



The Old Hemlock Letter

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



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Greetings;

No new litters planned for this year - not the best way to start an OH Letter. But, the good news is that Mike Krol's Dream has had a season and Mike will be doing OFA on her. We hope to breed her to Rex, Time Enough or Casey, if they pass their OFA as they will turn two years of age in July. I will keep everyone posted as these things proceed. We are walking the dogs attempting to take off some of the weight gained while the dog sitter is feeding them as we take parents to their doctor appointments at the Cleveland Clinic and Columbus. This spring has been very wet and the prospects are even worse for Ohio than usual. Thank goodness I am retired and can travel for some bird hunting.

Best

Roger

2011 Old Hemlock Reunion By Helen Ann Graffious

The 13th OH Reunion began a day early at Roy and Sally Sisler's Hunting Hills in Dilliner, Pa. So many "early birds" came the beginning of the week, an extra day was added for our hunting enthusiasts. Many come in for a week, to socialize, shoot clays, and visit Kay and George Evans' Old Hemlock house in Bruceton Mills, WV. Our dedicated owners often travel long distances to join the hunting camaraderie of the "OH Family." We see vehicles from Maine, Ohio, Mass., Pa., N.C., N.Y., and N.J. just to name a few.

The weather gave us showers, torrential downpours, cold, wind, snow, and finally a perfect 52 degree sunny Saturday!

We had dogs of all ages from 10 month old pups to 13 year old OH Flight (Bruce and Sue Buckley) who in her age and wisdom still captured the success of the hunt. All total was 46 people and 33 OH setters.

Of note was an entertaining water retrieve by OH Bluet and her master Roy Sisler. Tom Bowman "purposely" shot a chukkar which landed in a small pond. Two year old Bluet circled the water twice before following Roy into the

knee deep water for the retrieve. Kudos to Roy for not giving up in the face of freezing water and no boots!

Thanks goes to Bob Rose for organizing this yearly event and to Roger Brown for supervising the new breedings, giving us a wonderful selection of new pups. As Kay once said, "Look at all the Manton imposters." Roy and Sally are gracious hosts, and Ras and their knowledgeable guides have given us many valuable tips and suggestions, as we seem to learn something new every single year. For sale this year are copies of the eight GBE prints that adorn the studio wall at Old Hemlock. Price is \$15.00 plus postage and are still available to Old Hemlock Family members.

At the end of our hunt, grilled steak called us to the lodge for our final meal. While we feasted, Sally Sisler observed a lone chukkar walking thru the parking lot, the dogs so weary; she heard only a single yelp to acknowledge the end of a successful day.

We are proud of our OH Setters. We strive to be good masters and better trainers. We had many beautiful points and retrieves, but as Roger Brown once told me, "dogs are like children, they're not good every day." But we love them always, and for the most part, a companion like no other, for in the words of Gertrude Stein, "I am I because my little dog knows me."

Submitted by Helen Ann Graffious, owner of her very first dog, OH Black Willow.

P.S. Never give your dog more attention than your spouse, unless you like sleeping in the DOGHOUSE.



News from Old Hemlock

by LeJay Graffious, OHF Director and Administrator

Ah, springtime at Old Hemlock! I receive great pleasure in observing winter transform into summer. As many of you know, Kay maintained a daily diary. She would record when natural events occurred such as when is the best time to look for Lady Slippers, or when to look for what George called "Water Azalea" with its wonderful aroma. Helen Ann and I would often get a call from Kay saying that they felt this would be the best time to look for a certain wild flower. We would meet and walk the area searching. We had grand times talking and sharing the natural world while OH Setter's bells rang. Sadly, many of the plant stations have disappeared. I believe mainly for two reasons, forest succession and deer. The deer population on Old Hemlock was too large on the habitat. The deer damage on OH has continued to increase steadily since George's death. They have over browsed the understory. Most of the spring wildflowers that Kay, George and I would annually check for are gone. When I do find one now, I put a wire cage around it to protect it. The understory consists mostly of plants that deer do not like: poison ivy; ferns; and spice bush. To help conserve these plants enjoyed by the Evans's and with the support of the directors, we harvested twenty-six deer on Old Hemlock's 230 acres. We are still seeing deer almost daily and have found fawns this spring. This reduction should help some of the understory regenerate.

This winter I was invited to participate in a study on Golden Eagles in the Appalachians. There is an eastern race

of Golden Eagles that nest in eastern Canada. Biologists think 80% on these birds winter in West Virginia. The project entailed setting up a trail camera that was baited with deer carcasses throughout the mountains in West Virginia and Virginia. I was given savage permits by the Department of Natural Resources to collect deer for the project. The eagles like small (approximately 100 feet x 60 feet) openings in high ridges to feed. Since we do not have any such locations on OH, I set the site on the neighbor's farm on an old coal strip mine. Even though I did not photograph any Golden Eagles, I did get many photos of critters that I have seen on Old Hemlock. If you are interested in seeing some of these animals which are not high quality photographs, I put some on our website. The address is oldhemlock.org/PhotoAlbum/TrailCam2011.

What other things are happening at Old Hemlock? The new meeting room, public restroom, office and caretaker quarters are close to being complete. We hope to have the structure totally complete by mid-July. Then we start the landscaping process and improvements to the lane.

I continue to work with the West Virginia University Public History Department, WVU Center for Civic Engagement and WVU Library Archives. The Public History instructor uses Old Hemlock as a study house to give students experiences in writing interpretive plans and archiving. We plan in the future to have rotating displays to highlight George and Kay's Life and Works. The Center for Civic Engagement creates a contact point for me and students to interact on for projects that benefit Old Hemlock and students. Examples are: students come to Old Hemlock to help with projects such as trail maintenance for community service hours; or for projects for classes. The past semester a business student and I worked on a policy manual including policies required by government agencies for non-profits and policies required by our commercial insurance underwriters. The WVU Archives is a great resource for information and photos about West Virginia. Check out the Old Hemlock web site for a link to see photos on-line of the Evanses. They would like to publish George's shooting journal on-line. They are looking for resources to do this. I think this would be a great way to highlight George. There is also interest in re-publishing some of the GBE's books or creating a new book highlighting his writings, reprints of journal pages and photographs. This interest is coming from more than one institution or source. The Old Hemlock Family members and readers could help by giving to me ideas on what books should be republished or what you like to see included in a new book. All of this is in the planning stage. Any input from you would be valuable. Input is always appreciated to help make the web page more valuable to our family, too.

Another method to maintain contact among Old Hemlock Family members is through FACEBOOK. Mark Hitsman took the initiative to set up an Old Hemlock group. This is a great way to maintain socially and with light conversation about Old Hemlock Setters and what are friends are up to. Currently, this is a totally open environment for anyone interested. The site is monitored by Roger Brown, Mark Hitsman and me. Feel free to contact us with any questions or concerns.

As I write this, the first day of summer is only a few days away. Every season brings new dimensions to Old

Hemlock and I enjoy each one. Summer also brings more visitors to Old Hemlock. We will have house tours for the public on Saturday, July 16. The local historical society and WVU students help with the tours and security. In 2010, we had 259 visitors during the course of the year at OH and well over a million hits on the web site. Many of guests were readers of George or locals who had know them. Many commented that they were pleased the house was maintained as when George and Kay lived. Several folks said that they felt the presence of this couple and expected them to walk into the room at any moment. As always, Old Hemlock is open to family members and their dogs. Your visits and stories about George and Kay always bring new dimensions to the Foundation.



Long Ride In the Saddle by Bill James

It was a long ride to Morgantown, West Virginia. But it always is, and many Old Hemlock Family members are logging just as many hours in the saddle or more than Robin and I.

However, the long-ride-pains quickly go away at Hunting Hills with all the old friends and many new faces this year. I'm lucky Robin does a lot of the driving while I dream away about puppies and gardens in the future. We only had vacation time for 1 extra day this year, so getting around to meeting the many new faces was hard, and I didn't get to meet everyone. I'll work harder at this next year.

From reports I heard, the new members and pups did very well and will be strong additions to our family. After a very long and cold winter coupled with deep snow, my two pups were more than rusty. They usually have weekends outside to run the property, as I pntter with wood and such.

This winter had me cautious of those long legs on Blackberry, so both he and Blue were limited. I didn't want any twists or tears or worse. It had been some time since my annual X-MAS morning hunt, but they hit the ground running at Hunting Hills and made nice points. They loved every minute. In the afternoon, they again did very well. Bruce Buckley traveled the afternoon field with us, and I had asked him for advice on Blue. Blue's last Vet appointment found him down in weight, and had me pretty nervous. All of the tests proved ok, and I made a food change on this 9 year old and got a few pounds back on him. I thought he was finally looking better and my fears were set to rest when Bruce gave me his blessing. Blue still has some fine tuning to do on Blackberry and I'm hoping for many more seasons in the NEK with Blue and Blackberry.

What I really enjoyed was walking behind Jim Jones with Pilot, and Jack Kearns with Brooke. Along with Jeff and Kendra we all watched these new family members give Hunting Hills a run. And a great run they treated us to - Jim and Pilot seemed like they were old hands at Hnnting Hills. What took me by surprise was Pilot as I had not seen this young pup since puppy day at Jeff and Kendra's home. I had shared with Jim that I was not sure if I would be able to pick out Blackberry or Pilot at a distance. They not only look similar in appearance but their style and movement seemed identical. Only with those Hemlocks! Next we walked with Jack and young Brooke. Darnn if that Brooke didn't get into my heart with her first sight of the field. Brooke did a great job in the field and Jack had her even stronger at the end of her run. Two more proud Family members and fine looking Old Hemlock Dogs.

I never would have believed Robin and I would be so lucky in being part of this family and seeing such a beautiful group people and, of course, what brings us together, our dogs. I'm always prond to say I'm a member of the Old Hemlock Family. We have been fortunate to have had our Timber, from the Catlett's Ice Storm litter, and now our new pup, Blackberry, from Jeff and Kendra's OH Blackwater. Our first trip without Timber to the reunion which was sad for me, but those two clowns, Blue and Blackberry, made sure the long ride from Vermont was more than worth the time in the saddle.

Next year, I hope to walk with others and see new adventures. Somehow we need to slow that Roger Brown down. He goes with every group and eats on the run, so he has the feel for where the line needs to go.



A New, Old Hemlock Book
by John McGranaghan

Please send to:

John & Toni McGranaghan
96 Merrinack Road
Amherst, NH 03031

And call with questions and input: 603-620-7025

We encourage all of you to send John and Toni your pictures and stories of life with Old Hemlock Setters. Become a part of this Family history – extending your enjoyment as members by sharing it with us.



Many of you know already via email and I imagine through conversation as well...Toni and I are very happy to be in the development stages of designing and publishing a high quality coffee table book that is photo heavy, but that will also contain, quips, quotes, anecdotes, stories and history of our four legged friends both stationary at hearth and moving in field. The idea is to have a book that many will enjoy both within and possibly without the Old Hemlock Family.

Our starting point is to gather up photos and descriptions and such and then go from there. And, to include a brief history borrowed from existing sources, along with new if possible, juxtaposed against where we are now with the Old Hemlock line and Roger's vision for the future.

Many have already sent materials, but there are many who have not. The more the merrier, as they say. So, we encourage whatever participation possible; digital pictures on CD or DVD media, thumb drives or even email—although the best is high quality full sized digital photos with descriptions and stories to go along.



Editor's Note:

Missing an Old Hemlock Reunion is a depressing thing. Of the 13, this is only the second time I have been unable to attend – both related to the career balance that George warned us about. I don't think Flint noticed and we made up for it with an outing of our own, once those other responsibilities were out of the way. The rain reported from Waynesburg helped curb the disappointment some, but then weather never dampened a reunion before and so we still missed seeing that “sea of setters.” I appreciate Helen Ann providing a reunion report for this issue – and a fine one it was. Me thinks she has been hiding her writing skills from us and I know you look forward to more from her just as I do. And, Bill James is no slouch at the key board – his contrasting focus on the training aspect had me regretting not seeing some fine performances.

Roger shares hopeful news on the breeding front, if not this year, with the Krol family's desire to step up to the plate again, once OFA proves out. Mike and Merely have raised some fine OH litters and I have no doubt they will again. Having been part of their first and watching several others since, the experience has been gratifying for me, I can only imagine how they feel.

LeJay keeps us posted on the happenings at Old Hemlock – what fine job he and the Foundation are doing preserving the Evans homestead and promoting their ideals in both literature and art. Be sure to include a visit to OH on your “Bucket List”, perhaps more than once...you'll need it in order to fully appreciate what they have done and are doing.

Many of us are, no doubt, deep into summer shooting sports. I encourage those who don't, to give it a try – great way to wait out the season while improving shooting skills at the same time. Find a local gun club that offers Trap, Skeet and/or Sporting Clays and try a few practice rounds. Club members are always happy to start new shooters on their way and the clubs could use the support. I will warn you though, busting pottery can become addictive! Trap is my personal choice, first, because that is what was available locally, second it's the most affordable, and third, the other two games frustrate my mediocre skills. I'm only a B class shooter on my good days but manage to post at least a few perfect scores (25/25) each year and that keeps me trying.

Don't forget to give your pups some fun over the summer as well – outings to find new cover, a few planted training birds perhaps, cooling swims in a creek or just some yard work. They'll just love being with you and the exercise is good for both. And, maybe catch a few good pictures to send to John and Toni for the book project while you're at it!

I'm always looking for good articles to post in the OH Letter. I've corrected my latest of many email addresses below, removing the typo in the last issue and folks are beginning to find me again. You can also contact us through the Old Hemlock webpage and www.oldhemlock.org. For new-comers, we look for any and all dog related stories from the past season or just training issues you experience as you bring your partners along. A word document attached to an email is best but we accept hand-written work as well – give Flint something to carry up from the mail box. 400 words or so makes a nice fit but don't let that hold you back – we've had as many as 1000 word and as few as ten...its all good stuff. We have to be careful about copy written material so please identify any quote source you use.

Many thanks, wishing you frequent and steady points! ·

Mike

