



Old Hemlock *Letter*

Volume XX Issue 2

www.oldhemlock.org

Fall 2019



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



From the sketchbook of George Bird Evans

2019 Puppy Report

Hall Carter

In 2019 there were sixteen Old Hemlock puppies that went to their new homes from two litters: eleven puppies from Old Hemlock Mountain Laurel's litter sired by October John (Buckley), registered as Early Frost with FDSB, and five puppies from Old Hemlock Thatcher's litter sired by Old Hemlock October Redd (Kron). Of the sixteen puppies, six are males and ten are females.

Laurel's litter produced the full spectrum of color patterns, including several orange beltons, three tri-colored pups, and a variety of black and white pups with patches of varying sizes. Thatcher's litter was all orange and all belton except for one male puppy that will be classified as white, orange, and ticked.

LeJay and Helen Ann Graffious (Laurel) and Jim and Barbara Recktenwald (Thatcher) put countless hours into raising these two litters with excellent results. Typically the dam's owners choose to keep a puppy from the litter they raise, but this year it is interesting to note they both decided not to keep a puppy. We are very lucky to have such selfless owners willing to contribute time and heartache to keeping George and Kay's legacy moving forward.

Of the sixteen puppies, ten went to current or repeat Old Hemlock families and six now live with first-time Old Hemlock families. The new families are located in North Carolina, New York, Illinois, Michigan, Texas, and California. Sue Buckley has recently updated the Directory she maintains, which is invaluable for tracking historical litter information, and is also helpful for facilitating communication among the group in the event you reside near another owner or might cross paths while traveling to hunt this fall.

Planned Litters for 2020

We plan to breed Laurel again in the first half of 2020. One of the downsides to our arrangement in not maintaining a central breeding kennel is that it is rare to have a repeat breeding from a female, so I am grateful that LeJay and Helen Ann are ready for Round Two! October John has contributed a lot of athleticism and bird sense across both litters he has sired, but I will likely pair Laurel with a different stud dog this time in order to introduce some future breeding flexibility. This litter will be at Old Hemlock in Bruceton Mills, West Virginia.

Also planned for 2020 is a breeding of Old Hemlock Webley (Bowman) to Old Hemlock Red Molly (Killay). Molly's mother is Old Hemlock Miss Kathryn ("Katie") and her sire is October John. Webley is Thatcher's only sibling out of Old Hemlock Boswell (Bowman) and Old Hemlock Patches McNab (Recktenwald). This litter will be located at the Killay residence in Massachusetts if everything goes as planned.

2019-2020 Season

Please continue to send me reports of how your dogs are progressing, both the good and the bad. This information is important in assessing future breeding decisions. Good luck to everyone this fall!

Thatcher's & Redd's Litter

Jim Recktenwald

Living in what I believe is the most beautiful part of this country, we decided to have a litter of puppies this year. Having a litter is challenging but also very rewarding in the end. Barb and I were in the operating room during the C- section, and I had to help with the dew claw removal. This litter was tough, we fell in love with all 5 of the puppies. They had traits of both the sire and dam that we loved. However, in the end we felt that is selfish to keep a puppy when we have 2 great dogs already: Thatcher who will turn 4 in October, and Patches McNab who turned 10 in July, need some hunting time by themselves. There were a lot of tears shed the week the puppies left for their forever homes.

Of the 5 puppies, 3 are going to a younger generation of hunters. Hall Carter has done a great job of screening owners, and I am so excited for the Old Hemlock family to meet them.

The owners are:

Jim & Kathy Cron from Roanoke IN selected Redd's Gunnarr, purple male. Gunnarr, a Norse word for warrior, is a big strong puppy that that will be very similar in temperament, coloring & confirmation to his father OH Redd. He is an evenly ticked orange belton whose demeanor reminded us of another puppy, OH Casey.

Brian & Renee Bemis from Chicago Illinois area selected OH Rye, blue male, which will make a great companion for OH Maximillian and a great hunting companion for Brian. Rye is a charmer with light orange patches that surround the most beautiful eyes I have seen. I should add that their distillery makes one of the finest Bourbons I have ever tasted.

Tedd Gavin is from Cold Brook NY and selected Timber Redd, orange male. Timber will have the op-

portunity to hunt the Adirondack area of NY. Timber is an orange belton male that has his mother's coloring and was the smallest male puppy but learned quickly how to use his speed to torment his larger brothers. I am hoping to introduce him to our fellow OH New Yorkers.

Austin and Jenni Smith are from Fletcher NC, just outside Asheville. They and their daughter selected OH Maggie, yellow female. Maggie is an orange belton female who is very biddable and wants please. Maggie will be a great hunting companion and was coming to Austin when he called her before they left our home. They are also close to our home in NC. I'm hoping to take them on some walks in our mountains this fall & a visit our quail preserve in SC.



Phil & Elicia Graves from Ventura CA provided regional balance for our litter. They and their 3 daughters selected OH Crockett, green female. Crockett is an orange belton female who was the smallest in the litter and is always thinking. She was known to us as Houdini because of her ability to escape any kind of barrier. Crockett has already been introduced to skateboards and the girls' soccer practice. We might have to meet them halfway in TX and hunt some quail.

We are already looking forward to either seeing them in the coming months hunting or at the OH Hemlock reunion in March. I believe George and Kay would be proud of the litter and eager to meet the new owners. I can still hear Kay's voice on phone encouraging Barb and me. I hope we can live up to her and George's legacy to help the new owners as Kay did for us.

Bucket List Hunt, Part 3

Rick Baylor

Finally, Montana.

I say finally Montana, because when I originally planned this trip it was to go to Montana for Sharpies, Pheasants and Huns, immediately after leaving our annual hunt in Wisconsin. Scheduling became a problem for the lodge owner and he asked if I could reschedule a few days later than my original arrival date. I worked it out, but it meant I had about 5 or 6 days to kill in between Wisconsin and Montana. Thus my side trip to South Dakota, which turned out to be a great time and providing some relaxation for the dogs too. As it turned out, that rest period of travel and hotel time paid off for the Montana hunt.

From South Dakota I drove up to Billings, Montana to pick up the love of my life and expert photographer; my smart, beautiful and very understanding wife, Maura. I know I am laying it on a bit thick, but it's all true. And did I mention how much she hates flying; wine and a sleep aid help her immensely. After conferring with another good soul of our OH family who is a commercial pilot, Maura was convinced the risk was worth it, if only partially, and she did want to see the beauty of Montana. In the field, she looked like an ad for Orvis hunting apparel, but I must say she wore it

well. I picked her up at 1pm, got some lunch and hit the road back south to Ft. Smith and the Little Big Horn area, where Custer stood his last. The Big Horn River travels through southeast Montana with trout and waterfowl in abundance, and Forrester's Big Horn Lodge is located on its banks. We awoke one morning to the thunderous sound of what must have been several hundred thousand Canada geese that had dropped in overnight to rest on their way south.

High butte prairie and long ravines with brushy Choke Cherry served as our hunting grounds. Mostly leased hunting rights were used by Nick Forrester, our guide and the owner of Forester's Big Horn Lodge. We also visited the Little Big Horn Battlefield nearby on a 20 degree snowing day that gave us and the dogs a break.

The Choke Cherry bushes and ravines we found in many high prairies, held amazing numbers of Sharp-tails, Huns and Pheasants. The dogs hunted it well, working in and out of the thick bushes using deer paths where they could at least see where they were going. The Sharpies would hold sometimes but mostly flushed fast and flew like their cousins the Ruffed Grouse, putting cover between them and the hunter.



The weather had them in coveys in the ravines with food and cover from the wind. The guide we had hired originally couldn't guide for us as his wife was delivering their child the day we arrived. So the owner took us out to his coverts and literally turned us loose. We were in six inches of new snow with more falling that first morning. We had driven onto a ranch to hunt the pastures and ravines. One spot with long ravines sloping up high buttes or low mountains, depending upon your viewpoint, proved to be challenging hunting but full of birds. The dogs were working scent immediately and Casey was on point some 50 yards out from the truck. I moved up to him expecting a Sharptail to explode out and over the ridge above us. Instead, a large rooster pheasant erupted from the snow covered branches where he had been loafing. Just as it cleared the Choke Cherry bushes, my pattern centered him and he dropped in the snow. Casey was on it and made a beautiful retrieve in his great style. Then, I noticed Covey some 20 yards up the Ravine, locked solid with that high tail and his mesmerizing look into the cover, waiting patiently for us! Boom, another rooster breaks out and rising fast, while I take a step to get better footing and take that bird with the other barrel for Covey. He retrieved it, circling around once to show his sire Casey he can play this game too! We turned back down the ravine and by now had about 10 inches of snow on the ground. We were walking to the truck when I see Covey in the snow way out ahead of us,

standing still in the middle of the pasture with high head and tail, which could mean a pheasant was likely before him. There was nothing around him for a half mile but snow, and never doubt his nose! I walked slowly past Covey and could now make out a rooster tail some ten yards in front of him under snow and grass. I readied my gun and took another few steps. The large beautiful ring neck lifted with snow flying everywhere and loudly cackling. I leveled my barrels over it and it folded at the shot, falling with a bounce and Covey was on it fast. He again retrieved it to me after a short parade for Casey. A great morning hunt! I walked on down the hill to a creek bed while Maura stayed in the truck with Nick, as it had gotten much colder now with 20 degrees and a breeze. I walked with the dogs as they started getting scent and working very slowly and carefully; but something about them was different. Sharptail maybe? Sure enough several flushed out ahead leaving me no shot, but we followed them along the brush filled ravine, staying low with the creek. Once again, the birds were here and the dogs were on point with Casey up front and Covey honoring him. I moved a step, and up went three Sharptails off to my left. I picked one out in front of the trio and fired; success that gave Casey another retrieve and a beautiful Sharptail. The feathers on these birds are stunning, with light tans and greys—maybe Mike McDonald can use them for his flies! We hunted this creek bed towards a stand of trees some one hundred



yards away and I could make out shapes in those trees, and sure enough, about 50 to 75 Sharptails were roosting there. We moved in slowly and I had to crawl under a fence to get in range. Casey and Covey were in the trees pointing into cover in the bottom of the creek bed. I stood there looking in amazement for a moment at what was in front of me. I have never seen that



many Grouse in one place, ever! Habitat is everything. Then, one bird lifted ever so slowly from the top of a tree and flew out to my right, gliding over the top of a nearby hill. I then came to my senses and moved in to where Casey was on point and his bird flushed left and high, giving me a good open shot. Casey retrieved the bird and by then the birds in the trees had all taken flight—an amazing sight. I noticed that one bird had flown down into the ravine below us, where Covey had

it pointed. I walked in but no flush. I stepped on past where I thought it was and of course wings sounded behind me. Smart birds these grouse, but I swung hard and my pattern found it squarely. What a wonderful day of gunning over bird dogs. We ended our trip in Montana with 9 Pheasant, 3 Hungarian Partridge and 10 Sharptail Grouse—and lots of even more amazing pictures of our beautiful country.

The next day I drove Maura back north to the airport in Billings, then headed our rig home towards Ohio. The two days to drive home gave the dogs and me some much needed rest, as well as some time to reflect on a grouse hunt that started in Maine in early October and ended in mid-November in Montana, traveling some 10,300 miles. That bucket list of mine, the one that listed a number of bird species—with one bird taken over each of my great Old Hemlock setters—had a big dent made in it now!

George Bird Evans has affected my life in many ways; directly through his writing and pointedly because he picked Briar as a sire in the OH line that decades later led to OH Casey coming to me. Jim Recktenwald picked Casey for me and I am eternally grateful to him and Barb for rearing such a fine litter, and to Roger Brown for carrying the torch forward.

So I will close with the following excerpts from GBE's Living with Gun Dogs, Chapter 1, Bright Moments, page 4 ----

“The Charm of gunning over gun dogs is the charm of dreams, the things we hope will happen, a continuum of things that did. We share this wonderment with our gun dogs”

“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. No small part of it is because we elevate these things to a level of the sublime--- our reverence for the game, our devotion to quality as concerns guns, our total immersion in our dogs. Game birds, game guns, game dogs are names that set these above others of their kind.”

George Bird Evans Living with Gun Dogs 1992

The Bowman Hoot Saves the Day

Kandice Tuttle

Preface: When hunting with Tom and Pam Bowman, occasionally we would separate or hold back, and when it came time to reunite Pam and Tom would “hoot” to locate each other. Bob and I adopted this method to communicate in the woods.

Now the Story:

We’ve taken this walk hundreds of times in back of the cabin in Rangeley. It had rained earlier and the sky was still quite overcast but we wanted to take Breeze and Fallon for a walk. Fallon stayed close, but Breeze explored the woods in search of grouse and woodcock scent. On our way back, just after we crossed the bridge over the river, Breeze went into the woods and before too long we heard his collar start to beep indicating he was on point. Bob and Fallon went to follow up on his point and I stayed on the road. The mosquitoes were thick and the woods were wet.

After a bit I could no longer hear the collar beeping and finally Bob “hooted” to get direction. I “hooted” back and waited. Bob “hooted” again but I realized that it was further away. He was going in the wrong

direction! Bob’s hearing aids will help amplify sound but he has a devil of a time figuring out which direction the sound is coming from. And of course Breeze wasn’t wearing his GPS collar. When we hunt he always uses the collar, as Bob can use this to tell the location of the dog. No need to bring a compass, we were just going for a walk. We hooted back and forth several more times and each time he was getting deeper and deeper into the woods. I thought of going in the woods myself but realized we did not need two lost souls.

My “hoots” became more panicked and finally Bob used the good sense God gave him and turned against his instinct and went in the opposite direction. Finally I could tell the “hoots” were getting closer. At last Bob emerged from the woods soaked and rattled.

Lesson learned. Going forward, the GPS and compass will accompany us on all ventures into the woods, no matter how familiar we think we are with the area.

By the way, Bob saw one (possibly two) young grouse fly out from Breeze’s point.



Introduction

Jamie Billman



My name is Jamie Billman, I am 23, from a small town north of Pittsburgh called Mars. I found myself in Morgantown in August of 2018 with little to no direction or idea of what I wanted to do. Thankfully, after some amazing professors and friends guided me, I found myself in the Public History Masters Program at WVU. Eager to start getting hands-on experience in my field, I started looking for the perfect internship that would allow me to learn in the field. I have an interest in architecture, museums, and archiving. So, needless to say, Old Hemlock is the perfect place for me to be serving with the AmeriCorps and fulfilling my internship requirements.

So far, my experience at Old Hemlock has been great! There is nothing more beautiful than driving through the fog covered valleys on the drive out to Bruceton Mills, excited at what the day has in store for me. I have very much found myself enthralled in George Bird Evans' writing, and how poetically and

eloquently he speaks of the forest, hunting, and of course his beloved setters. I am currently enjoying *Death in Four Colors* and I must say I am hooked! I've been reading it during all my free time, and I cannot wait to figure out who done it!

I am very much looking forward to working here with Helen Ann and LeJay and learning more about George Bird and Kay Evans and the area. I hope to gain hands on experience through this AmeriCorps position on what it means to maintain a historic structure, museum building, and the property that comes along with it. Further, I very much am looking forward to exploring the forests here and bringing my 5-year-old Beagle Mix along with me! I am very much looking forward to meeting all of the people who are involved with Old Hemlock and also working towards getting more people involved with the Old Hemlock Foundation.



What Is and What Should Never Be

Mike Krol

A few of you older rockers will recall this as the name of a tune from Led Zeppelin's second album. I was a fan back in the day, back when I had hair (and a lot of it). What follows is a tale of the natural losses I have experienced in my lifetime ... and no, I'm not talking about my hair!

Pheasants

When I was a kid growing up in upstate NY pheasants were everywhere. Back in the 60's, men would take opening week of pheasant season as vacation just like they did for deer season. My Mom got me a mutt from the Humane Society when I was six, a lovely little gal we named Lady. Black and white, we were told she was part English setter. Lady was my constant companion, and would be with me as I matured into a young man. We would roam nearby fields, and she would be after pheasants constantly. She never pointed, but boy was she keen on birds. No one in my family hunted, so her efforts until late in her life were largely wasted, but she and I had a grand time together. As a kid I would fire my BB gun at those cock birds, of course to no avail. And one time she even caught one and retrieved it to me. A neighbor showed me how to clean it, my Mom cooked it, and I tasted my first game bird at the age of 10 or so.



Pheasants continued to be abundant until the early 80's, and I was able to enjoy the tail end of what was a wonderful resource into my early 30's, but they were becoming increasingly scarce. Those fields I roamed growing up became malls, car dealerships, and subdivisions. Farming practices changed and hawks were far more abundant than they were in my youth (many feel the banning of DDT contributed to this upswing in the hawk population. DDT made their eggs brittle and hatching success was poor). I recall our conservation department doing telemetry studies with pheasants in the early 80's and if my memory is served, 60% of the pheasant kills were attributed to hawks. All of the above factors contributed to the demise of wild pheasants in NY. There are still small isolated pockets of wild birds here and there, and I love to hear them crowing in the springtime, a sound so associated with my youth; but I wouldn't even consider hunting them, special resource that they are. The State now releases a good number of pheasants each fall, and of course game farms provide constant action, but neither is quite the same as going after wild birds with long tail feathers.

Woodchucks

These critters became a key target for me when I became 16 and could finally own a real gun. As I noted above, no one in my family hunted so I had to wait until 16 to get a hunting license, such was the law at the time if you had no one older to take you hunting. Woodchucks were everywhere, and farmers welcomed you with open arms to hunt them. I must confess to the bloodthirsty attributes of youth, so my best friend Steve and I went after them with a passion. This would also bring out the beginnings of a habitual gun trader, something that never left me, even to this day (but I am getting better, honest!). As I went from one

woodchuck gun to another, constantly upgrading, hand loading my ammo, I would eventually find myself with a heavy-barreled Remington 700 in .22-250 caliber that within reason (say out to 400 yards off a steady rest), you knew what the outcome would be before you pulled the trigger. By this time I had killed a LOT of woodchucks, had gotten a lot of “the kill” out of my system, and was just becoming interested in bow hunting, so one day on a whim I brought that Remington to our local sporting goods dealer and traded it for a complete bow hunting outfit. This singular event saved my buddy and me from experiencing the tragedy of a lifetime. The following weekend Steve and I were out on one of our favorite local farms, he with his Dad’s .22 Hornet, and I with my bow for the first time. We were on the edge of a large clover field when we spotted a woodchuck about 180 yards away. Steve was about to take the shot, settled in and safety off, when he noted the woodchuck was just below a small rise. He suggested I take my bow, work around the rise which I could use as cover, and when I crested it the ‘chuck would only be 20 yards away or so. Off I went, and the plan worked perfectly... except for the fact that when I crested the rise, the “woodchuck” turned out to be another woodchuck hunter, lying prone in the high clover, not wearing a hat; what we had seen through Steve’s older Weaver K4 scope was the hunter’s head. After all these years my knees still get a bit wobbly just telling this story; that morning I nearly collapsed realizing what we had almost done. Needless to say, that other hunter learned a lesson as well, and I’ll bet he never hunted woodchucks again without a hat!

I would continue to hunt woodchucks until my early 30’s, but never with the passion of my youth. We used

to have good numbers of them on the farm next to our home, and our son Gray made his first kill on a woodchuck at about the age of 10, we still have a picture of him with a wide grin, holding up a ‘chuck nearly half as big as he is. My beloved Old Hemlock Shay was a woodchuck killing machine. I would take him for his evening walk in the clover field next to the house, and on a number of occasions a woodchuck would pop up in the clover to check us out. Shay would lock into a solid point, and I would say “Mr. Woodchuck, if you hold still you’ll be OK but if you break, you’re in trouble”... and sure enough, the ‘chuck would dash for his den. Shay would be off like a rocket, the usual end result being Shay trotting back to me, head held high, dead ‘chuck in his mouth, just as proud of that woodchuck as any cock grouse, even sitting to deliver as he always did throughout his long life.

As coyotes became increasingly abundant in NY, the woodchucks gradually disappeared. I will still see the occasional ‘chuck around the house, but nothing like they were back in the old days. When I was getting Grayson started in hunting in the late 90’s we would look for them in the fields near our camp in southern NY, but even here they had become scarce. Of course the farmers are happy, and nobody really cares that much about a lowly woodchuck... except perhaps us aging woodchuck hunters who have fond memories of days long ago when we were able to purge that bloodlust from our systems.

Trout

For much of my adult life I was an avid fly fisherman. I am blessed by having a very fine trout stream 20 minutes from home, Oatka Creek. Oatka is fed by



Spring Brook in the nearby town of Caledonia. Spring Brook is a natural spring-fed limestone stream that never freezes, and Caledonia is the home of the first fish hatchery in the Western Hemisphere, built in 1864. Because Spring Brook feeds Oatka, it too never freezes for Oatka itself has many small springs feeding it throughout its length from where Spring Brook enters it. This creates a wonderful environment for brown trout, who are able to naturally reproduce from season to season, a wild trout fishery just minutes from home. Oatka also has a state fishing area where the public is welcome, and this stretch of stream was my home in the spring and summer for about three decades. Being public, it could get crowded at times during the big hatches of mayflies and caddis flies, but you could always find a spot for yourself during the evening hatches and spinnerfalls. I would be there at least three times a week during peak season.

Just east of the public water is a private fishing club that owns or leases another mile of Oatka, known as the Garbutt Club. Membership is limited, you need to be sponsored, and there is a long waiting list. I had a friend sponsor me, and I think I was on the waiting list for ten years before I got in, but it finally happened, and I had found nirvana! Many of the members were much older than myself and seldom fished. Gone were the crowds of the public water, I would often find myself with vast stretches of the river to myself. In addition to this stretch of Oatka, the club also owns a nice stretch of Spring Brook upstream from the hatchery. There is a large mansion on these grounds next to the stream, and the fishing there was so spectacular that even Teddy Roosevelt fished what is now the club water. To make this even more unique, many years ago club members built what was called the boardwalk, which was essentially a wooden dock going through the center of the stream for the length of our property. Just think about that for a second: you could fly fish this entire length of the stream and never get your feet wet! The first time my sponsor friend brought me

there the trout were so numerous that I was told “feel free to keep your fish, Mike; you’re really doing the stream a favor by reducing the population a bit”. After years of catch and release, what a treat to have wild trout for supper! I treasured top quality fishing for many, many years.

Over time the wooden boardwalk deteriorated and no longer was safe. Alas the stream bottom here is largely silt, so is unsafe to wade, and so for a fashion we lost this wonderful fishery. It was such a treasure we as a club discussed how we might rebuild it. The current owner of the mansion is a very wealthy gentleman who lives in California, using the mansion as a summer retreat for his family. He was sympathetic to our plight, and offered to defray the cost of the boardwalk rebuild by 50%. So 7 years ago, the club engaged a local company to rebuild the boardwalk with steel and rebar, to the tune of \$180,000. We as members are still paying against the loan via annual assessments; it may not be paid back in my lifetime, but we have a boardwalk to dream about.

What, you ask, could possibly go wrong with this picture? The answer: weather. About five years ago we experienced cold weather that was unprecedented. The Niagara River actually froze over, stranding hundreds of thousands of Mergansers, many of whom died. But some found their way inland in their quest for survival, and a number of them found their way to Oatka and Spring Brook. In one winter they consumed all but the largest of trout in both waters. Spring Brook was almost devoid of trout altogether, and the remaining trout on Oatka were very scarce. No problem, you say, you have the oldest hatchery in America at your doorstep, but all NY hatcheries raise their fish for release on public water. Private clubs like ours cannot purchase fish from them. OK, you say, get your fish from another state, problem solved? Not for our Spring Brook property. Because it is upstream from the hatchery no fish can be released in fear of introducing diseases to the fragile ecosystem of Spring Brook. So

now we have a boardwalk that is truly spectacular for which we will be paying for many years, and zero trout. We have been able to do some stocking on our Oatka water, but survival rate for the released fish is poor and many find their way navigating through our water into the public water above us; what was once a wonderful naturally reproducing wild brown trout fishery is largely a thing of the past.

Grouse and Woodcock

This sad tale now brings me to the birds near and dear to all our hearts. When I began upland hunting seriously in 1978 (most of my 20's were spent chasing big game with my bow), grouse and woodcock seemed to be everywhere in any covert I explored in western NY. The hunting was so good there was hardly a day in which I didn't bring home a bird or two. I kept a journal religiously, and would tally up season totals each year, counting flushes, points, kills, shooting percentages, etc. By now a devout member of the church of George Bird Evans, I tried to mirror his magical life with Kay and their beloved setters, even to the point of having crystal decanters into which I would place the wishbones of every grouse killed, each dog having its own decanter. These decanters are still displayed on my desk, many of them overflowing. My first Old Hemlock setter, Blossom, would amass more than 500 grouse points and 1,000 woodcock points in her lifetime, and we never left my NY coverts.

Over the span of about three decades this picture didn't change a lot. Of course you would have some down years due to the grouse cycle, but they would bounce back, although I did notice each rebound wasn't as good as it had been previously. And then about ten years ago things got worse, especially for the

grouse. Woodcock numbers continued to be strong though, affording good action for the dogs even though I didn't shoot many. My crystal decanters became somewhat of a joke. I just checked Dream's decanter: it contains 18 grouse wishbones... Dream turned 10 last October. Up until the last three years we could still count on good woodcock action to offset our loss of grouse, but even these delightful little birds have become hard to come by. I have now resigned myself that if we are to get into grouse and woodcock I will be forced to travel, likely out of state... and that is what I intend to do in the future.

I'll close this bleak tale with a brief discussion about trees. When I was a kid growing up in a suburb of Rochester, the street next to mine was lined with majestic elm trees. I well recall our dismay and sorrow when in my late teens the town came in and took them all down, they being the victim of Dutch Elm disease. Now we have the lovely emerald ash borer. The little three acre woods that we own with our house is probably 60% ash. All are dead or dying. We have spent a lot of money taking out those trees close to the house, and will be spending more in the future. Ash is predominant in western NY, and all the trees are doomed. During high winds power failures are now commonplace, and this will be the picture for the foreseeable future.

What is and what should never be indeed.

The good news is that I am still of sound mind (my wife Merely might argue that point at times) and body, and at the age of 68 am still able to "take a dog, a gun and go", and go I will for as long as I am blessed with "those proud headed dogs that hunt game birds in autumn".

"I can think of nothing quite as gratifying as discovering a grouse cover like the Bruce place, treating it as it should be treated, gunning it with exquisite care."

George Bird Evans An Affair with Grouse 1982

News from the Old Hemlock Foundation

LeJay Graffious

The Center for Service and Learning (CSL) was honored to have LeJay Graffious as the featured speaker at their annual Community Partner/Faculty Networking Breakfast event in the Mountainlair on WVU's Morgantown Campus September 4th. The Old Hemlock Foundation (OH) has been an official partner of the CSL since 2007 and was the 2019 recipient of the WVU Community Partner Award for Excellence in Community Engagement. LeJay has served on the CSL's Partnership Advisory Board since 2014. He spoke with over 70 Non-profit partners and faculty members about how to identify student strengths and interests and apply them in creative ways that served both student learning and the goals of OH. OH has supported a wide variety of rich student learning experiences ranging from dendrology to literary analysis to historic preservation. Students have described lifelong impacts from their service, shaping the way they view nature and the role art, literature and history play in the conservation of natural resources. After the event, LeJay and Helen Ann shared the OH story and volunteer opportunities with nearly one hundred students during the annual Service Expo in the Mountainlair.

Catherine Whitworth

Community Partner Coordinator

WVU Center for Service and Learning



Engagement Talk Text

LeJay Graffious

Thanks for the opportunity to share Old Hemlock Foundation today. Catherine asked me to discuss my interactions with volunteers.

Basically, my approach is to follow the “Golden Rule” of treating others the way that I want to be treated.

Before the Old Hemlock Foundation came into existence, I had the pleasure of meeting George Bird Evans and Kay Evans in 1974. In the late 1980's, they asked me to be their executor and to administer their estate as an educational foundation.

George was an artist for Cosmopolitan Magazine in the 1930's and 1940's. He and Kay collaborated on mystery novels in the 1950's and 60's. Then, along with many popular national outdoor magazine articles, George wrote 19 upland hunting books before his death in 1998.

He also developed a line of English setters registered with the Field Dog Stud Book.

In 1939, they purchased 232 acres with a log home built in 1815, deeded in 1782. The property is on the National Registry of Historic Places. We have five miles of trails and a virgin stand of hemlock. We also operate a bird banding station during breeding season.

The foundation was established in 2008. Our mission of preserving and promoting the legacy of George and Kay is mainly served via medical scholarships, scholarships for Bruceton-area students, grants to Bruceton School for Art and Literary education, gifts to the Preston County Humane Society and the local historical society.

As you can see, we have many facets to our organi-

zation. Since we have an endowment from the Evans's estate, I can focus on the educational component of our foundation.

Personally, my background includes 12 years as a middle school teacher and 24 years as a principal with post-graduate degrees in Curriculum and Instruction, and Public School Administration.

OHF differs from many other organizations in that we have a national clientele rather than a local one. So as I work to advance our mission nationally, I can also focus locally in operating as an authentic learning laboratory for students of all ages.

Our association with WVU Service and Learning has been a tremendous asset for us and, I believe, for WVU students, too.

To address Catherine's request to share my approach to engaging students: basically, it boils down to management and leadership.

My administrative focus is to manage myself and assets of Old Hemlock. Our student engagements are either volunteering for service projects such as trail/ground maintenance, projects posted on iServe such as proper care of artifacts and papers in our archives, or outdoors projects such as evasive species abatement.

The second major type of engagement exists on the academic front as with Dr. Oppe's Strategic Communication students, Leadership classes, or Public History interns. Here, management is my preparation prior to meeting the volunteers or students. Prep is having all the tools, materials and intellectual property ready to get started. Secondly, I try to know something about the volunteers prior to their arrival at Old Hemlock. This is usually via social media or Google search. My goal is to use this information to make a personal connection with each individual.

As a teacher, my instruction was based on learning objectives. The standard is Bloom's Taxonomy which is a classification of learning objectives. It is divided into three domains: cognitive (thinking); affective

(emotion/feeling); and psychomotor (physical/kinesthetic).

My goal as a leader is to bring out the best in the team. As I start by making a personal connection with each member, I focus on the affective domain. If you think about any national election in recent years, more votes were influenced via the affective domain by appealing to emotions and feelings more so than the cognitive domain. An affective approach is a powerful motivator.

My initial contact is an informal interview where I work to foster some personal connection with each student. An example was when Michigan's Alma College Lacrosse team came to OH for an afternoon of service. Prior to arrival, I reviewed their school's webpage which had news about players and tidbits such as their hometown and accomplishments. One young player from upstate New York had received a player of the year award, and was invited to play summer lacrosse in Australia. I greeted her by name and said "Nice to meet famous people." She looked at her coach and said, "Am I famous?" I responded by noting how few young women from a small town in upstate NY were able to make their mark in college lacrosse and have an opportunity to go to Australia.

As I continue to engage students during the initial conversation, I ask questions that help me assess which learning modality they are most comfortable using. I base this on Howard Gardner's work on the Nine Multiple Intelligences. This helps me structure how the student will take-in the information and formulate best way to guide their output.

Once the project is underway, I do not micro-manage. From my years of supervising teachers and volunteers in the school system, I have learned that there are many routes to same destination. So I focus on the outcome and not the output. The steps that they might choose may not be my way, but the outcome should be agreed mission.

Crucial along the way is to monitor progress toward the goal. You may have heard the adage “What gets monitored, gets done.” This does two things; it makes me available to the students and allows me to make suggestions if needed.

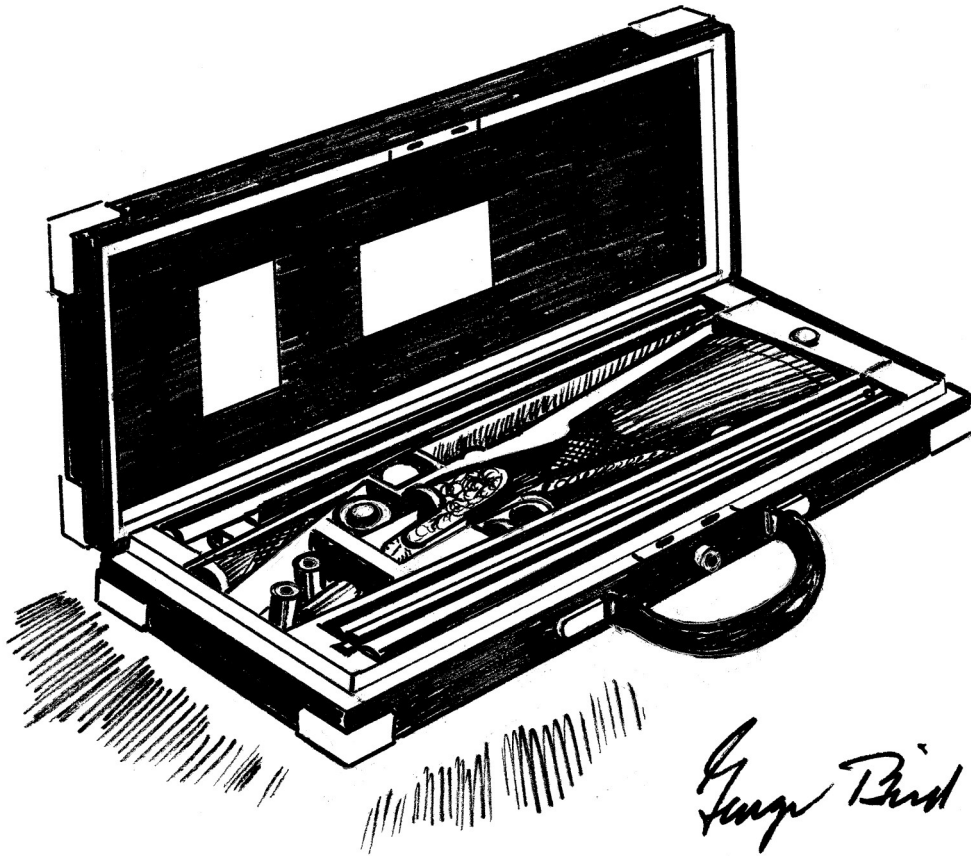
Evaluation is the final component of any project. My strategy with evaluation is to guide their self-reflection. I will read the content objectives and ask the student to reflect on their work. I usually follow up with a question such as, “If you were to do the project again, would you do anything differently?” This is a metacognition approach to evaluation.

I also stress that there are no failures, only learning opportunities. Some of the greatest advancements in science are due to failed experiments. The

difference is being able to learn and grow from the experiences. An example from one of the Strategic Communication projects was to plan a workday. The previous year we had great success getting volunteers on Greek Day. So we decided to plan for that date this year, but we had a very poor response. The reason was a challenge related to travel that ultimately excluded Old Hemlock. Analysis of their work and effort show they did everything a high level, but something out of their control had an effect.

In conclusion, my advice is “Manage Yourself” and “Lead Others” through making connections, being positive, monitoring advancement toward an outcome. There are no failures, only learning opportunities.

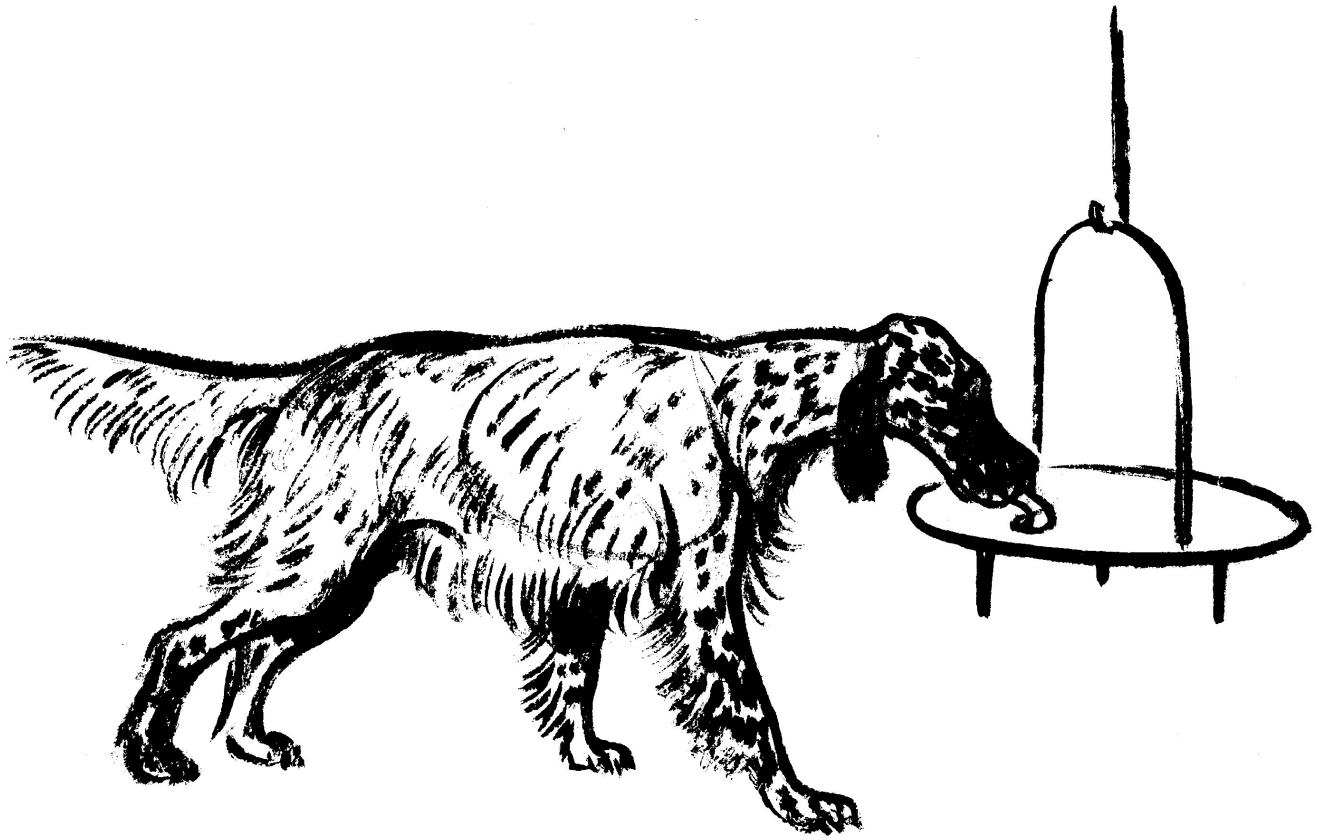




George Bird Evans

“I had on shooting gloves so I could handle the guns freely. The stock was extremely straight, with the checkered wood butt of a standard London best.”

George Bird Evans The Upland Shooting Life 1971



BLUE

*“Good things seem to come at the end of day —
rare moments would be as rare, fair thoughts as fair
at any hour, but because the day is dying
each is the more precious as the lordly ridges swallow Time.”*

George Bird Evans An Affair with Grouse 1982

Editor's Note

This edition of the Letter is late, preparation pushed well into prime hunting season for many of us, mostly by circumstances beyond anyone's control. I hope yours is as good as the one I'm sharing with October John.

If brevity is the soul of wit, and it sometimes is, these passages from George's lyric writing best express the essence of this time.

"Autumn is the Season, colors and smells and fantasies, a sense of transience, magic lost with the sweet hurt of its passing making it sweeter."

"I think there are few sights more lovely than dusking woodcock in a sorrowing sunset sky."

"It is easy to be hypnotized into thinking it will last, and then the leaves of the North Porch Maple suddenly turn gypsy and are gone."

Bruce Buckley



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