a piece of state forest, not far from Old Hemlock. We stopped at 6 predetermined points, faced north and listened for ten minutes, broken into three periods - 3 minutes, 2 minutes, and 5 minutes. LeJay would listen, and each bird call he heard was recorded in a circle drawn on paper with a cross, splitting it into four segments representing NE, NW, SE and SW. He recorded the name of the bird, number, location, and time period in which it was heard.

Day six, I spent working on the trail, where it entered an over-stocked stand of even aged red pine. Some natural thinning had already taken place here. Throughout the day I saw a number of different animals - deer, turkeys, a woodland jumping mouse, and many different birds species.

Day seven, I again headed to the trail, eating breakfast on my way to the job sight. I was only able to work until about 12:30, when a lightening storm made it no longer safe to be in the woods. I spent the rest of the day cataloging the various birds, trees and woody plants I had been finding the previous days.



Week 2

Beauty can occur in different parts of life, and most often hits you from unexpected places at unexpected times. This week was nothing like that. Every visually and mentally pleasing occurrence this week came not as a surprise but as a prediction. These predictions were the result of the extreme diversity of the Alleghenies and Appalachians. Through this diversity, I discovered that the true pleasure of my experiences in West Virginia would come through anticipation and waiting.

June 10; Today began at 4:00 a.m. with a birding expedition. LeJay and I found a number of species, a few of which I had not seen and heard before - Grasshopper Sparrow, Chipping Sparrow, Eastern Towhee, Northern Parula, House Wren, Indigo Bunting, Cardinal, and Rose Breasted Grosbeak. LeJay also found a bird that is rare to the area called a Swanson's Warbler and he wondered how many more might be around. We also spent some time further south where I found trees I had not seen before - Sarsaparilla, Indian Cucumber, Pignut Hickory, Mockernut

Hickory, and Sweet Gum. After returning to Old Hemlock and lunch, LeJay and I spent the rest of the day working on the trail removing snags from a stand of even age White Pine.

June 11; LeJay and I wanted to go searching for more signs of the Swanson's Warbler that we had found yesterday and located them in two places – one on Old Hemlock and another on neighboring state land. We also cleared more of the trail and LeJay found a rare Orchid called Rattlesnake Plantain. We decided to incorporate it into the trail by placing stone around it. That evening I researched the silvics of more new tree species I had found.

June 12; At 9:00 a.m., with tools in hand, I headed to the trail and worked on it most of the day clearing another 50 yards through an area thick with blown down sticks and trees. I saw a fawn around 2:00 p.m. LeJay came by with the chain saw and we removed some large logs from the path.

June 13; This morning LeJay took me on my last birding instruction before we departed to the week long Brooks Bird Club Annual Foray. On arrival, we met and talked with a surprising number of professionals from the fields of entomology, botany, geology, ecology, and wildlife management.

June 14; The people of the Brooks Bird Club are unlike any I have met before. They are unrelenting when it comes to learning – many are totally self taught! I spent the day asking questions and recording information as I watched them study and analyze every interesting plant, insect, or tree they found. They took time to point out to me various trees and plants and explained how to identify them. I took careful notes so I could include them in my catalog.

June 15 & 16; Up early each day for birding – Red Vireos, Bobolinks, Chickadees, Kingfishers, and Green Herons. I learned about the relationship of topography and the composition of species. We visited a bear trap used as part of the West Virginia's bear recovery program – rejects from Mr. Donut make the best bait!

I had my first test on what I had learned, and I did pretty well considering the volume of information provided to me with no time to digest it. Some one would point out a flower and ask me to identify it. Another would point out different parts of a plant and ask me what they were. I found a really large mushroom, which a mycologist helped me identified as Umbrella Mushroom. One man gave me a much-appreciated gift of a book on West Virginia wildlife. A veneer grader explained the process of making veneer, from green logs...to the submerging vat... to the rotator and oven curing.

It's incredible how knowledgeable and friendly the members of the Brooks Bird Club are. Attending the Foray was a fascinating and humbling experience – they really took me under their wings.

I've Never Doubled

by Mike McDonald

I've never doubled – that is, shot two birds that flushed simultaneously. In truth, I've never had a reasonable chance to double and that's fine with me. In 35 years grouse and woodcock hunting, I have really not killed many birds...not in comparison to the hours I've spent in the field trying. Thus, each shot opportunity becomes singularly important to me, especially when they come over a point. When it happens, I usually flub the shot with my mind focused on the dog's performance rather than what I am supposed to be doing. In fact, a shot over a point on grouse or woodcock is so special that I find it incomprehensible to squeeze two of them together in one fleeting moment – I doubt my brain even works that fast. I won't shy away from the fact that reading George Bird Evans may be influencing my opinion. However, I prefer to think that I have always had that opinion and that he simply explains it better than I can. Like the trout that is too special to catch just once, grouse and woodcock are too special to shoot in multiples – robbing any beyond the first of its' singular rarity. If I ever shot a double, I'd feel uneasy about it, I'm sure. Again, that may be GBE talking...if so, I'll simply defer to his superior diction and presentation. Oddly, I harbor no ill toward anyone who has achieved a true double – rather I consider it an amazing feat and a demonstration of shooting skills far better than mine. That said, I have shot Doubles Trap and Sporting Clays – not well mind you – but the predictability of clay birds cannot compare to the complexity of flushing wild birds in mixed cover with dogs quartering and gunners moving about and a myriad of other sights and sounds affecting one's response.

Perhaps in lacking the skill to shoot a true double, I am searching for some other excuse for never having done it. Curiously, I chose this forum to express my thoughts on this elusive accomplishment. In truth, supposed I would find others who have never shot a double, and that they would understand.



*"I shot the little Prudey there,
a dream gun in a dream land.*

- GBE

Old Hemlock Nuptials!

It is with great pleasure that we announce the engagement of Anna Carter and Roger Brown. Anna has been a long time friend of the Brown family and accompanied Roger to the 2009 OH Reunion. They have obviously developed a much closer relationship as was obvious to many of us at the Reunion when Anna appeared in her leopard pattern muck boots that Roger had purchased for her. A June wedding is planned. Congratulations to Roger and Anna from the entire Old Hemlock Family.

Old Hemlock Reunion 2009

Many thanks to all who helped make the 2009 Old Hemlock Reunion a success. Each year seems better than the last with new faces of puppies and their Families along with more familiar dogs and their people. This year, even the Sislers joined us, not only as our Hunting Hills hosts but also as official Family members themselves with Old Hemlock Bluet, out of OH Beretta by OH True. As always the highlight is watching the dogs work in the bird fields and Raz Sisler's puppy clinic for those young dogs for which game birds are a new and exciting experience. Of course we all had excuses for poor shooting performances, not the least of which was the rain adding to the challenge. The food was excellent and while new lodging this year presented some issues we hope to improve on that next year.

Old Hemlock Family "Tips"

From Kendra and Jeff Kauffman (and Orvis), you should be aware of the "Orvis Pet ER Guide." This Guide features the location of emergency veterinary services across the country, state by state. We have all been on the road with our dogs and had some level of "dog emergency" pop up and it can be a lonely feeling not knowing where to turn. This Guide can help eliminate that problem and prevent a race home to familiar vets and possibly a spoiled trip. It sells currently for \$14 (believed to be a sale price) and can be found on their website at www.Orvis.com

Another new product on the market that might be of interest is "Dog Appeasing Spray," a synthesized

pheromone from Dams nursing puppies. Applied to food as directed, it offers relief to dogs with anxiety to thunder storms. DAP comes in 60 ml spray bottles and only by prescription at around \$10 - 12, so ask your vet. Supplier information can be found at www.VPL.com or by calling 888-241-9545.

Service Deployment

Pvt. Grayson Krol, US Army Reserve, was deployed to the Middle East in July. We do not have an address where he can be reached, however his parents, Mike and Merely Krol, are your contact should you care to write him. It would be nice if members of the Old Hemlock Family could send him some things from the states while he is serving our country and keeping us safe. He is scheduled to be in Kuwait for several weeks of acclimation before receiving his final duty station, so it may be a bit before we will know where to send things. We can only imagine how hard this is for Mike and Merely and Grayson's sister Marisa, and we hope and pray for his speedy and safe return from duty.

And, as we are certain he will receive a copy of this issue of The Old Hemlock Letter;

*Thank you, Grayson, for your service
and dedication to our country.*

- From your Old Hemlock Family

"In the Hearts of Their Masters..."

Old Hemlock Belle, masters Larry and Vicky Catlett, Leeds, ME. (s. OH Sirius - Rose, d. OH Bittasweet - Catlett) Died on July 13, 2009. Belle developed a large and rapidly growing tumor with extensive complication that proved inoperable. She is the first of the Ice Storm litter to go - not at all fair to Larry and Vicky who so bravely raised the 11 puppies despite twenty one days without power caused by the big storm that swept the northeast. To Larry and Vicky, she was the Queen. She now rests behind the Hemlock garden in a shady, peaceful and beautiful spot with Scent and Sweetie and soon to be joined by Sirius. "*She was the most beautiful Setter I have ever seen.*" - Larry Catlett.

"The one best place to bury a dog is in the [hearts of her masters.]"

- Ben Hur Lampman

Where to Bury a Dog.

Editors Note:

Litter news is always good news whether it's before or after they are born. By the time you read this Jim Recktemwald's Becasse will hopefully have puppies on the ground, all healthy and thriving. We will have to wait for nature to tell us when we have another Catlett litter on the way. Collectively its' good news for the continuation of the OH bloodline, that we have families willing to host litters and raise puppies for prospective homes and Family members.

A trip to Old Hemlock is also good news, before or after. For Wendy and I, 4th of July weekend marked our third OH visit in past 13 mos. - this time to see our son, Keith, as much as to enjoy the nostalgia of Old Hemlock. We had been reading Keith's weekly reports from his Old Hemlock externship, but seeing the work first hand is really impressive. The trail system that he and LeJay designed is nearly complete, winding through some of the most impressive sections of the property. Keith has been working steadily several weeks, between birding and forest identification lessons from LeJay. He began marking out the trail route in early June, followed by the physically demanding work of clearing a path wide enough for two people to walk side-by-side while enjoying beautiful vistas and the many unique features of forest growth. LeJay, is Keith's mentor, for both his college credit requirements as well as the results they hope the project will produce. He checks on Keith's progress daily and they discuss specifics about a particular turn or feature of the trail. They work together on two man jobs where a chainsaw or the tractor is required to remove larger logs and old stumps. By no means is Old Hemlock being damaged, on the contrary, it is being enhanced so it can be enjoyed and studied in detail for generations to come. We could see immediately the positive effects of this experience is having on Keith - physically, from the hard work as well as educationally and dare I say, spiritually. Walden's theories of the woodlands stimulating both mind and body are blooming in Keith before our eyes. We were very impressed with his progress and equally grateful for LeJay's guidance. A few more weeks and they should have the main trail completed, after which Keith can enjoy a well-deserved break before heading back to fall classes at Paul Smith's College. He will carry with him hard-earned college credits and the even more valuable experience of his summer at Old Hemlock. It's quite evident that LeJay and Helen Ann enjoy having Keith at Old Hemlock. As parents, we have nothing but pride in his efforts and hard work. Hopefully, visitors to Old Hemlock will enjoy the trail he helped create for years and it will not doubt be an element of pride for the Foundation. I have to believe that George and Kay would be pleased, too.

The Old Hemlock website invites you to virtually tour the home of George and Kay Evans. Until you have seen that lovely old house and walked its' oak floors in the dark, you cannot fully appreciate the treasures within. Visiting, even for an hour or two, is something every member of the Old Hemlock Family should experience. The Old Hemlock Letter can now be found under News on the Old Hemlock website at www.OLDHEMLOCK.ORG with updates on the preservation work and other related news.

Many of the GBE sketches featured in this issue come courtesy of LeJay Graffious, from Old Hemlock's second floor archives. Most represent preliminary work for more advanced pieces. We thought it would be interesting to share this unseen work in his favorite subjects. We hope you enjoy them.

Lastly, please note the change in Roger Brown and Mike McDonald's email addresses below.

Best to all,

Mike, Link & Flint

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