



Old Hemlock *Letter*

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



The Old Hemlock Foundation, Preserving and Promoting the Legacy of George Bird Evans and Kay Evans

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Greetings to all,

It has been a busy summer for us. A trip to Danbury, Wisconsin in late May and early June to get Old Hemlock Maybe Karma bred to Nudrap October Boy produced puppies on August 4, 2015. They are currently two weeks old and growing fast. Puppies sure keep you busy and I feel the lack of sleep more now that I am a little older. They are approaching the age when they are mobile and a lot of fun and even more work. I look forward to hearing how these puppies develop and hope to do a repeat breeding if they are as special as I think they will be.

Tom Bowman made a trip to Jim and Barb Recktenwald's to breed Old Hemlock Boswell to Old Hemlock Patches McNab. We should know if that breeding took in early September.

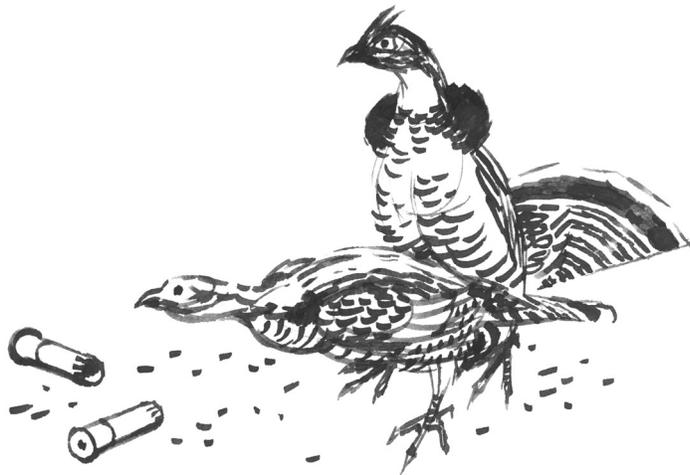
Bird numbers are low in Ohio, and once again we are planning an October trip to Michigan and perhaps Minnesota. Kansas is a possibility in December for quail and pheasants if the predictions of decent numbers there are accurate. We may try to get to West Virginia and Pennsylvania too.

Please keep in touch with information on your dogs and hunting. Pictures of your dogs are greatly appreciated.



Best to all,

Roger



"I lay my hand on the ninth-generation Old Hemlock Quest on the sofa beside me and feel the pulse of the one thousand twenty-two names on that extended pedigree of English setter bone and muscle and sight and hearing and scent and love and soul, and know the yearn of beauty there. These lovely setters with their uncomplicated honesty have given me an ideal of purpose and principle and courage, their way of Living for each day to when the day goes down, ignoring the Inevitable with a nobility I can only seek

George Bird Evans Living with Gun Dogs 1982

Keeping a Promise

Mike Krol

This is a “tail” of how our latest Old Hemlock lady came to grace our lives.

I have had the honor and privilege of raising four Old Hemlock litters over the years, beginning in 1988. Each has been special in its own way, bringing much excitement, joy, and yes, heartbreak to the Krol household. Each had its own nuances, each created memories to last a lifetime. But this latest brought an unexpected surprise.

I have kept a puppy from each litter that I have raised. I cannot imagine spending eight or nine weeks with such beautiful marvels, only to have all of them depart on puppy day. The pain of seeing puppies go to their new homes is only offset by the realization that they have been placed with the best possible people, and the hope that they will go on to become family companions, loved as they deserve, and be presented with the opportunity to use those wonderful instincts imparted by sire and dam. I tip my glass to Helen Ann and LeJay for giving up so much in allowing Karma and Katie to depart to their new homes, and you simply couldn't do better than the Browns or Killays when placing a pup. But I know only too well that the smaller the litter, the more attached you become to those puppies; giving those two orange beauties up had to be painful indeed.

In making my puppy selections over the years, I have always tried to use Bob Wehle's (of the famous Elhew Pointer line) advice: when asked how he went about selecting a pup, he replied “That's easy, I pick the one that likes me best!” Sound words indeed, but let me tell you, when you raise a litter and spend hours every single day with them from the time they are born, if you don't end up with a bunch of speckled beauties that adore you, you had better look hard in the mirror and wonder what the heck is wrong with you! And so like all of us, additional criteria are applied: how they respond to the usual recommended puppy tests, how they react to the first time they see a bird wing, how they move, how they interact with their peers, conformation, head structure, how they are marked, a whole bunch of things we are all familiar with.

For me, one arbitrary criterion has always been wanting a perfect Belton. George wrote of this in a number of his books and articles, and like all of us, I aspired to be the sporting gentleman that George was. The simple use of the word “perfect” created the idea that this pup would somehow be better than his or her siblings. Indeed, what can be better than perfection? Silly thinking in the overall scheme of things, for each puppy becomes its own individual based upon how it is raised and the opportunities that it is presented with.

Still, having the luxury of first pick from my litters, I let this silly notion affect my decision. From the time that the pups were born, if a pup came out with a solid patch mark I would say “you'll make a wonderful bird dog for some lucky family, but you won't be staying with us”. Those solid patched pups would get every bit as much love and attention as their “perfect” brothers and sisters while with us, but invariably a perfect Belton would be the pup that became a Krol.

And so it was in our latest litter; I can say with certainty that the first pup born had a solid eye-patch, and I said my usual mantra. This lucky pup would become Hall Carter's first choice when he made his selection, the first choice after mine, and anyone who has been fortunate enough to witness the beauty and charm of Old Hemlock Primrose in action can speak to the folly of using markings to rule out a candidate! As I lived and breathed hours each day with this wonderful litter of ten, two potential candidates emerged: a big blue Belton female we nicknamed “Blue Under-Ear” (solid blue under one earflap), and another blue female we called “Teardrop” (facial markings looking just like a tear). All ten pups were a joy to be with, all of them eagerly greeting me, falling over one another in their haste to get to my side, then playing with one another, some spending more time on my lap than others. As they reached the age of six weeks the usual bird wing on a fishing rod was introduced, just to see how they reacted; meaningless perhaps, but who can resist wanting to see a wee pup point staunchly for reasons they cannot comprehend? All were curious at first, many displaying pointing instincts, but one seemed more intense

and interested than her peers, a pretty tricolored gal with a solid ear and large rump patch; surely, this would be quite a bird dog for some lucky family.

As the pups matured we would take them for brief outings outside. Having been born in May (coincidentally on the very same day of the month as their grandmother Beretta), the weather in early July was warm and pleasant, a fun time to have the pups do some exploring, albeit nerve-wracking with ten little rascals to keep track of. On one particular day, one of the more adventurous and inquisitive pups managed to crawl beneath our false chimney, squalling when she couldn't find her way out. Merely panicked, screaming for me to help, and after I got the other nine pups returned to their quarters we managed to dig and clear an exit path for the little gal. And low and behold, it was that same solid-patched tricolor female.

As the time drew near for puppy day, I was still undecided between Blue Under-Ear and Teardrop, but it was going to be one of the two. Our daughter Marisa accompanied me to the vet for their last puppy shots, and as we sat there in the waiting room Marisa picked the solid patched tricolor as her favorite. Like every Dad, there's a special

place in the heart that only a daughter can hold, and I began to consider this bird-crazy female as a possibility. When we returned home, I started looking back though all the pictures from this memorable litter (which were a LOT! One of the wonders of digital photography is that you take a ton of pictures, thinking that every one will capture a nuance you will want to hang onto forever). Many, many pictures were of me holding this or that pup in my lap, with the others vying for my attention, and one pup was ever present. Yep, that same solid patched tricolor that stole Marisa's heart.

And so it was that at the eleventh hour I decided to keep Old Hemlock Autumn Promise, the pup who liked me best even when I failed to recognize it. And I have never looked back. Blue Under-Ear would go on to grace Pete King's home, and Teardrop was Willie Carter's choice (much to the chagrin of Helen, who so much wanted to keep the Wee One aka Amazing Grace!). Promise is without doubt the most intense Old Hemlock setter I have owned, absolutely driven by birds large and small. She's the only one who daily points songbirds, and displays great drive and style on point. I feel blessed to have her in my life. Now if I can just get the crazy girl to retrieve!



"Some gunners buy well-bred dogs but never seem to find one to suit them; others, willing to spend time with their dogs, seem almost regularly to have good ones."

George Bird Evans The Upland Shooting Life 1964





Yans



First Blood

Extracted from the Shooting Journal of David L. Hall

On Thursday August 18, 1988 my wife Libby and I drove to Belleville, Illinois. There we connected with Steve Hitsman and his litter of three females and five males from his Old Hemlock Ash and George and Kay's Quest. Steve had elected to keep a male, and somehow George and Kay had given me next choice. Heeding Steve's opinion ("If I were keeping a female, this is the one...") the pup destined to be Old Hemlock Sonnet was chosen.

Sonnet made her entry into the Hall household during what I now consider my three-year exile in Kansas. This is in no way to imply that the people there were not stellar, and the bird hunting was beyond stellar, but my wife and I recognized we are East Coast people. Still, Sonnet's first year was a baptism of wild birds in grand numbers. They weren't grouse and woodcock. In roughly parallel size, our quarry was wild pheasant and bobwhite quail. My part of Kansas was a perfect overlap of territory for each, and the two seemed an ideal pairing for a setter to develop on during a first year.

The rest of August and all of September and October found me in the yard and in the field with Sonnet every day. There were the daily routines at home: loud noises during feeding, progressive exercise with the HOLD command, and many walks in the field around our house where I would suddenly hide in tall grass while watching her realize, with ensuing panic, that "her man" had disappeared (I almost never had to hunt for my dog; Sonnet was keen on keeping track of me). By late October and early November we were out questing for wild bird scent, supplemented with some training quail accessed through a friend.

By the start of bird season in mid-November I had brought Sonnet as far and as fast as I could for an almost five month old pup. On Friday the 25th we made our first "real" excursion on the quarter section where we lived. Libby drove us to a half-mile strip that bordered our land and we ventured into the cover. Sonnet was not afraid of brush - running in, cavorting, and coming back. She stayed very close (sometimes shoe-top, but at five months....). Still, she would make small casts.

As we headed along an Osage Orange hedgerow we came upon a cock pheasant trying to wedge through a hog-wire fence in the thicket. I walked in on him forcing a flush, then brought him down on the far side of the hedge with one shot. I picked Sonnet up and placed her over the fence and followed after. She zeroed in on the fallen bird, burying her nose into its breast and nuzzling its bloody head. Raising her head, she had its blood on her right jowl - "blooded" on the weekend of her fifth month.

We crossed back to the "correct" side of the fence (our land, and for wind direction) and continued out the hedge. After about one hundred yards Sonnet stopped, faced into the hedge and began to work her nose. I stopped in deference to her interest and a covey of quail erupted on the far side. I shot once, fleetingly and through the trees. I was doubtful, but crossed the fence to confirm my miss. Sonnet did not like the separation. I hurried back over to her and we resumed our walk.

It wasn't all "hunt". She would find sticks to pick up, throw them with her mouth, and then growl. Yes, I said to myself, she's a pup. But as we neared the end of the hedgerow where a dirt road intersected, a single quail went up. I fired both barrels but watched it fly away. Sonnet was oblivious to the sound of the gun.

We crossed the dirt road, turned and followed a grassy ditch to head toward home. We were near the quail's line of flight when I noticed Sonnet scenting and turning back into the wind. I honored her interest and back-tracked. After only ten feet or so the one quail erupted and turned back toward the hedgerow. I waited that "one second" and fired. The bird fell on the other side of the hedge across the road. We went back over; Sonnet walked into the wind and found it. She would not pick it up, so I did and held it out to her. She went nuts, showing more excitement, for some reason, over the scent of the quail than the pheasant.

We finished a short walk to our house and Libby took pictures of Sonnet and me with our two birds - one pheasant and one quail on the inauguration of her hunting career. Old Hemlock Sonnet was truly going to be a bird dog.



"It was another eon, a longago faraway place where sunshine came through dappled. Those days in my gun diary are like the chaff in the corners of my game pocket mixed with peacocked back feathers conjuring old coverts. I lived the dream and the grouse were there, Heaven each time Indian Summer came, Paradise Lost each time it went."

George Bird Evans Grouse on the Mountain 1994



Arnold House

EVANS

My Affair with Grouse

Lejay Graffious

"I have savored a shooting life most living gunners will never taste, days in grand coverts when they abounded with grouse, a continuum of dogs and birds and guns and time to enjoy what was for me a Bonasa adventure. I lived that fantasy for a time, and for a time it actually existed; there were enough grouse and enough great coverts, and soon there were enough gunners to destroy them. I look back at the thinning of the birds at least with the knowledge that I carry no black marks for that. I treasured those coverts and treated them as the fragile things they were; I hunted grouse vigorously but I hunted them with love."

George Bird Evans *An Affair with Grouse* 1982

George penned these words lamenting the lack of Ruffed Grouse in his coverts. I believe he missed the mark when he blames the increase in hunters for the downturn. Of course, this was an effect but I believe the big change was loss of habitat. The loss of large tracts of early successional forest caused a concentration of hunters in coverts where George hunted. This loss of habitat is a scenario being repeated across our country now at a more alarming rate.

When George presented me with a gift of *An Affair with Grouse*, he inscribed it: "For LeJay, who has his own affair with grouse". I had fairly well given up hunting during the years that George knew me. I devoted what little free time I had to pursue my love of the outdoors through bird watching. To me, it had all the attributes of hunting without seasons and guns. Therefore, I could get out in the natural world anytime or anywhere.

I maintain a Life List of birds which I have identified in the field. Reviewing my list, there was a void in the many gamebirds in the lower forty-eight. As I looked at the list of twenty-three breeding gamebirds (I eliminated all migrants except the American Woodcock) recognized by the American Birding Association, I had not seen many of the western ones nor the northeastern Spruce Grouse. Many of these birds are barely holding on due to habitat loss or fragmentation of their breeding areas. With a good friend and birding buddy, Derek Courtney, whom many of you met at the 2015 Old Hemlock Reunion, we planned a trip west. We found Dusky Grouse, Sharp-tailed Grouse, White-tailed Ptarmigan, Greater and Lesser Prairie-Chicken, Gunnison and Greater Sage-Grouse, and several other gamebirds. Most of these we had the privilege watching on their lek in breeding season. For me, this ancient rite of spring was an amazing experience.

This past year I have had my own affair with grouse. My eastern nemesis has been the Spruce Grouse. This bird was once common in the north woods but is very easy to overlook and eludes many birders who seek it. They are very tame and may sit motionless while observers pass by just a few feet away. Due to the low numbers they are no longer hunted in their range of Maine, New Hampshire, New York, or Vermont. My search started more than twenty years ago in upstate Maine. Since then, I have searched in the Adirondack Mountains and Algonquin Provincial Park. This summer due to the generosity of invitations from Old Hemlock family who live in the Spruce Grouse range, I was able to continue my search with a good bird dog to assist me. Bob and Kandice Tuttle invited us to visit them in Rangeley, Maine. My preliminary research gave me some good leads within easy driving distance from their cabin. Willow found some Ruffed Grouse, but no Spruce. Bruce and Sue Buckley also invited us to visit them in Vermont. Some internet reconnaissance gave me a good tip to find the bird in the Wenlock Wildlife Management Area, on the Moose Bog Trail. I corresponded with a birder who had reported the Spruce Grouse just two weeks before we would travel through the area. The highway bisected the management area and the trail was very close the highway. Since we were traveling in the afternoon, I did not think there was much hope to find my quarry, but I thought I could at least find the trail and return at sunrise after an hour drive from Bruce's. We easily found the trailhead when, as we were preparing to walk, a van of young teens with an ecology guide arrived for a nature hike. I thought this would further diminish our chances. So we hiked and explored the opposite side of Moose Bog to give the younger explorers time to get on down the trail. When we returned, the van was still in the parking area. I put Willow on the lead since I was not sure where the teens would

be or how close to the highway we would be, and we set out. As we neared the end of the trail, the young naturalists were returning. We had a polite conversation about what they had seen, but no Spruce Grouse were observed. Keeping Willow on the lead, we walked to the terminus trail which was a board walk into the bog. It was literally a board walk consisting of alternating one and two 2x8 inch boards with a short 4x4 cross tie at the end. With each step, the boards would sink an inch or more into the fen. Willow was excited to be in probable grouse habitat; pulling on the lead more than usual. With precarious footing on the wet board walk, I released her on the return.

Within five minutes she was on point about twenty-five yards off the trail. I started toward her. She was in a mature stand of spruce, balsam and hemlock. There had been a dead fall opening the canopy, releasing the young understory to grow and create a small dense copse. Willow held, pointing into the thicket. As I approached, I heard the flush on the opposite side. It was not as forceful a sound as a Ruffed Grouse flush, so I was in hopes of my quarry. I have never trained Willow to stand to flush. Where we hunt in West Virginia there are so few birds, I prefer her to follow the flush. Soon she was barking about ten yards farther. This usually indicates a treed bird. I quickly located her

but could not see what was exciting her. As Helen Ann approached from the opposite side, I told her there was probably a bird in the tree and asked her help to locate it. Her first glance up found the bird immediately. As I relocated to look, the bird flushed again. It flew only a short distance to another spruce tree. We were able to follow the movement and quickly relocated him about fifteen feet above us. I hurriedly took some snapshots to record the bird. True to their nature this male Spruce Grouse was absurdly tame. He allowed me to walk around the tree while in plain sight, looking for the best angle and best light for another photograph. Willow got bored with my picture taking and went off to find another. Finally satiated with the experience and another Life Bird on my list, I walked away from the bird still sitting only a few short feet above my head.

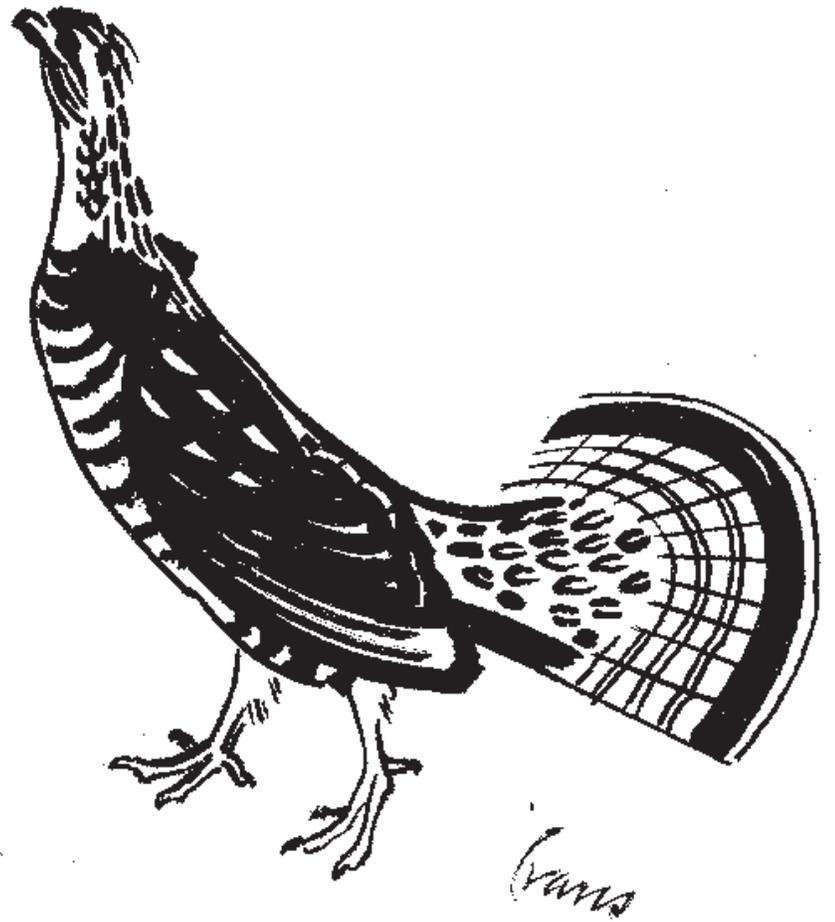
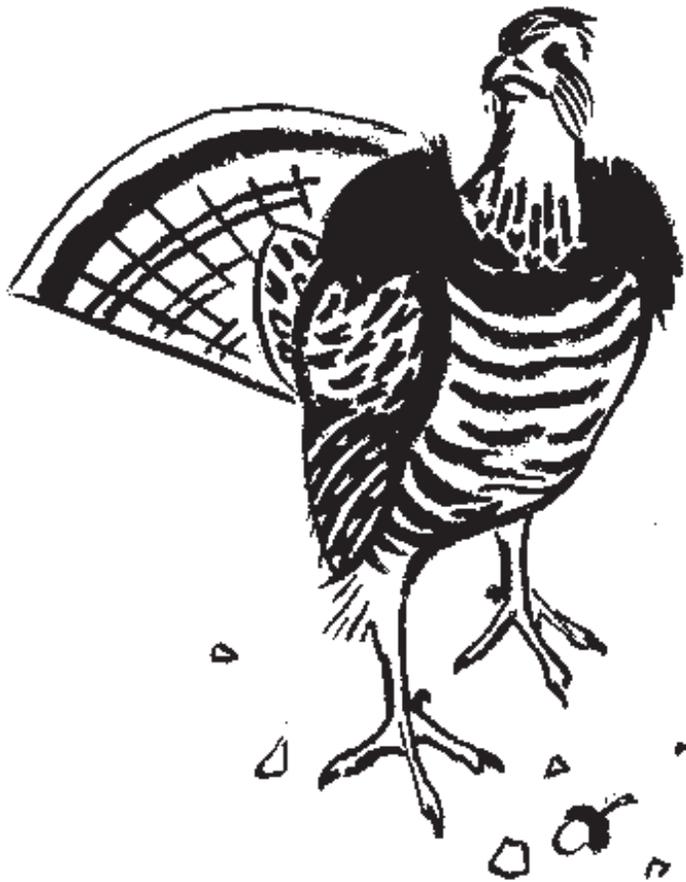
Rambling back to the trail with Helen Ann at my side and Willow off in the Spruce ahead, my mind wandered to George's words from *An Affair with Grouse*. Much as George had savored his own shooting life and the countless memories it gave him, I was savoring my own woodland experience. We had found this spectacular male in one of the few remaining coverts in the eastern US. And I left knowing that without a good setter at my side I might still be searching for this regal creature.



"The years can do good and bad for the shooting man. They can remove people from the land, rotting empty houses and turning old fields backward to regrowth that, during periods of transition, is a perfect setting for grouse and woodcock. "Progress" doesn't like this happening to good saleable acres, but in New England and the Alleghenies with their sleepy version of Time, thousands of square miles remain in this suspended state, removed from man and his bright ideas."

George Bird Evans Living with Gun Dogs 1992





A Bird Dog Adjusting to Retirement

By Mike McDonald

I am a fortunate sportsman, having never been forced to “retire” one of my setters – that is to say stop hunting them because of an accident, age, or infirmity – to watch others continue the chase that the retiree would give any number of their last days to be a part of. Thus far, all of my Old Hemlocks have hunted well into their best years. At times, some adjustments were made to the terrain and hours hunted, but in the end there were very few days they were not able to hunt with me.

At eight years of age, Flint shows no signs of Time or lingering maladies adversely affecting his stamina, range, or game. That said, adjusting to retirement is but a play on words for the dog because it is MY retirement that he must contend with. Beginning last April, Flint and I have been practically inseparable following my decision to leave behind my work-a-day life in order to pursue all the pleasures it robbed from me over forty-odd years. A decision like that is never made lightly considering today’s reliance on 401K planning vs. a pension, Social Security age qualifications, and the domestic responsibilities that never end. Nevertheless, I was determined to experience a life of no Mondays before I was incapable of exercising the option for which I had paid my dues. Months earlier I began tracking my final weeks behind a desk, at the wheel, or on a plane, with the confidence that with the next “bad day” I could simply walk away with little or no consequence. As it turned out I reached my declared date of departure without incident and slipped guilt free from bondage while still on good terms with my employer. At my request, there were no parties or long good byes; I just carried a small box of personal belongings to my truck and made exit to care free living.

This brings me to the real message of this piece and a surprise I had not anticipated. The intense distraction of spending so much time pleasing others had swindled me of the real treasures of life, not the least of which I am discovering through the eyes of a setter and the graceful ticking of “Time Enough”.

In those first few weeks of freedom I suffered startled wake-ups, certain I had over slept, and disturbing gaps of “unproductive time.” The silence

was deafening and I was slow to notice Flint’s constant shadow at my side. He followed me from room to room as puzzled as I by my presence at home in the middle of the day, every day. What happened to sleeping his day away in the kennel until I returned around 5:30 or 6, and those nights I didn’t appear at all and there was only Mom to walk him and on a leash at that? Why did I no longer rush his breakfast or skip his brushing in order to speed off in our truck, leaving him alone? Flint even began to lose track of weekends when he expected me to be home for the habitual lawn mowing that now took place on any random day. Every day now begins with a late breakfast and sharing of left overs followed by an easy schedule of activities with this man who’d always been in a hurry – not a bad trade - but still confusing. This would indeed take some getting used to for both of us.

Walks or rides in the truck no longer had to be planned and frequently side-tracked to visits with people Flint had never met – neighbors, local farmers, the clerk at the hardware store, and even other dogs. No more routine based on the day of the week or the hour of the day. Rushing to go anywhere or do anything was a thing of the past, and while it took some adjusting we learned to cope, with appreciative grace on both our parts. Flint had long been an anxious dog with some serious bouts of separation anxiety whether I was traveling to another state or simply on the other side of a closed door. Even when we were in the same room he always seemed to want to be somewhere else, doing something different. The waning of this habit was the most surprising for me. He began to lose his fear that I might leave him behind and he became a more relaxed and serious fellow. He would no longer jump from a sound sleep if I stood up from a chair. He no longer began whimpered if our eyes didn’t lock every fifteen minutes. No longer did he tremble when I so much as left to take out the trash. He was becoming as content with this new life style as I was. Even as I type this, Flint is lying on the sofa behind me in comfortable slumber, void of any fear that I might forget he is there or that I might slip away without him.

When my father retired and there was again "Time Enough", I watched as he and my mother "discovered" each other again after so many years raising the family and struggling to pay its bills. Like them I am experiencing the re-discovery of a presence that never left my side while I was too consumed to fully appreciate it. The turn-around is amazing and no doubt this old bird dog is enjoying retirement.

A friend warned me that retirement would require a lot of adjustment, and I thought he was only referring to me. I had not anticipated how Flint would react; setters always seem to catch on faster. Without "Monday" breaking the spell of

a couple days together you learn just how much closer you can become, man and dog. Did I say no more Mondays? Now when Monday comes and it doesn't matter, or any other day, there is no consequence because we have the Time and the choice to do as we please. There may still be times when some chore means leaving Flint at home, but we now get to decide when and for how long. There may also come a day when I must "retire" a dog from field work due to age or infirmity, but I will be a part of his or her retirement, not just making a decision of what's best for them, but rather what's best for us. To all my fellow retirees, enjoy it. To those yet to experience retirement, a great reward awaits you. Get there as soon as you can.



"The important thing with an old gun dog, as with an aging gunner, is that he must not give up and stop hunting, if only to go out for short afternoons. It is then that the barren coverts shot-out with too much pressure seem most bitter, for sharing a point is sharing a soul. But you go out anyway, together. As if he and you could be forgetting."

George Bird Evans Living with Gun Dogs 1992



Belton

Summer Happenings at Old Hemlock

LeJay Graffious

As many of you know George did not want Old Hemlock to become a museum, although his work to set up a non-profit with the lawyers would force us in that direction. Being an educator, I naturally began projects with school and college students about the lives of George and Kay. What better way to preserve the legacy they left? It was not until I met professor, Dr. Melissa Bingman, that I found out there was a name for this strategy, the Study House. She introduced me to Donna Ann Harris who wrote the book, *New Solutions for House Museums*. One of her chapters was totally about study houses. Today I believe Old Hemlock is an excellent model for this strategy. George and Kay's work and its preservation has become a living laboratory.

The first project of the year was with doctoral candidate, Kristen de Graauw. She used the known variation of annual growth rings of trees to sample and study the logs used to construct Old Hemlock, and compared them to an existing data set. This process of pattern matching is used to cross-date structures. She has found the logs of Old Hemlock were cut between 1814 and 1816. Through her dendrochronology project, of which Old Hemlock is just one of many structures, she will reconstruct pre-settlement forest dynamics within the central Appalachian region.

Our AmeriCorps member, Devin Scanlon, applied his research skills at the court houses in Preston County, Monongalia County, Charleston WV, and Richmond VA, to check records on construction at Old Hemlock. Even though we have been at various times part of two states and two counties, and there are a few blanks in the records due to court house fires, his research is showing the same time period.

Another example of how we are a study house is the WV Climate History Project. Lori Petruski, a graduate teaching assistant in West Virginia University's Division of Forest and Natural Resources, used Kay Evans's journals for her phenology project. Kay's journals provided information allowing her to piece together a baseline of when flowering plants bloom, and the emergence of birds and mammals. Lori wrote: "She kept fairly consis-

tent records of when spring and summer flowers bloomed at Old Hemlock between 1938 and 1996, and by reading through her journal entries dates of flowers blooming over decades can be compared. Her dairies provide excellent data to the West Virginia climate research."

We also continued the summer program for children, Curious Kids, started by AmeriCorps member, Eliza Newland. This year we put out the call for volunteer instructors and had a quality response. Three volunteers from the Monongalia County Master Naturalist program taught classes. Of these, two were doctors and the third was a soil scientist. We also had three elementary teachers and myself provide instruction. Each Wednesday, approximately 15 children ages 5-10 came to Old Hemlock. They cycled through three activities each time. Students learned about George and Kay with their interest in the natural world. Activities were about importance of soil, decomposers, honey bees, how pioneers needed to understand nature to survive, and the trees and bird life at Old Hemlock. This year's classes were about Curious Kids in the natural world. Next year we hope to add three more sessions, Curious Kids in History.

We are always looking for new ways to connect the public to George and promote his legacy. In the past we have had guests touring Old Hemlock who had an interest in art. They encouraged us to do an exhibit of George's work. Devin Scanlon seized the opportunity with another AmeriCorps member working at the Morgantown History Museum to showcase George's work in a temporary exhibit. George created the artwork on display for magazine covers, stories, and advertisements in the 1930's and 1940's. The exhibit will also include his sketches from his journal pages. The event was kicked off with a reception on August 13, and will run through November 10, 2015.

Something new for us this summer was a social event. The West Virginia Department of Natural Resources Commissioner David Milne contacted me about having their commissioner meeting at Old Hemlock. Our venue was too small for the fifty people that they expected, so it was decided to have an informal social the evening before

their meeting. They provided the catering and we provided tours of Old Hemlock. The new WV DNR Director, Robert A. Fala, was a reader of George's work and had corresponded but had never met him. Director Fala published a book which was a collection of his weekly Logan County News columns. In his book several sections were about George. We had the opportunity to share with decision makers thoughts about West Virginia hunting, George's philosophy of valuing the experience of the hunt over the quantity in the bag, and "Being Worthy of the Game".

There are way too many stories to share about visitors and activities at Old Hemlock this summer for a newsletter article. If you are interested in more news about happenings at Old Hemlock, please join our Old Hemlock Foundation Facebook page. As always, any member of the Old Hemlock Family is welcome and encouraged to visit. We enjoy sharing how George and Kay have touched so many through their legacy of words, setters, and this wonderful property with virgin timber and a marvelous old log home.



"Walking up our lane with Kay with our sugar maples sifting gold, I try to think what it would be like to see such a house with its boxwood, sleeping away its centuries under these giant trees in the dignity of solitude, and not possess it, and I grasp that Indian summer and all of this is just for Kay and the setters and me."

George Bird Evans A Dog, a Gun, and Time Enough 1987



Editor's Note

Recently I took a step that for me seemed unlikely; I registered for Facebook, for one reason only. Though I admit to being generationally challenged, I am not in the least reluctant to learn something new and explore distant horizons. Hell, at my age I'm going to be doing that soon enough whether I like it or not.

My reason was to become acquainted with a modern phenomenon embraced by many in the Old Hemlock family to one degree or another. This falls into the category of things I ought at least to be aware of as your editor. The question has arisen: does the Old Hemlock Letter still have relevance in this age of social media, where information and especially pictures are exchanged in real time? The question remains open.

Approaching Facebook with an open mind, I have concluded that my initial suspicions hatched before I knew what I was talking about have been mostly confirmed. Personally, I find it ranges between interesting and annoying. While certainly useful for timely exchanges of information and those wonderful puppy pictures, it is mostly an odd gumbo of trivia and sometimes worse. The Old Hemlock group category languishes practically unused. I don't pretend to understand why. There is nothing of a permanent record about any of it, so perhaps that doesn't matter.

The Old Hemlock Letter is no longer a "news" letter, if it ever was. While Facebook may have its uses, the Letter's purpose is to be a venue for extended and more thoughtful presentations of our current thoughts, our history and traditions, and for celebration of our setters and the legacy of George and Kay, without which none of this would matter very much. Mike McDonald understood this when he started the Old Hemlock Letter long before our current preoccupa-

tion with electronic distractions. It is his lantern that I follow in editing the Letter. The Letter is partially directed to those joining us who with the passage of years are increasingly likely to ask "George who?" or "Mike who?" But only partially. More importantly for all of us it serves as the only contemporary and lasting journal of who we are, where we came from, and perhaps where we are going. Someday somebody will care about that.

Personally I have never doubted the relevance and even importance of the Old Hemlock Letter, but mine is only one voice. If you are of like mind, I hope you will take keyboard in hand and support it with your memories of days when the leaves were golden, the birds were there, and all the setters brilliant. Many of those memories are as recent as today, and as exciting as the tomorrow we can see in the faces of our new puppies.

Who knows? Possibly one of those faces or something else you see or post on Facebook will inspire your own article.

We are grateful to those who already have contributed, and continue to. That group is smaller than it should be, and more loyal and supportive than we have any right to expect. They are the Old Hemlock Letter.

Another glorious autumn is upon us, and there are puppies everywhere. The Old Hemlock star shines brighter for it. Now if we can only get you to bring them to the Reunion in March.....



Bruce Buckley

"The sorcery of woodcock – dropping almost out of nowhere into remote coverts, bringing them alive for a few days, then vanishing – working their spell each autumn in places many times unseen by men, is a wonder I can never take for granted."

George Bird Evans Men Who Shot 1983

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