



# Old Hemlock *Letter*

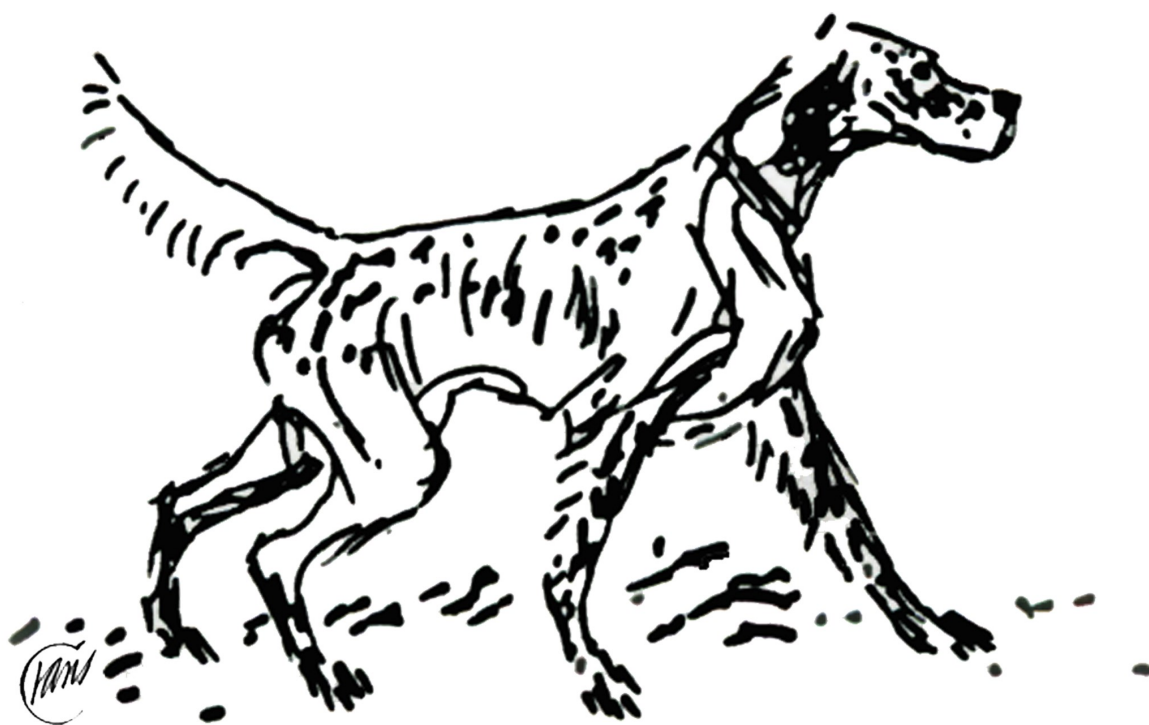
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*The Old Hemlock Foundation, Preserving and Promoting the Legacy of George Bird Evans and Kay Evans*



## Passing the Old Hemlock Line

Since George Evans' passing on May 5, 1998 Jeff Kauffman and I have had the pleasure of being entrusted with carrying on the Old Hemlock line of English setters. It has been a pleasure and joy to see the dogs continue, and I feel George and Kay Evans would be quite pleased with the setters we have produced. George told me every breeder puts his mark on the dogs, due to the type and ones they use to carry on the line. He selected me because George and I liked the same kind of dog, pleasing on the eye, calm at home, and an athletic hunter that hunts for the gun with style and flair, producing birds. We strive to get it all in a dog: health, nose, ground coverage, brains, and style. It's time to pass that torch on to W. Hall Carter Jr.

Jeff and I are placing the line in his hands, confident that he will continue just like George would have wanted, producing dogs we all would want and desire. Hall has a great eye for dogs and knows just what both Jeff and I like in a setter.

It has been a fun and enjoyable journey, and since George's passing a new bond has been formed in the Old Hemlock family, something that came from our love of these beautiful setters. Thanks to Bob Rose for having the idea of a gathering to meet owners of the setters, and to find out what this new guy had in mind, and so the Old Hemlock Reunion was created. Thanks to Roy and Sally Sisler, who own and run Hunting Hills, the location of the Reunion, and all those owners who attended over the years. Sue Buckley created the Directory, which lists all the owners, and continues to update it keeping us all connected and up to date, a thankless job but appreciated by all.

Mike McDonald came up with the idea of The Old Hemlock Newsletter and took on the job of actually editing and publishing it for all our owners. It grew into a wonderful venue for sharing stories and information helped by John McGranaghan and his wife Toni. When Mike decided it was time to turn over the newsletter to someone else Bruce Buckley took it on and continues to do a wonderful job. The layout and design he and LeJay Graffious publish is first rate.

I want to thank all of you for being a big part of my life so far. Thanks to the many owners who raised litters and helped carry on George's dream. I'll always be an Old Hemlock setter owner and part of this wonderful Old Hemlock Family. Good luck to Hall and the future of these wonderful dogs.

Sincerely,

Roger Brown

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*"Reaching back into Time, embers light up other flames."*

George Bird Evans – personal book inscription



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*"When you start out with a puppy, you are shaping a life, his and yours, which should be one. Like your gunning, your puppy will be what you make him by your attitude toward him, not as a tool to get birds but a bond between you that is the finest thing a human and a dog can know."*

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

# Open Letter to Hall Carter

Kathy Cron

Hall,

I guess congrats are in order for the OH breeding responsibility to be entrusted to you. "I guess" in that I wonder why on earth you would subject yourself to all of us so crazy-attached to an Old Hemlock setter.

Oh well. Now you are "in", so it is only right that we suggest our two cents worth and ask that you strongly consider a few concerns in the breeding, things we have noted as relative newcomers to the group. Only a few...

We are wondering if you could look at selections that would provide for a patient setter when preparing for hunts. Perhaps you could look for an OH that would sit quietly in a corner and wait for boots to be laced and guns to be readied. Our particular OH does not qualify as he insists on being between Jim's arms as he tries to lace his boots and the sight of anything resembling a gun case will put him between us and the door, just to be sure we don't forget him.

A look at pairings that might yield a dog that does not need lap naps once or twice a day after, say, 40 lbs. Somewhere at about 65 lbs. and the long leg stage this habit becomes a bit uncomfortable for the owner. Just sayin'. I'm not sure you can find this in the OH group but thought you could give it a try.

There must be an OH or two you could use in the breeding effort that do not have a need to wake owners with morning kisses. The wet kisses are a joy that can be tolerated even first thing in the morning before my coffee, and even appreciated, but the breath. And wow are they wet.

Sleeping is an entire category on its own. We are thinking of looking for just the right selection for breeding that does not require at least occasional sleeping with owners (or guests of the house in a pinch). It seems innocent enough when they take the foot posi-

tion, but we all know in the middle of the night they will sleep between owners (or unsuspecting house guests if the doors aren't bolted) at some point. And what about upside down sleeping. Maybe more focus on the breeding selection there. And then there is running, hunting and occasional barking in their sleep. I'm sure they are dreaming the perfect hunt, but it can be disruptive to said owners' sleep.

We might also suggest a look at that head. Maybe try for lessening the sad eyes that make unsuspecting visitors think we beat him. And, the communication eyes/directing eyes around the treat jar. House guests often think we might be starving our guy. He is a very clear communicator - and an even bigger con.

Overall head height. While we truly love a bigger dog, perhaps consideration could be given to standard kitchen and dining table height and the OH Setter. Countless butter dishes and leftovers have been pitched as the cruise height is a perfect match to dining tables.

Drooling. Can we talk about those "perfect for retrieve" jowls and the amount of left over water they hold? Surely.

Coat. While there is nothing any prettier than our pup after a bath with the caramel-colored ticking and bright white coat, we were thinking the new generation of OH breeding might incorporate burr and stick-tight release? Just a thought.

Well Hall, those are the basics on the breeding want list I guess. You have your work cut out for you. Let us know if we can help.

Kathy & Jim

PS. Never mind. Second thought. We pretty much love our Redd as he is...

Thanks for taking on the new role.

# A Litter of Puppies

Helen Ann Graffious

We were overjoyed to receive Old Hemlock Mountain Laurel from Roger Brown's litter in 2015, our own Willow's granddaughter from daughter Karma. We immediately planned a future breeding. Reviewed by Ken Alexander, he said she would be perfect for this role. Her first heat was a bit late at two years, and we hoped she would not follow Willow's schedule of three heats in ten years.

We were rewarded in September 2018. Laurel came in while we were bird banding on the Dolly Sods, so we immediately made plans to travel to Vermont where her future mate October John lives during the summer and fall with his owners, Bruce and Sue Buckley.

Bruce had a nice fenced-in area for the mating but it was not needed as Laurel immediately flirted and had a natural tie with John. Two more successful ties that week and we headed home to West Virginia with hope in our hearts.

As October progressed, there was no change in Laurel as she passionately hunted with her grandmother Willow. We were elated on October 30, when the ultrasound showed a positive pregnancy with three embryos. November showed an increase in appetite and during the last three weeks we did not take her hunting. We could feel puppies by soft palpation and, in our innocence, hoped for a litter of six.

Sunday, December 2, proved a restless day and night for Laurel. With the whelping box assembled, we anxiously awaited. Labor began on Monday, December 3 at 8:45 am when the first puppy was born in the hallway – a Belton female. Then nothing. A call to Roger who suggested we walk her around the house, and this started the process again. Eleven more puppies were born, the last one at 4:20 pm. We were astounded at this number! Number

eleven, who became Fallon, would not suckle and a quick trip to the vet with Laurel in tow provided subcutaneous fluids for the puppy and an x-ray of Laurel that showed no more pups. At 9:30 that night Fallon had failed to suckle, so a second trip to the ER vet and a nasogastric tube provided puppy milk. By three AM he was like a trouper, eating for himself.

Laurel rose to the occasion licking each puppy as it emerged. Three males and nine females, seven with patches and five Beltons. I called my neighbor to bring nail polish to mark the Beltons for us. Of course Fallon, our male, needed none.

We finally got everyone weighed by Wednesday, our Tuesday filled with making sure all had fed. Two shifts for feedings with a break for Laurel in between meant almost ninety minutes to accomplish this. A trip to the vet on Wednesday for dew claw removal and exams went well. A sad end to this day was when we found the smallest Belton female expired that evening. We did CPR to no avail. We let Laurel sniff at her before we buried "Little Miss".

The next days were filled with feedings, rest, and cuddle time for the remaining eleven. We decided to nickname them with a Christmas theme in mind, but the three boys provided themselves names. Fallon, named after Dr. Fallon, Teardrop, who had a large tear shaped patch from his right eye, and Groucho, one of three tricolors, with big black patched eyebrows similar to the comedian Groucho Marx. We ended with Eve, Patches, Noel, Holly, Star, Natalie, Angelica, and Snowflake.

We took turns staying with the pups 24/7 for the first two weeks, then used a camera and puppy monitor. A setback came when puppy nursing went from every three hours to every four hours. Laurel got a severe case of Mastitis. Although still able to nurse, she need-



ed hot and cold compresses every two hours. Two steps forward, one step back!

Days proceeded with daily weights, and weekly pictures. Laurel grew thinner and we supplemented her food with 8 lbs ground turkey, 16 lbs. of venison, 15 chukars, and 12 lbs. of chicken during her eight weeks of confinement. We started weaning the pups at four weeks and by week six all were eating regular puppy chow. No need for cleanup, they ate every bite. The whelping box was replaced by a large crate with the door open to an area for "pee pads" This worked out quite well, having a minimum of accidents in the crate.

Every week brought astounding new changes. We had a bevy of visitors giving these little ones plenty of socialization. Roger Brown was a phone call away with answers to our questions. Carla and Steve Marshall came every week with dinner. Sue Buckley stayed five days, helping from cooking dinner to puppy care. Kandice and Bob Tuttle spent several days here sharing with many activities from puppy socialization to folding laundry and washing dishes. Several friends

brought snacks and lunches.

Puppy Day arrived and we welcomed the "picking of puppies" and reveled in their new names. Photographic memories of all helped ease the pain of giving them new homes. Facebook had introduced these pups and we hope to continue following their progress into the hunting world.

The puppy room has been cleaned, Laurel has returned to her old self, and we are pleasantly enjoying a return to our previous routine. These last two months have flown by! The last two weeks of washing puppy feet, toys, towels, and floors will soon be a distant memory. With Willow being almost eleven, we will be able to devote the care, hunting experiences, and companionship she deserves. On the horizon will be a new litter from Laurel and the probability of keeping a pup, Willow's great granddaughter. We will look forward to this future adventure with the experience gained by this wonderful and fulfilling "Eleven".



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*"We often become overly concerned with what we can do to shape our gun dog to make him into a performer. A puppy is an adolescent, raw and green; what we can best offer is to put him straight, but we must not force him and in doing this miss the essence of the relation between the gun dog and his man."*

George Bird Evans    An Affair with Grouse    1982

# Another Day Afield – Tales of Apollo

Moe Lee

Learned how to budget through years of marriage  
Enabled two each, baby carriage  
\$65 for designer jeans?!?! she would say  
But for another day afield,  
Now I'd gladly pay.

"Apollo is sick", Dr. Laura said  
A land far away has the edge  
To put this trio back together, she sincerely pledged  
For another day afield.

Penn Vet, Ivy League, the sign said  
Looks of a Viking, tall and red,  
A vet with steady hands holds Apollo in his stead  
In hopes for, another day, afield.

Doctor's done, he'll be okay!  
Was in New Orleans on that very day  
(You know, The Big Easy, sexy, Burlesque Queens  
Everything's a party scene)  
Got none of my ten pence, thoughts or dreams  
My prayer was only for another day afield.

Things I love, hobbies amassed:  
Boxes of shells from first to last  
Talks with men of shotguns properly cast  
My Apollo turning on whistle blasts  
And another day, afield



# A Tribute to the Soul of a Setter

OH True's Bromley 7/09 - 2/17

John McGranaghan

*I wrote the following two weeks after we brought Bromley home.*

## A Miracle Puppy and a Grouse Dog For Us

I was ten seasons into hunting grouse and woodcock in my New Hampshire woods, reclaimed orchards, and farm lots. Perhaps it's just as appropriate to say that I have been pursued these ten years by a sense of traditional.

My first year's adventures did not include a four legged friend. That first season yielded no birds to my crisp new vest, but my imagination put many there. I spent my time learning how to recognize proper grouse and woodcock cover and scouring the southern half of my state looking for those places that might hold birds.

I had some early success, not so much due to a learned eye nor experience, but rather the many hours that I spent afield. Every once in a while we'd stumble upon a decent covert that held birds. It wasn't until later years that I have begun to understand just why those early finds held birds.

The excitement at my first grouse flush and the fact that he fell to my shot was just what I needed to keep my interest each time I grabbed my department store vest, gun, and put my lab on the ground. I've missed many more than I've hit since that day. Every time out was filled with the hope and expectation of a bird flushed and Connor bringing the prize to hand with all the joy of a child finding his first two wheeled bicycle under the Christmas tree on a snowy morning.

All of the elements were present and needed only the blessing from above to put the pieces together so as to reward Connor's work and my determination to follow his nose. Once in a while it came together for us. Most of the time due to my bad shooting and birds

avoiding my 8's we came home with empty vest, and poor Connor without the taste of feathers in his mouth.

Yet I've loved spending time in my New Hampshire woods since childhood, so the days were not lost and I generally learned something each day spent in those covers.

Just as many other aspiring upland hunters had before me, I read stories. Stories of how 'gentleman gun dogs' would work close in thick cover and find and set a bird so that the fella on the wood end of the shotgun could better anticipate a bird's flight. Of all of these stories and accompanying photos and sketches, those that froze in my mind involved English setters. And of those, it was the regal looking canines with flowing form and feathers that most caught my fancy.

Those images and stories led me to learn of the dual type dog, and how and why they came about.

Of those there were two. The George Ryman dogs that came from that man's vision and determination to



bring about a line that had never been and so was new to this earth. And the other beginning with those dual dogs and always dipping back to that gene pool; the result of the efforts of George and Kay Evans, who likely spent more time afield with their setters than any others. Folks with a dedication and an eye toward setters that have instinct to find and work upland game, be half of a partnership, look beautiful at hearth and home, and provide loving companionship in and out of the field.

These things appealed to me on many levels and I wished to have one of these gentleman gun dogs with which to pursue my new found pastime.

About four years ago I had read about a fella, in my own New Hampshire, who bred Llewelin setters and referred to them as a "classic New England gun dog". His dogs had the look and reputation describing what I yearned for, so after several conversations and visits I acquired a tri-colored male. I named him Tucker.

He is developing into a fine woodcock dog, has promise to be a decent grouse dog and is most definitely my good friend and companion.

It wasn't until sometime after that I really learned of the differences between my Tucker and the dual

type dogs, so I decided that when the time was right, it would be a good thing to have such a dog added to our family.

It was nearly two years ago that I contacted Roger Brown in order to inform him of my interest.

Somewhere along the line at least two individuals spoke kindly of me to Roger, in reference to owning an Old Hemlock setter. For that I was gratified beyond words and forever thankful.

It is no small thing to have men and fellow upland hunters who so value these dogs, to have thought me a candidate to be included in the Old Hemlock family. No small thing to me.

During the summer of '09 Roger and I spoke a couple of times of failed pairings and possible litters. Roger informed me of how an available puppy is greatly dependent upon the male to female ratio in a given litter.

There seemed to be a possibility of a pup sometime in 2010, but with no assurances possible I braced for a wait.

And now I am finally getting around to how this story begins and ends with happiness at the McGranaghan household.



It began on the occasion of receiving a note from Roger telling of a puppy that had unexpectedly become available.

How that came about is a story for someone else to tell, but those circumstances made it possible for us to have this wonderful male orange Belton, who we subsequently and with great joy named OH True's Bromley.

Roger told me that he is ours, that he would like for this pup to make a home with us, and that we need only make arrangements to fetch him from away off in Minnesota.

As with many these days, money is tight and I have been working part time having just dealt with Hepatitis C and the nasty meds taken to kill it. I didn't know how we could pull this off at short notice.

My wife Toni and I had been speaking on the phone back and forth over the next hour or so about these things, and lo and behold Toni calls me back one time all excited. She was very excited and could hardly get the words out.

It seems that her boss had just walked up to her desk and handed her an extra week's check. Something about straightening out the books.

Totally unexpected, timely, and just what we needed to drive to Minnesota and back. Needless to say, the two of us were a bit pleased and agreed that this was providence at work. The details with our jobs worked out like the sweet action of my well-oiled old Fox, and we were set to leave that coming Friday afternoon with plans to arrive at Jim and Barbara Recktenwald's place on Saturday evening. They very graciously invited us to spend the night and repeatedly called us both before and while journeying, encouraging us to not hurry on their account, but rather take time and be safe.

We arrived late in the evening, and our hosts were not daunted by the late hour, but rather spent much time visiting with us and allowing us that first opportunity to spend some time with our new baby, his litter mate, and Becasse, the mother.

For Toni and me, it was love at first puppy breath!

We were greeted by an energetic pup in fine fettle, and just as anxious as we for hugs and kisses.

We were all weary and the dogs settled in to their accommodations and the rest of us into ours. We retired with thanks in our hearts and excitement also for the days to come.



The ride home began that next morning as we parted with new found friends and much well wishing.

Nearly two weeks have passed until the time of this writing and OH Bromley has settled into his new home well. He and our Llewellyn setter, Tucker are already fast friends as our 'pack' has adjusted.

OH True's Bromley, in keeping with what I have heard and read, is one smart dual type Old Hemlock setter.

Toni and I could not be more pleased at what the future holds as we look to hunting our New Hampshire and Maine coverts with an Old Hemlock setter. What a privilege it is!

And to the McGranaghan household, a Miracle Pup.

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Over time Bromley won our hearts in many ways. I realize that all of our dogs are special and that they all to one degree or another make an impact on our hearts and minds. With that said, Bromley was special. He just had an incredible soul. Loving, trusting, funny and smart with a devotion that made him seem much more than he was. He was as sweet as fresh drawn honey. He absolutely loved birds and sniffing them out for us. Although he didn't have the same prey drive as Tucker, his nose was amazing. Maybe he just knew when there were no birds around and would lay off out of

wisdom and efficiency. I don't know, but would not doubt it.

In his seventh year he left us. Cancer. He was gone in two weeks. His passing so quickly hit us real hard. He was healthy and in two weeks I was lying on the vet's floor doing that whisper thing in his ear that I'd done since he was a pup as a calming technique, as he fell asleep before the second shot.

I sobbed as deep as the pain sank. My heart was already raw from other things anyway, things that make life both wonderful and hard.

I am so glad that Toni didn't make the trip to the vet that morning. It would have been bad for her.

He loved the woods, and although a large specimen of ninety pounds, he moved through the woods with a gentle grace and smooth effortless gait that defied his size. He loved water and pillows. He loved his brother Tucker. He seemed to be always happy and never tired of smiling or making friends with a toad. A gentle soul. He could swim like Johnny Weissmuller and was a natural retriever of a bumper and woodcock alike. He was equally at home on our bed of pillows and a mud puddle. He could walk on two feet and reach things like a bird feeder out back. Bromley would point a snowball and just for practice, dove scent, gone or not. He loved to sit in a lap and even at ninety pounds, somehow managed to be smaller and defy physics when it was time to be a lap dog. He enjoyed a golf cart, a tractor, and a dog box on occasion. He was a good boy.

I don't know why, but one day when he was only a year old and we were driving down a dirt track on the way to a cover, he somehow tore through the screen on the truck cap's side window and jumped out. I didn't know until I stopped a bit down the road. Scared me silly. He was back there waiting for me.



In his first year, up in Pittsburg, NH he locked up on what I assumed was a grouse. It flew and yet he remained solid. Three more grouse flew out of that clump one at a time and yet Bromley remained solid. He was naturally like that. As much as he loved to smell a grouse, Bromley was nuts over woodcock. He just adored those little russet fellas.

When getting things ready for a hunt, he would not leave my side. He worked close to the gun and was always faithful to check my whereabouts.

He once stole a stick of butter from the counter and

ate the whole thing. He loved to watch me cook on the grill. There may have been the hope of a 'nummy' involved. Maybe.

Bromley made us laugh and in the end Bromley made us cry, and still today. His leaving left a vacuum. And a great many wonderful memories of the sweetest of souls.

He was a good boy.



THE MOMENT

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*"Looking out my studio window at the bare winter bones of the scarlet maple across the north clearing and remembering its flame in October, I understand the meaning of experience."*

George Bird Evans Grouse along the Tramroad 1986



## Around Old Hemlock

LeJay Graffious

*“Few things are more beautiful than a puppy being born. The long plans, the long, long wait for the parents to reach maturity and prove themselves, the delicate balance of timing that is the mating, the pregnancy with its hazards and anxieties, the immense relief when the puppies arrive. I am totally moved when I see a bird dog puppy come in this world.”*

George Bird Evans, Troubles with Bird Dogs

As I begin to write, it is Sunday morning after Puppy Day. One little female setter is left in the kennel area. What a journey Helen Ann and I have had since the last week of September!

George wrote in Troubles with Bird Dogs, “*The earliest sensitive period is the first ten days after the puppy is born, during which it is responsive to limited olfactory, tactile, and thermal stimuli.*” Knowing this, we tried to provide a rich environment to start these gems on their paths to becoming hunting companions. Immediately we began sensitivity training to various sounds from household machines, to ascending-in-volume claps of two poplar boards, to YouTube videos of thunder storms and clay shoots. When weaning from mother’s milk we introduced the one blast of the whistle at feeding. We received much support in carrying out the socialization process. We had 181 puppy visits for playtime and holding.

Today, all the puppies are with their new companions, in eleven states from Idaho to Texas to Maine. By all accounts, Laurel’s litter has acclimated well to their new homes. The puppies are now ready for what George wrote in Troubles with Bird Dogs, Part Two: “Ten Easy Lessons” of training the brain. Fortunately, all the puppies are in homes of George’s readers who are experienced in gun dog training.

In Helen Ann’s latest newsletter article, she acknowledged many who assisted with this litter. Roger Brown approved the breeding and was very supportive with our inquiries on the care of the litter and health of Laurel. Bruce Buckley was invaluable with his input, too. During the gestation period, Roger passed control of the breeding of Old Hemlock setters to Hall Carter. He stepped right into the role of plac-

ing the litter and managing the paperwork. The whole process from conception to day-to-day care went rather smoothly. When problems arose like Laurel’s mastitis and puppies failing to thrive, assistance was a call away, or medical help a short drive to our friend Dr. Jesse Fallon and his generous expertise.

Helen Ann and I are fortunate to be part of the Old Hemlock family. We love the idea of continuing the Old Hemlock setter Legacy with October John’s and Laurel’s puppies, who Bill James called “Wonders of Old Hemlock,” whelped on the grounds of Old Hemlock where this all began.

Although puppies have been in the forefront of our lives since December 3, we continue our work to promote and preserve the legacy of George and Kay. Since the last newsletter, with the support of Steve Smith, editor emeritus of *Pointing Dog Journal*, George’s “On Being Keen” from An Affair with Grouse was published in the January/February 2019 issue of PDJ. In the words of Roy Sisler, “This is big.” Steve called while I was at the Reunion at Hunting Hills last March. He wanted to print five or six 2000-word selections from George’s body of work to introduce new readers to him in PDJ. I need suggestions from the Old Hemlock Family for selections to pass along to Steve.

Our weekly post of a GBE quote with a photo from the archives is growing in popularity. Currently, we have 1714 followers on Facebook, of which 92 are in 29 foreign countries. I continue to work with students at West Virginia University on various projects. Since George and Kay did not want Old Hemlock to be a museum house, I operate on the principle that it is a study house. Essentially, Old Hemlock Foundation

becomes a lab for various areas of study, and for community service. 283 students came to Old Hemlock in 2018 for study or volunteering. We had 966 visitors. In addition to this, we were invited to do thirteen off-site presentations to share the story of George and Kay, our Old Hemlock setters and the work of the Foundation to reach an additional 453 people. Of course, the Old Hemlock Reunion is always a highlight with 68 attending the 20th reunion.

We continue to provide programs in the areas of wildlife, communications, public history, and art and literature. Working with the WVU libraries, we were included in a brochure published by Arts Monongahela as a guide to Public Art in the area. This year will be our fifth year working with AmeriCorps members. Ian Gray is back with a half time position. He spends most of his winter time working with the George Bird Evans Collection in the West Virginia History Archives in the WVU Library. I continue to operate the Old Hemlock Bird Observatory which teaches bird identification, monitors the population of various species through point counts and bird banding, and report our data to the US Geological Survey-Bird Banding Laboratory, Patuxent Wildlife Research Center in Laurel, MD, and to the Institute of Bird Population in Point Reyes, CA. I also teach college students and adults how to extract birds from mist nets and handle them safely.

George and Kay set up the Foundation to provide financial support to local students. We gave our eighth medical scholarship through the WVU Foundation in October. In July, we gave four scholarships to local students doing post-high school programs. We are proud of two local women who graduated from WVU School of Nursing as Registered Nurses in May who had Old Hemlock Foundation Scholarships all four years of college. The directors began the George Bird Evans Literary Scholarship in the English Department. We just advertised that we are accepting applications for our third award.

We continue to share the George and Kay Story through pre-arranged tours for civic groups and other organizations. A fun event in August was when 29 Model T Fords rolled up our lane as part of a retracing of the travels of the "Four Vagabonds" (Henry Ford, Thomas Edison, John Burroughs, and Harvey Fire-

stone) trip through this area 100 years ago. We were an attraction on the final day of their five day road trip. The Model T Times magazine (No. 418- November/December 2018) reported that "the visit at Old Hemlock was a highlight for many on the tour." These current-day Vagabonds were from all over the east coast and were very complimentary of their time here.

The Old Hemlock Foundation has many different facets to share, but the Old Hemlock setters are by far the most popular. A usual question is "How much does one of these dogs go for?" I always wrestle with myself on how to respond. I personally do not think of our setters as objects of monetary value, although we advertise puppies for \$1250. Who among the Old Hemlock family would set a price on their companion? My response is, "Old Hemlock puppies are more of an adoption. The fee is to offset the whelping cost, the vet fees, and care for the first eight weeks." I once took Willow to an event of high school students. We



were standing around the parking lot when one of the young men asked, "How much is she worth?" Before I responded, the instructor said, "Look at all the cars in this parking lot (there were about eight), she is worth more than all of them!" I just smiled and explained how she was my hunting and home companion.

George's last sentence in Troubles with Bird Dogs is, "*When Fortune lets you live your dream with that dog in wind-bare thorns and on blazing hillsides, there is very little that is wrong.*" I feel Fortune smiled on us when we crossed paths with George and Kay. Now Fortune allows us to be connected to the Old Hemlock family. From Willow's two female pups, there are thirty progeny bringing us closer together.



## The Bucket List Hunt Part II

Richard Baylor

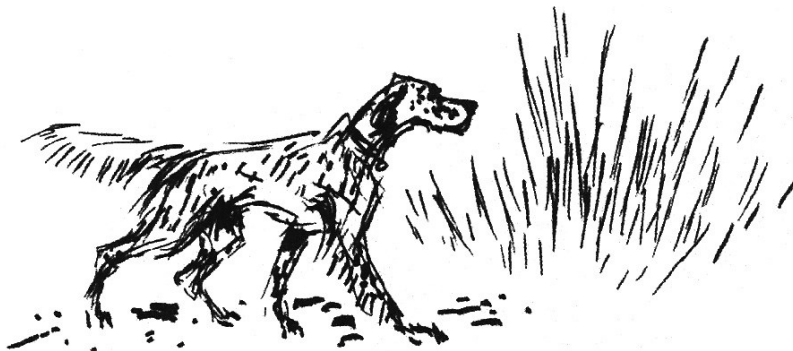
After getting a break back at work for a week teaching anesthesia and clinical techniques to Veterinary Nursing students, I was off to Wisconsin to chase more Ruffed Grouse and visit my friends Helen and Jim Palmquist. Palmquist Farms is a special place that has been my grouse destination for four years now, and until last year a place where my hunting partner and I enjoyed going to hunt these beautiful birds and relax. I had fished and hunted with best friend Paul Hall for over the past fifty years, shooting my first grouse and pheasant over his English setter, also named Casey. Paul has reached an age and time in his life where hobbling over clear cuts has given way to mostly fishing and turkey hunting. At eighty and still with legs of West Virginia steel, I can't blame him. He and I have had our *Time Enough*. This year I was hunting with a new partner and friend from Columbus, James Murphy.

The Palmquist Farm was originally a dairy and logging operation, but now focused on beef cattle and recreational offerings. The main focus of the place is winter sports such as snowmobiling, cross country skiing, and a place to escape the city and/or a busy life. Helen and Jim are the best at taking care of their guests, treating them all like family, even if you're a Democrat. The meals are superbly cooked by Helen and a few ladies from the area, serving

breakfast at 7am; offering packed or served lunch at your choice, and a great dinner buffet about 7:30, all served at the main lodge. Each cabin has full amenities and is dog friendly. Our Red River cabin has a great fireplace that has served us well on those frigid cold or rainy days that can happen at this time of year, easily heating the entire cabin. There is something very appealing to me about returning each year to the same cabin, same fireplace, same great folks, and familiar faces at dinner of the other hunters who are from all over the Midwest. I met an attorney one morning who was hard at work on his laptop at 6am as I came to the lodge to get a cup of coffee with Jim Palmquist. The man asked me if I owned the truck with the OHSETTR license plates, and if I owned OH setters. Being a business person who had spent too many hours paying attorneys, I knew he already knew the answer to his question. After a short conversation, I learned that he was a neighbor to Hunting Hills owner Roy Sisler, and had known George Bird Evans. Small world is that of grouse hunters!

Our first day was spent in the woods at a place I had only hunted briefly the year before due to heavy rains. This year was much dryer and we put the dogs out and headed off into the woods. We had walked a couple of miles back into thick poplar saplings and

alders, when we saw Casey hit a solid point with Covey honoring some 30 yards away. The bird flushed at my next step, climbing high to my right through trees presenting no shot for me, but James caught the bird on a nice crossing shot with his 28 gauge. Casey scooped it up and retrieved it to me, of course! All birds are ours! In 2016 I had hunted here alone, and the counts were like this:



**SURELY NOW!**



Day one: 11 grouse and 6 WC moved, 2 grouse and 2 WC bagged.

Day two: 11 grouse and 5 WC moved, 4 shots on grouse and 4 on WC, 2 grouse and 3 WC bagged

Day three: hunted the morning with no birds found, tired and we all took a break in the cabin.

Day four: moved 6 grouse and zero WC, took one grouse that day.

So I had had 10 productive points on grouse, with 5 taken. The dogs averaged 25 miles a day to my 6 miles; all in all we moved 28 grouse in four days. Being from Ohio, I was ecstatic to have seen that many grouse, or even any at all.

This year, we had had high hopes but the grouse population was down some 30% by local estimates, instead of up 30 percent as had been predicted. Now folks here are thinking it wasn't the rains in the spring that hurt the hatch, but that the decline was the result of West Nile Virus. Wisconsin is now considering shortening the grouse season by several months, ending it in November versus January. I think that is the right response, and GBE would approve I'm sure. Nonetheless, our first day we moved 15 grouse, and harvested one. Not a great shooting flying day! At dinner that night, when we all are called upon to report on our day and I think most are honest reports, I went last and was amazed to hear of folks only moving one or two grouse all day. When I reported that we had moved 15 birds, you could've heard a pin drop in the place. I told them how we had four shots and one bird taken, and had walked our fannies off. We had not seen a woodcock all day. I went on to say that if they were interested, they should call Roger Brown, who might possibly

(assuming some of these folks to be worthy) put them on the waiting list for an OH setter, because those two dogs were certainly the primary reason why we saw any birds at all! There is also a bit of luck at work here!

The next day was more like the rest of the week as it then turned cold, down to about 38 degrees and some rain with about 15 mph winds. We would hunt 9am to 1 or 2pm, take a lunch break and then hunt until about 4:30 or so as it starts to get dark early in the woods that time of the year. I shot two grouse that second day and my pattern found a woodcock as well, the only one we saw the entire week. That was good for me because my wife loves woodcock, and so at least I got her one. We traveled about 6 miles that day and the dogs about 18 to 20 something. The next day we moved three grouse in the Wood Lot covert, and three more on an adjoining property. I had two productive points over Casey with "two shot at and perfectly missed". "I worked hard to miss so well", as GBE said.

The birds were in deep, thick cover all week except one pointed on a logging road as we walked out of the woods. I took it on a second shot and Covey made a beautiful retrieve for me. We hunted about 5.5 hours on the fourth day until about 3 pm and took a much deserved lunch break. Casey had covered 20.5 miles and Covey some 18.26 miles. What a slacker! Both dogs were tired and Casey has lost weight after hunting hard here and in Maine. His ribs showed easily as he moved but now his hip iliac



crests are showing more than normal. The dogs told me they were praying for a heavy rain day! Me too! The warm fire of the cabin that evening along with some considered conversation with Jack and Ginger sure helped my tired bones. Our last day started out at 32 degrees and about 10 mph breeze, perfect. We hunted from 9 am to about 2 pm and then took lunch in our cabin and a nap in front of the fire. The dogs had worked well again today, finding two grouse in thick cover in front of me, and again no shots. James, my new hunting partner, did manage to get a shot later on one bird after having three flushed, but didn't connect.

I noticed that OH Casey, now 9 years old and the same age as I in dog years, still holds his own and moves like a ghost through the field or woods, so effortless. His long nose, beautiful points, and his drive to still be the first to retrieve the prize are still a wonder to see. I am thankful for every minute we have together. The birds were not holding this year, very

wild and nervous, and we had rain almost every day. My gun mounting needs some work to get my eye to the target and then the gun to the target. Another year older and I'm still working on me, but Casey is steadfast and consistently doing so well what he loves.

We had a great week, working hard for the birds as always. My new partner did well and he says he is coming along again if he gets invited. He will be, and it may help that he enjoys a spot of bourbon. The Palmquist Farm is a great location, in the heart of some great grouse and woodcock habitat in northern Wisconsin. The State has done an outstanding job developing bird habitat with planned clearcutting, reforestation efforts, hunting trails, and designated grouse management hunting areas of thousands of acres. The food is great and the prices reasonable.

So onward on the Bucket List Trip as I travel further west to find another species of grouse; Sharptails, and Prairie Chickens in South Dakota and Montana.

*(Rick's voyage will continue in the next issue. Ed.)*



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*"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 to emulate."*

George Bird Evans Living with Gun Dogs 1992

## Thank you

It is truly wonderful to have another Old Hemlock puppy in the house again making herself at home. This could not have happened without the amazing help of some special people: LeJay and Helen Ann Graffious, Hall Carter, Bruce and Sue Buckley, and Roger Brown. I want to say how grateful I am to LeJay for making the long journey out West and delivering Old Hemlock Story to me. I also want to thank all those who wrote their nice comments on Facebook.

I am now, once again, looking forward to hunting grouse this fall with another Old Hemlock setter.

Sincerely,  
Cathy Harper

*For those who may not recognize the name, Cathy is the author of George Bird Evans – Life of a Shooting Gentleman, a definitive book that is a meticulously researched and beautifully written biography of the remarkable life and love of George and Kay and their Old Hemlock setters, from their earliest days onward.*

*Editor*

*There may still be a few copies available. Contact LeJay at Old Hemlock.*



**GOING PLACES**

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*“It is the Glorious Twenty-Fifth and the Woodcock Moon was gold last night without a cloud. Today there is sunshine and sherry smell on damp air so still I can hear each yellow aspen leaf fall.”*

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

## Editor's Note

By any measure it has been quite a year, particularly those months since the last Letter. We have had another successful breeding, an extraordinarily well shared and lovingly raised litter, a memorable puppy day at Old Hemlock, and eleven OH miracles settled into new homes.

Reflecting on what all this means, it is inevitable that one considers on a broad scale what is really important, and what is not.

Five years ago, due to the loss within a couple of months of both our setters, one totally unexpected, I faced the prospect of a hunting season with no dog, and was feeling a little sorry for myself. Who would not? Lady fortune intervened with a September puppy, nine weeks old, from Ken Alexander. It really was too soon, but Ken's breeding had lines back to DeCoverly's Border John, Marse John, and Blue Major. That is the blood that had until recently flowed in my beloved Frost, and that sort of opportunity is rare. As a good and long gone friend used to say, "If you want cake, you'd better take a piece when they pass the plate."

I have written of this before, but that puppy, October John, pointed his first woodcock at the same age Laurel's and his puppies are now, ten weeks as this is written. We hunted every day, gradually extending our horizons, and when November came he had 44 woodcock and one grouse in his book. Of course at that age there was no gun. Somewhere during that time it came to me that I was having the best season of my life, concentrating completely on that puppy growing into his bird life totally in the wild, and forging a degree of teamwork that might not have happened otherwise.

Then, almost literally on the opening day of this past season, I severely hyperextended my right arm and wrist, doing damage that would take months to heal. I simply could not carry or use a gun safely in our thick Vermont coverts. But I did have October John, so again we went hunting anyway. We never shot a bird all season, but John and I shared golden days and large numbers of woodcock and grouse. We made memories, and again I had one of my best seasons ever. So did he. Now I have the answer to the question, does a dog lose drive or intensity if he is not shot over? A good one certainly does not.

Don't think for a minute that I don't enjoy the guns and shooting at least as much as anyone reading this, and missed both mightily. The point here is quite different. We all say at one time or another, sometimes perhaps a little flippantly, that it is not about the shooting it is about the dogs. It is, and with the silver lining in those bad experiences I have come to appreciate the truth of that with fresh intensity.

Bruce Buckley

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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

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