

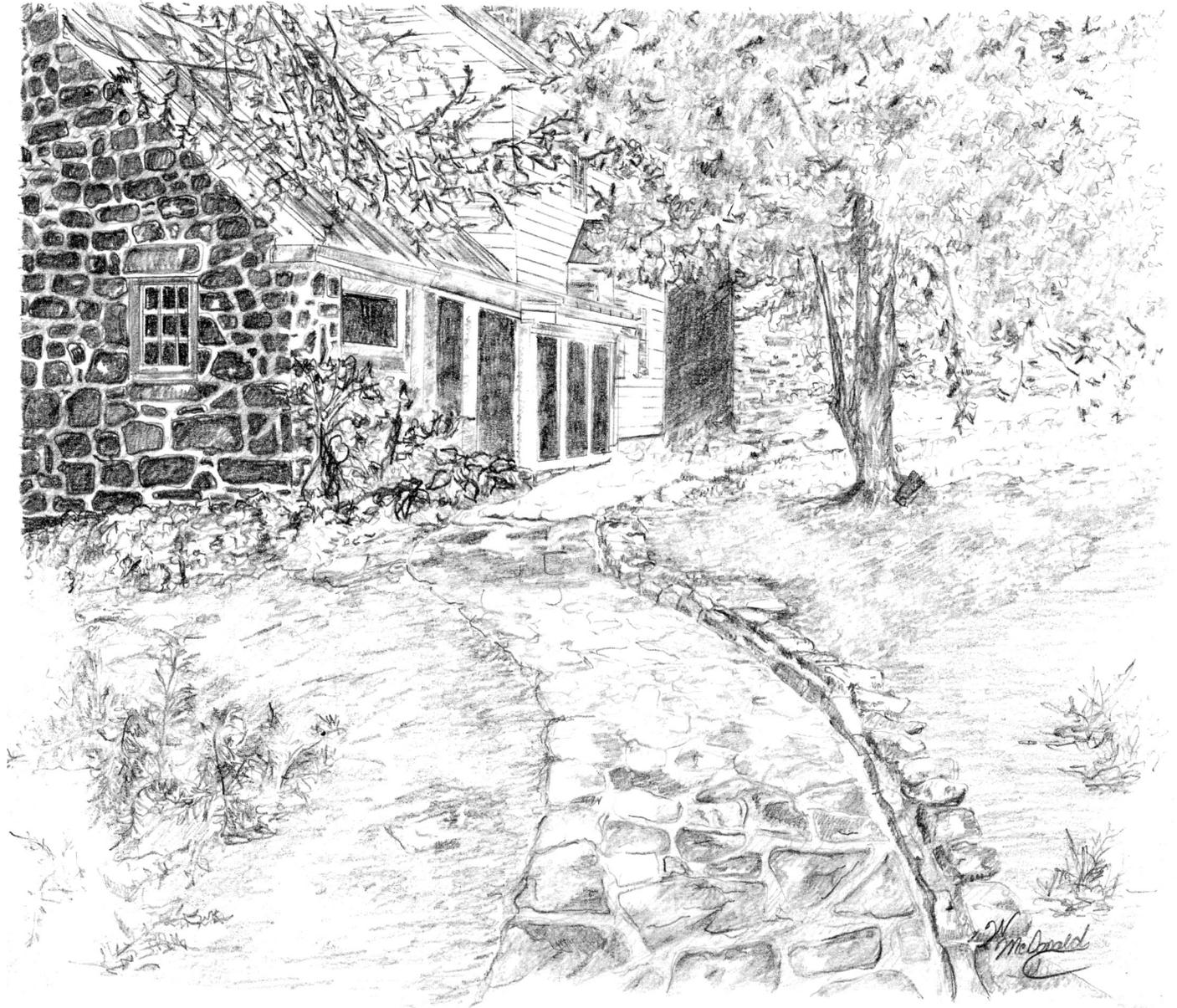


# Old Hemlock *Letter*

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September 2016



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



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*"A grouse and a brace of woodcock hang on the beyn-log wall of the porch in the sherry smell of leaves, and life as I would have it."*

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

# June Woodcock

Mike McDonald

We have always enjoyed and looked forward to hearing spring woodcock as they dance and peent to attract mates. Many of my shooting friends are unfamiliar with that tradition and pass off the buzzing call of a woodcock as a tree frog, cicada, or even a bad electrical transformer. I'm always pleased to educate them but the attempt is frequently, and not surprisingly, met with skepticism – local opinion holds that there is no way a bird could make a sound like that.

Along with their dance, we will occasionally find a woodcock nest or see their chicks. Such treats are rare and usually associated with spring training of a young dog, but there is little time to enjoy them as we hasten an over excited dog out of the area to avoid tragedy to both the chicks and our training session. This spring was to be different!

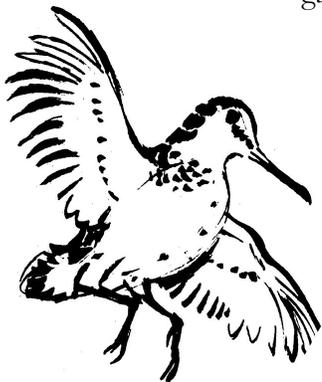
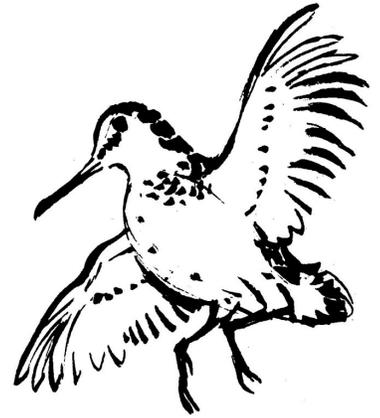
One evening in June, following as perfect a day as spring could afford us, I was tending to our backyard fire pit, preparing for dusk to ease into a good night for star gazing. I did a visual check of the yard for our setter, Flint, who is usually monitoring the affairs of our chipmunks or gray squirrels. Beyond the garden, I saw something in the grass which I first took for a mourning dove commonly seen in our yard just before dark. A second look called that into question, as

several smaller “doves” where gathered around. The larger one began *bouncing* and I quickly recognized that it was a hen woodcock and her chicks! I sneaked off to get Wendy to see this, and in the process rounded up Flint before he

could spoil the moment. It was a shame to rob him of this scent opportunity, but not with young chicks, although what would a little point hurt? Still, I had mamma's reaction to think about, lest she find no humor in his slobbering gaze.

From the kitchen window we were able to watch the parade undetected as it flanked the vegetables, 10X binoculars bringing the image right into the house. They passed sweet peas growing up the chicken wire, went between the pepper plants and rows of potatoes, then tangent to the wooden keg Wendy had planted with thyme. The woodcock family headed across the yard, mamma in the lead most of the time, followed by her brood which was continually shifting position, as if in doing so there was some advantage to be gained among the siblings. Mamma would stop occasionally to “bounce”, or better word “jounce”, up and down, which I thought to be some visual communication to her chicks as they reacted hurriedly each time she did it. Someone later suggested that it was a feeding ritual thought to bring out the earth worms. I'll give it a try next time I'm hunting night crawlers!

The woodcock seemed none too worried about the fire now blazing unattended in the pit, nor were they troubled by the tree swallows diving on them from the nesting box directly above them. Two chicks dived into a patch of tiger lilies, after bugs I assume, and then hurried back to join the rest of the family who showed no care about waiting for them. Next they came to the currant bushes, blueberries, and rhubarb – all laden



heavy with fruit and/or leaves and of no interest to a woodcock save for the cover they afforded. They darted behind each, paused, then marched quickly to the next. “March” is a fitting description for what we witnessed - mamma’s head nested tightly to her shoulders and placing one foot ahead of the other in rhythmic time with her little soldiers following smartly, albeit a somewhat disorganized squad of troopers.

Finally they reached the other side of the yard – a distance of approximately 150 feet – coming from thick woods and headed for more appropriate woodcock cover of mixed second growth aspens, sparse weeds, and the occasional pine sapling. The area had served as a log landing during the timber sale of our woods several years ago, but had always held dancing woodcock in the spring. It appears to attract them still, if for a different use.

The yard not empty with their passing, I apologized to Flint by taking him to the “scene of scent” which he headed for as soon as I opened the

back door. I’m sure he needed no help despite that he had chipmunks on his mind rather than woodcock. The change was immediate as he slammed into a two second point and then began trailing the woodcock path, led by genetics and breeding. I called him back before he could leave the yard and break up the family, although at this age the chicks can be masters of camouflage and the hen a convincing cripple, volunteering to be chased rather than see her brood harmed. It was a good evening for all.

I went back to my fire, Wendy to her Yankees game, Flint to the sofa and the woodcock family to habitat better suited to them than the backyard of a hunter and his setter. As I gazed at the flames and poked the coals, I contemplated what to do with this experience. Doubtful it will be repeated since that it happened at all was a small miracle, but it should not be wasted. Who better to share it with than the folks I know will appreciate it. It is my sincere wish that you do.



To the Old Hemlock family,

Kathy and I and OH Redd would like to express our appreciation to all at the Old Hemlock Reunion for the warm welcome we received there last March. It would be hard to think of a single thing I would change.

We would especially like to thank Bob Rose for taking the time to show us the ropes and introduce us to our many new family members ... what a great group!

The venue was perfect too. Food was plentiful and top notch. If I were younger, I would have stayed up later and talked to more people. It was a perfect opportunity for Redd too. The cover was excellent, birds flew well, and the guides were very friendly and accommodating.

What could change? ... a fourth day? ... twice a year? I would like to encourage all new members to attend next year's Reunion. You and your dog will enjoy it greatly. I know you will be warmly welcomed, too.

Kathy and I can't wait until next year.

Jim Cron



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*"The purist has never been understood by those who have let living get away from them."*

George Bird Evans An Affair with Grouse 1982

# Symmetry

LeJay Graffous

In the chapter titled Grouse Coverts I Have Known in his book The Upland Shooting Life, George Bird Evans writes: *“One of the most popular is the Dolly Sods – Dolly (Dable) a family name, Sods to denote the moorlike character of some of it. Accurately, Dolly Sods is a specific area but the name is commonly applied to the entire top of Allegheny Front, from the unpaved Laneville-Petersburg road north to Bear Rocks. The more applicable name for this region is Huckleberry Plains. It is in this high country that the connotation Allegheny Plateau really fits. From Allegheny Front, almost sheer on the east, the land rolls west in highland moors to the peaks of Cabin Mountain, where patches of spruce show like cloud shadows among the pattern of autumn color. This is grouse country but you must jeep or walk long distances, to get into it. The overall effect is bigness - big sky, big distances, big mountains showing beyond the edges of the plateau.”*

I started coming to Dolly Sods in 1976. At that time the area was free range. Cattle and sheep roamed the grassy balds and heath biomes helping to maintain grouse and woodcock habitat. After the area was designated a Wilderness Area, the grazers disappeared. I have studied Kay’s Kodachrome slides of George hunting here over Briar, Belton, Quest, and Manton. The trees and brush have matured so much that they would not recognize his coverts. I still enjoy wandering the ‘Sods with my Old Hemlock setters, retracing George’s and Kay’s footsteps.

Even though the weather was hot our first week this year, eight year old Willow and one year old Laurel searched the remaining islands of bird cover. The first four of twelve days Willow has logged 38 miles at an average speed on 4.58 miles per hour according to the GPS. With the exuberance of youth, Laurel nearly doubled her distance at an average speed of 6.75 mph. Willow uses her experience and memory to methodically cover the habitat while the

pup flies here and there. I enjoy watching her learn. Shortly after Willow goes on point, Laurel is there backing. If I do not get to her in time, her concentration breaks and she moves in following the scent. Then with the flush, her energy level jumps a notch or two. On day six Laurel located her first grouse unaided by her grandmother. The next day I reset my GPS and her average speed increased to 8.24 mph, although for the first 40 minutes it was 10.26 mph. I believe George would have enjoyed the current technology to log distances and times of each hunt. Although we walk daily on Old Hemlock, Laurel has never encountered gamebirds there. Now the desire to find a bird outweighs my need to have her tend to her bodily functions in the mornings so I get the bird banding station open before sunrise.

As I write this, I am sitting in a travel trailer on Dolly Sods. A light, consistent rain has closed the mist nets at the bird banding station where I usually spend my mornings. I look up as Willow stands and stretches; she changes position to create a mirror



image of her granddaughter, Laurel, on our couch. And I am struck by the symmetry of it all. I find it not just in the familiar contours and outlines of our beautiful setters on point, but in the threads that seem to weave through the lives of all our Old Hemlock family members and our extended family of those whose lives George impacted.

In his book, Grouse and Woodcock in the Blackwater/Canaan, George wrote of hunting with his setter, Bliss. As administrator of the Old Hemlock Foundation and caretaker of George and Kay's home and land, I often get to meet his readers. This summer I was contacted by a Michigan wildlife biologist who planned to attend our July Open House Tour. After a few emails, I offered him, his wife, and their setter Bliss our bedroom suite in lieu of motel accommodations. The biologist is an enlightened reader of George's work. He knew there had been an Old Hemlock Bliss. Upon their arrival I was with a small group giving the introduction to the Evans' house tour. I noticed a blue Belton setter at the double glass doors and immediately lost my train of thought. As I greeted our new guests, I said, "This must be Bliss." I picked up the pup and explained to the interrupted audience that this Bliss was the namesake of a past Old Hemlock. I carried her to a photograph on the wall of George hunting over his

Bliss and remarked that both were blues with right eye patches. The Michigan traveler had not realized until then the close resemblance the two English setters had, down to the eye patch. He thought it was karma. That evening our setters walked with us over the successional forests to the big hemlocks. We talked of George, setters, and common interests. An unexpected friendship was set in motion and now, like George before me, I look forward to new adventures, new coverts, and new memories formed in the Central Michigan wilderness Helen Ann and I have been invited to this coming season. Another window has opened to this son of a Pennsylvania coal miner though George and Kay.

*"I flew out several quail in a plantation of young spruce with clearings grown to briars, then brought Bliss and let her run off her edge in an area away from the birds, finally casting her toward them. As she approached where one had landed I snapped a short check cord on her and let her work into the wind. She hit scent, wheeled and pointed. I began stroking her from her head to the tip of her tail, starting with the other hand before the first hand left her. Although I held the end of the cord, I needn't have. Bliss was in a trance."*

George Bird Evans The Upland Shooting Life 1964





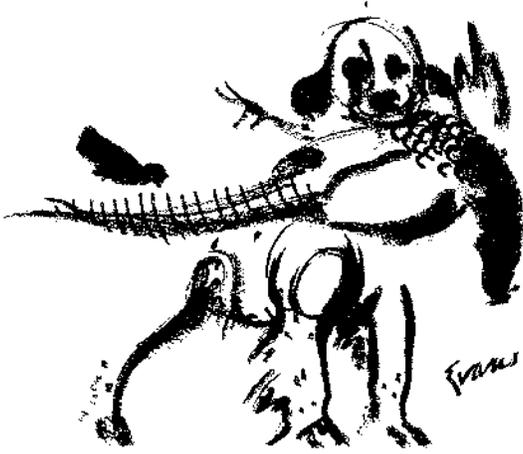
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*“You counter what is going to happen by clinging to the now, talking to them, touching them, doing small things that brighten their time between seasons. Our gun dogs teach us how to live, day by day.”*

George Bird Evans Living with Gun Dogs 1992

# A Winter Day's Hunt

Richard Baylor



Hunting diary:

February, 2014. Overcast, NE wind at 15 to 20, 12 to 15F, 12-18" fresh snow.

So...we were out after pheasants Monday morning, fairly deep snow in the fields in northern Ohio with temperature at twelve degrees and a nice breeze to put the chill down to zero. Casey and I are walking a sorghum strip; son Charlie and friend James are walking on ahead. Cold I bet, and after a couple hours they have about had enough and are heading to the Lodge at Elkhorn Lake. Casey and I have to keep hunting. Beautiful day and no quit in us yet.

I watch Casey work with a high head and strong gait,

quartering to my right. There is a row of tall pines twenty yards over and I figure a pheasant settled in them. That must be what Casey scents. I follow him off eastward to find out what he smells on that wind. We move through the pines - no bird - but Casey still quartering and head high, drinking in the scent. Onward, east into the wind and now an open field. Casey moves out some twenty yards and stops to look back for me. He looks at me as if to ask, "Are you still coming?" Casey and I converse often in the field about "where's the bird?" He starts quartering again, head high on the wind clearly working east in the same direction, staying within about a twenty yard band of field. Nothing but snow and cover grasses in front of us until a treed fence row about one hundred yards ahead. We move like this for some fifty yards or so and finally son Charlie is again following me. Casey is following scent and working so carefully in a line towards that fence row ahead.

Two hours earlier we had a pheasant volunteer from a point from Covey, Casey's son, and fly to that fence row. We have now arrived at the trees in the fence row and Casey hits a high head and tail point! I just stand and admire him and the skill that all those generations of Old Hemlock setters have passed along. Charlie circles to be with the wind at his back and moves in to flush the bird. The bird is nestled at the base of the tree, under the snow. There she goes and Charlie's shot centers the bird, a beautiful pheasant, and Casey retrieves his prize to my hand! Casey just walked scent well over one hundred yards and nailed the point. I can't say how much I love that dog. Watching him hunt with such ability and beauty is what George meant about these dogs. A Gun, a Dog and Time Enough always come to mind on days such as this one. Thank you Jim Recktenwald and Roger for honoring me with Casey! Briar, Manton, and True would be proud, but not more than I.

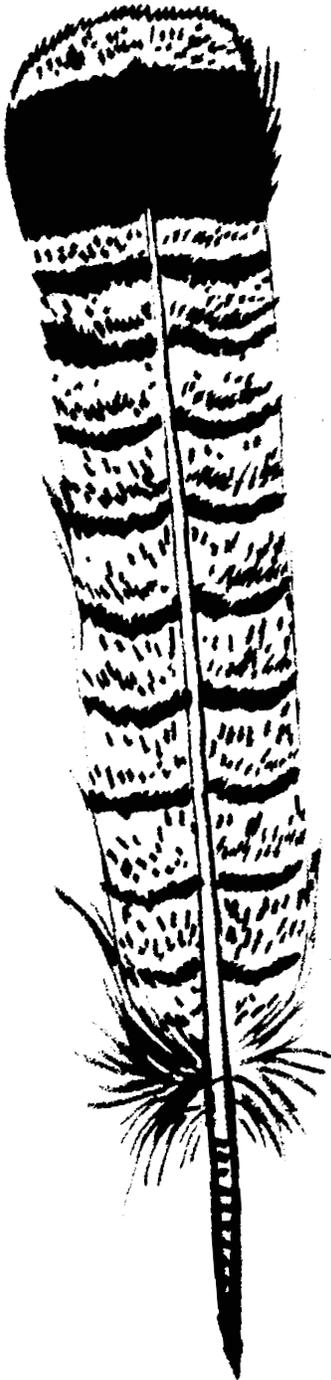
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*"Let your dog tell you something about range. If he is a worthwhile bird dog, you are in good hands."*

George Bird Evans Troubles with Bird Dogs 1975

# Confessions of a Breed Elitist

Maurice Lee



The names Old Hemlock and DeCoverly  
Have a special place in our hearts.  
To some our canines are quite lovely  
To others they produce a much too powerful bark  
...or possibly drool.

We're drawn closer to Dubbs and Apollo  
Many other people just stare and follow.

“That’s a wonderful dog they say”

But I insist

“No, my dog cannot come out and play”.

October comes with a colorful array  
Of birds to come and hunts that may  
Give us memories for a hundred years  
The majestic head, the floppy ears.

Still on walks they comment  
Of the beauty they know little about,  
“No it’s not a Dalmatian, no it’s not a Great Dane”  
Are you uneducated or just inane?

It's an English Setter we say proudly  
Upland hunting is what's it's all about, see;  
We live for times and places past  
Where life at its simplest form  
To us, worth millions cash.

They squint, they go on, with their questions ask  
Perhaps maybe someday, their Rover can play?  
A thank you, and a no, are the common themes  
Not even in your wildest dreams.

Have they ever wondered why we never say  
If their dog can "come out and play?"



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*"In that world where birds and dogs and guns possess us as much as we possess them, we who shoot know a beauty not given other men."*

George Bird Evans Living with Gun Dogs 1992



*“Wood ferns, once more frost-russet, have closed in over Briar’s grave under the hemlocks, embracing him with Ruff and Bliss. Briar is gone as far as he will ever go, if far is in my heart and my brain and everywhere on Old Hemlock and in those coverts he graced so gallantly.”*

George Bird Evans Men Who Shot 1983

# Early Encounters

Helen Ann Graffious

What's that clanging coming down our lane? What could it be? Our curiosity piqued, LeJay and I stepped onto our front lawn. Then appearing from among the trees came a beautiful prancing feathered setter, who we soon learned was the now famous Old Hemlock Briar. Then followed George and Kay, with beagle Bunny bringing up the rear.

As caretakers of the Preston County 4-H Camp, LeJay and I were Kay and George's next door neighbors, the camp being on the southern border of their property. Our first meeting occurred in May 1974. The Evanses appeared at our door after walking from the trailhead leading to their virgin hemlocks. They greeted us with the announcement, "We came to meet the new neighbors." Introductions were made, and we marveled at this curious couple - George in his safari coat with a pistol on his hip, and Kay with her khaki cap with a blaze orange ribbon over the visor and a jaunty pony tail tied with a silk scarf. We had seen beagles before, our families hunted rabbits with this breed, but the English setter was new to us. We had only seen them on television shows and in magazines.

As our friendship grew, we often were invited to Old Hemlock for a walk on the hill, followed by tea in the screened in porch or by the fire in the studio. As newlyweds, we were on a tight budget. LeJay had just purchased a wool toboggan from L.L. Bean to be ready for the winter season. When visiting Kay and George, we often laid our coats and hats on the studio

settle just inside the door while we enjoyed refreshments and conversation with the Evanses. As we bundled up to leave this day, the discovery was made that Briar had gnawed a 50 cent piece sized hole in the new hat! Kay lamented, "Oh Briar!" followed by George commenting "Well, boys will be boys!" Kay graciously offered to mend it, which she expertly did.

LeJay still has and treasures the toboggan with Kay and Briar's handiwork, and to this day we often repeat George's quote whenever a puppy chews a valuable item.



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*"In a shooting life, it is permanence we yearn for."*

George Bird Evans Grouse on the Mountain 1994

*Ian Gray, whom many of you have met, is the third AmeriCorps volunteer to serve at Old Hemlock while continuing post graduate studies. Their contributions to the discovery, recovery, and archiving of Old Hemlock history have been significant. Ian's term ended recently, and he leaves with our thanks and gratitude.*  
Editor

## Reflections

Ian Gray

*"It is pleasant to hope when Kay and I are no longer gunning Old Hemlock setters will keep our ideals alive."*  
George Bird Evans Troubles with Bird Dogs 1975

Most days when I head into the "office," the first thing to do is reach down and greet the black and white ball of energy called Old Hemlock Mountain Laurel that runs to the front door. While serving with a pair of dogs is a soothing experience and an incredible perk, it also stands as a metaphor of the unique legacy and nature that makes Old Hemlock so special. Many places claim it, but we at Old Hemlock can truly say that our history is alive.

The proverbial "click" when this realization came, and all the facets of Old Hemlock fit together, happened fittingly enough at Hunting Hills amid the sights and sounds of the Old Hemlock Reunion. For three days, the sounds of joyous conversation, the sharp crack of gunshots, and collective barking from dozens of Old Hemlock setters eager to hit the field and find the waiting birds came at me from every angle. Having never even held a gun, much less embarked on a hunting trip, being able to simply follow the dogs and owners into the field was an eye-opening experience. The bond between gunner and dog, the beauty of the slender setter on point, the exhilaration of a productive shot and subsequent retrieve, and so many other things described so eloquently in the pages of George's writings were now before me in living color. In each dog rested the legacy of the man and woman who so carefully bred the line, and the equally carefully selected owners who carry on George's view of hunting and

respect for the game. While we are blessed at Old Hemlock with the natural beauty around us and a literal house full of artifacts to tell the story of George and Kay, the real legacy and best storytelling tool will always remain the setters and owners who gather at the Reunion.

As everyone reading this knows, at every Reunion stories of times spent with George and Kay, their writings, their legacy, and most numerous, the line of setters, can be heard around the tables and out in the field. The history that the Foundation was established to preserve rests in the hearts and minds of the Old Hemlock family and is something no physical object can fully capture or convey. Thankfully, the first AmeriCorps member at Old Hemlock, Eliza Newland, realized the same thing and many of you shared with her the experience of sitting down for an interview and adding to the archive of anecdotes, thoughts, and feelings that were alive in the oral tradition but had never been written down or recorded. At the most recent Reunion, I got the chance to try my own hand at adding to this already rich archive and further connect to the past I had been exploring for the past few months.

First and foremost, talking to the interviewees brought the subject and history squarely into the present. The interviewee's testimony made memories of George and Kay, the setters, and past Reunions seem as if they had happened only yesterday. I was brought back to the



moments shared by the interviewees that conjured warm feelings of fond embraces, and at one point a few tears of joy, and felt in some small way that I had gotten to meet the people behind the wonderfully written books I had been reading the past few months. Beyond the figurative aspect of the past existing in the present, each interview made clear the story of Old Hemlock has yet to end. As members of the Old Hemlock family aptly demonstrated, the writings of George and Kay, the line of setters, and the annual Reunion continue to carry on their memory and have ensured that legacy will not die anytime soon. The Old Hemlock Foundation's mission is to preserve and promote the legacy of George and Kay and it benefits immensely from that legacy being more than static objects and writings. It is a group of people and a line of setters that continues to grow with every new litter and owner. With this archive of interviews lying at my fingertips, the natural next step was to get the content out of the archive and into the public sphere.

When asked how to grow the Old Hemlock family and spread the legacy of George, Kay, and the dogs, one word was repeated more than any other: internet. In my mind, the best way within the umbrella of the internet to get the word out was obviously the creation of a YouTube channel for the OH Foundation. A few months after the initial idea, the channel is off to a great start with over thirty short clips that cover some of the more important aspects of Old Hemlock's history. Through the voices of many who are reading this very article, viewers are introduced to the history as if they are sitting around a table at the Reunion enjoying an entertaining conversation, complete with the cacophony of barks

in the background. It may not be the equivalent of actually walking around Hunting Hills for three days, but what will always stick in my mind from my time both back in March and the eight months I've been privileged to work here are the people. Hopefully, the welcoming digital faces on the web may bring a few more real faces to the family, and spread the history to many more in the meantime. For myself, the process of creating what turned out to be my main focus during my time here was like a continuation of those three days in the Pennsylvania countryside.

Each time I hear and see the voices and faces on the screen, faces that went from strangers to incredibly welcoming and good natured people over the course of the Reunion, the tales told became more and more like conversations shared in the relaxed atmosphere of the Reunion rather than files on some hard drive. Each clip shed new light on the multi-faceted story we celebrate here at Old Hemlock, and put it in words that seem to be inspired from the pens of George and Kay as they look down on what they would be proud to call their legacy. As George poignantly stated in his book, *An Affair with Grouse*, "Some men tell of beauty, speak of grace. I tell of grouse dogs that enriched me beyond measure and made me glad."

Thanks to that intimate love for the setters and his tireless efforts to perfect the line, the Old Hemlock Foundation has itself been enriched beyond measure by the dogs that still bear the breeders mark, and the owners who carry on a living memory that shows no signs of fading. As I wrap up my time here at Old Hemlock my hope is that I've been able help in some small way, as George stated, "to keep those ideals alive."



# Minnesota Summers with Three Girls

Jim Recktenwald

Over the past two weeks we have had days that didn't get above 60 with nights at 34 degrees, and then the past few days have been in the 90's with muggy nights in the 70's. However, between having the house remodeled and training the dogs we are busy. Having three generations of English setters in the household is interesting. Each of them needs attention and each is different.

Becasse, who at ten plus years loves to hunt and train but no longer wants to go for long walks, will readily swim with me. She prefers a cool place to rest during the day and will let Thatcher, her granddaughter, know that she doesn't appreciate her getting too close. However, there are days when she engages the little one in some wrestling in the yard. Becasse's nose is still keen and she will point birds twenty plus yards away when we are training, but she is moving slower.

Patches McNab, at almost seven, has become the guardian of the yard and will chase everything that enters her domain. She also will hold point until we come get her which is problematic since she believes that her yard extends through our neighbors' three acre yards, or Iowa, which is further. Without a doubt she is still the best retriever I have and has learned to be rock solid with her points. Thatcher will follow her everywhere if allowed, and we try to give Patches special attention.

Thatcher, at eight months is a joyful handful. She awakens me every morning at 4:30 to go outside and be fed. She is a chatterbox and uses a high pitched

chirp to let me know she is ready for the day to begin. She will try to chew and swallow everything she can, including the remote control. She has learned that she can feed from the counters when Barb is not looking. She is our drama queen: a spanking normally leads to her raising her front left paw and whimpering. After a hug and tummy rub she is back doing mischief. We have lost five pairs of slippers due to our inability to remember to place them where she can't find them. As bad as she is, she still hasn't eaten my wallet, as Becasse did, or a sofa (Patches McNab). I am taking her training slowly after Raz Sisler gave me some pointers at the Reunion. She is pointing pigeons and the sound from my blank pistol doesn't faze her. When we tape the pigeon's wings, she still doesn't want to retrieve them but she is mouthing them. Today for the first time she brought to hand the retrieving dummy, three straight times. I was elated. She is a better swimmer than her mom and I think as the summer progresses she will catch Becasse. I hope by August she is comfortable with shotguns.

To prepare for next year we are getting in shape by swimming five days a week, three of which are in open water. We are starting to set up hunting trips, and I hope that both Tom Bowman and Rick Baylor will be heading to Wisconsin or Minnesota this fall. We just learned today that all three girls will be going to South Dakota in late October with me, and I am looking forward to it. We need to start looking for southern hunting venues January forward, and any suggestions would be appreciated.

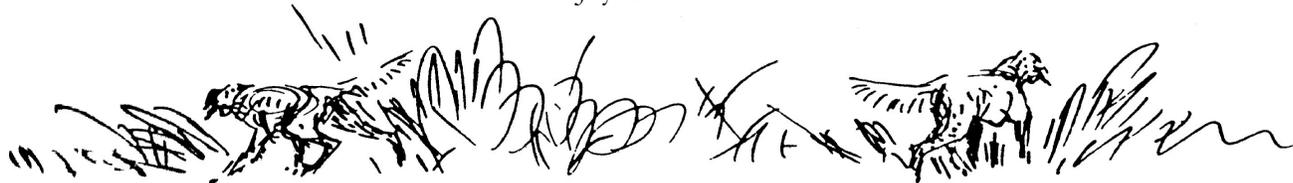
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*"The man who goes out with a gun without tradition is as impoverished as the man who goes out without a dog."*

George Bird Evans Upland Gunner's Book (Amwell 1986)

# *Old Hemlock Setters: The Legacy of George Bird Evans*

LeJay Graffious



On August 27, with the publication of the current issue of *Pointing Dog Journal*, the video *Old Hemlock Setters: The Legacy of George Bird Evans* becomes available to the public. This video, I believe, is an excellent representation of the history and development of the Old Hemlock line, Roger's current breeding program, and the family atmosphere attached to our setters. This twenty-seven minute feature is the culmination of a collaboration of many individuals. The production was a new experience for me and I have learned much during the process. I know if I were to start it today, it would probably be a different product. I do not think that lessens its value to the legacy of George Bird Evans though. I am very proud to be able to share this production with the world and future generations.

In 2007, I pondered creating videos to illustrate the legacy of George and Kay. I thought I would do several topics such as his setters, his writings, his illustrations, their lives at Old Hemlock, and the Old Hemlock Foundation. After George's death in 1998 I had a call from Craig Kulchak. We discussed his interest in doing a public television-type documentary on George Bird Evans. Nothing ever materialized from this.

The Old Hemlock setter is central to my and Helen Ann's life. Even though Roger is the line's owner, I often field inquiries about our setters. So with the support of the Foundation's directors the process began. With notes from Roger, I met with a production company and realized that I needed much more material.

Thanks to Craig Kulchak for story-boarding and scripting the first chapter of the video about the history of the line, and to Hall Carter for stepping up with a script for chapter two on our setter breeding. Hours were spent going through the archives at Old Hemlock, scanning pictures and editing photos to send to Craig to illustrate his script. Chapter three is comprised of unscripted interviews of Old Hemlock family members at the 2014 Reunion. Julie Olinger and Jay Jelliff of Flying Arrows Productions were great resources and very patient with my inexperience. Julie's ability to edit and to find public domain music was a godsend. Jay did a professional job narrating.

I cannot begin to thank all of the folks who provided me and the Foundation with support during the long production time. I did fail to credit Walt Lesser for providing two photos used in the video. I believe I have provided a disc copy to all who helped or were part of the process. If I have missed your contribution, please let me know.

One of the Foundation's purposes, beyond preserving the legacy of George and Kay, is to share the Old Hemlock philosophy with young hunters. We also strive to share the story of the Old Hemlock setter.

Please feel free to share the video link from our web page with all your friends, and if you would like DVD copies to share with friends and possible future Old Hemlock owners, just email ([video@oldhemlock.org](mailto:video@oldhemlock.org)) with names and addresses.

*"Woodcock make romantics of those of us who love them."*

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

## Editor's Note

Another autumn with its bittersweet promise is upon us. The joy and anticipation of the coming upland seasons and the prospect of puppies is tempered, as it always must be, by a sense of inevitable loss.

**Old Hemlock Tsuga** - Josh and Hayley Frazier

**Old Hemlock Lucille** – Geoff and Susan Jones

**Old Hemlock Blackwater** – Jeff and Kendra Kauffman

**Old Hemlock Osthau** – Rick Losey

**Old Hemlock Jake** – Paul Swartwood

We are diminished by their loss, but greatly enriched by their having passed among us.



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The 2017 Old Hemlock calendar is now available, and a fine job it is. The potential of the calendar is really limited only by the quality and variety of photographs LeJay has to work with.

His early plea for good high resolution photos from the OH family frankly went just about unanswered. This need not be. We all take pictures of our setters, many of us lots of them. Unfortunately for the calendar, most are snapshots far from calendar material.

The obvious and best way to improve our calendar is to contribute more and better pictures. Doing this will almost guarantee yours will be used, and also enhance the variety of seasonal settings and backgrounds.

There are some requirements. Pictures must be of high enough resolution to retain image quality when enlarged to calendar size. This is a complicated subject, but if you have a 4 megapixel or more camera you can probably make good enough images technically. Many cameras have several resolution settings. Most folks choose not to set to the highest because that results in fewer images saved in the memory. But that setting is exactly what's needed for this project.

Many snapshot (or worse, smartphone) cameras have only a very wide angle lens. With rare exceptions this is not the way to get good pictures, other than for casual snapshots. Just look at the awful distortion of the close-ups of dogs and faces people post on Facebook all the time. Do not stick a wide angle lens in your dog's or your friend's face if you want them to look good.

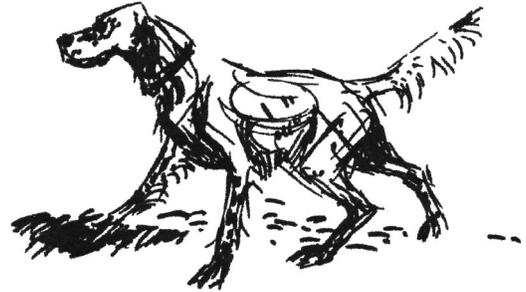
The market has many incredibly capable cameras with excellent optical variable lenses that are still light and compact enough to hunt with and priced between the limited if convenient point-and-shooters we all have and the big money digital SLRs that are usually too heavy and expensive for our purposes.

How to creatively use available light and composition are subjects beyond the scope of this discussion, but I can tell you the single best thing you can do to improve your hunting dog shots whether points, portraits, or

action, is get your camera low – down at the dog’s level, cover permitting. Take a look at Steve Shaluta’s professional work in recent calendars and see for yourself the difference that makes. Having a variable or “zoom” lens is essential for composition under field conditions.

So here is another mission for this hunting season. Making really good pictures and gunning at the same time is not impossible, but is a difficult goal at best and frustratingly impractical. Use a suitable camera if you have one, or upgrade. Take advantage of opportunities to leave your gun in the truck for a covert now and then, and go along purposefully using your experience and imagination to focus on getting a great shot or two. Those occasions when social hunts tend to put more guns in a covert than really belong are perfect picture making opportunities. Gunless hunts with little puppies or after bags have been filled offer perfect opportunities, too.

Warning: This activity can become habit forming: the high and the memories last a lifetime.



Thanks to all who make the Old Hemlock Letter possible, with special thanks to Wendy McDonald whose fine sketch is this issue’s cover.

The Letter and the broader Old Hemlock effort are defined by our willingness to contribute where and what we can.

I hope your fall season is everything your setters have been dreaming about for ten months.

Bruce Buckley



*“October, a time to take a dog and a gun and go.”*

George Bird Evans (personal book inscription)

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