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From the Master

Cubbing started out smoothly. The runs lasted just as one expects them to last: brisk for an hour then the temperature climbs, the dew melts and scent melts with it. The youngsters entered without a hitch apart from a few who choose to visit neighbors during an oyster festival.

With a little luck from the weather, signs pointed to a wonderful season with the usual lull in November. And it played out that way except that November, though scenting was difficult, showed us better days than most Novembers.

Then the bottom dropped out right around Thanksgiving and has lasted a month. Without resorting to hyperbole, I can testify that this has been the worst month of hunting I have ever known. Hounds pick up a line and three minutes later, it vanishes. On three occasions we have endured completely blank days which is very unusual for us. God bless those hounds because they never give up. At Cherry Hill, Sunday, January 6, Epiphany, hounds and I searched for cold air currents. Given that by eleven the mercury was in the sixties, we had our work cut out for us but we did find them. On one occasion the hounds stood on their hind legs, eau de vulpe wafted on that higher current and then it lifted right over their heads.

Feeling downcast at breakfast, Lisa Winkler and her husband Matt, members from Hyde Park, New York whose main affiliations are with Chatham Hunt and Milbrook in New York state, told us they



were experiencing the worst season in memory. They've enjoyed only two good runs all year. And I thought we were suffering.

However, how can it be bad when you're riding through a landscape breathtaking in beauty, filled with bounty, accompanied by bracing friends and forward you can see a dedicated pack of hounds working their hearts out? This is followed by the legendary Oak Ridge breakfasts.

We are fortunate.

However, hounds and I want to push our foxes. They should be traveling in twos, the grays first, then the reds. If the temperature doesn't drop and stay down, we might get a line but it will fade. If the weather cooperates, the best of the season is before us. As all experienced foxhunters know, February is the jewel in the crown.

Yours for the hounds,

RMB

From the Editor

Some things in our lives remain a part of us, regardless of how long we've been away from them. Being editor of Hark to the Line is like that for me. I'm delighted to be back "in the saddle again". The newsletter is the heartbeat of the club. It is how we connect and communicate between hunts. Please bear with me as I experiment to determine what works best with the email format. Let me know what you think. Please contribute your ideas, your photos and your articles. Like the club, the newsletter functions best when every member takes an active role. My email address is

ccsgreen@aol.com

Looking forward to hearing from you all - Cindy Green -



OAK RIDGE FOX-HUNT CLUB CELEBRATES 120TH YEAR ANNIVERSARY
NOVEMBER 4, 2007

More Tales From the Tail

This past year has been a great year of learning experiences. I've certainly learned a lot and there is plenty more ahead. I also realize there are many unwritten rules that we assume everyone knows. Some of these apply to all aspects of life, not just foxhunting.

First of all, to identify the three flights: The Field, or First Flight, follows the hounds and the Huntsman over jumps. The Second Flight, or Hilltoppers, follows the field closely, but may take small obstacles, i.e. logs. Third Flight, also called Hilltoppers, does not take any jumps and most often goes much slower for new members and green horses. This flight is rated to accommodate all but is still not a trail ride or a baby-sitting service.

Be on time and ready to move off ten minutes before cast time. Make sure you arrive early enough to be tacked up and mounted. Many members choose to tack up before arriving. This gives you time to have your stirrups adjusted, the girth properly tightened, tack clean, your stock tie tied, your helmet adjusted, and your horse clean and hopefully fit. To tack up ahead of time is a personal decision, but for horses that have never hunted, arriving

More Tales from the Tail (cont.)

tacked up can save some fidgeting and give you and your horse time to settle a few nerves.

Third Flight cannot wait for latecomers or we're out of the hunt from the beginning. That means we are always standing around, looking and listening to hear the hounds or the horn. That's when riders get bored and start talking. Then we certainly cannot hear the horn or the hounds, and stand around even longer. The last thing we want to do is disturb the Huntsman's covert. Rita Mae wouldn't like that!

This is a foxhunt not a trail-ride. You must be able to walk and trot down a hill. You need to be able to ride a slow canter, situation allowing. If I am leading a group and I don't know the skill level of all the riders, we may have to eliminate the canter. If I am leading a group I am familiar with, many times we can keep Second Flight in sight.

During the hunt is not the time for a riding lesson. This would be like learning to ride and play polo at the same time, or entering a car race when you don't know how to drive well. This is a dangerous sport and you must stay focused.

Please do not move up and down within your flight. That's like pushing your way to the front of the Walmart line and causing trouble. You may ask permission from your Field Master, but never just blast by. Many accidents are caused this way.

You may, with permission from your Field Masters, switch flights. However this is not encouraged because it can be confusing. The Field Masters are responsible for keeping up with the count of who is behind them. It is impossible to keep an accurate count if riders are constantly changing flights.

Ride behind, not beside your Master. Never pass a Master. Members with colors ride before those with buttons, and others behind them. Guests should be invited to ride up front if they wish. If you bring a new person to the hunt, especially in Second or Third Flight, it is your responsibility to stay with them until they are familiar with the rules and are comfortable on their own.

Juniors ride in back and generally are expected to get the gates. Only one designated rider stays at the back to open and close gates. Only one other rider should stay with him. This is usually a junior, or groom, but others may do so. The Flight does not wait for them, so it would be best if they were familiar with the territory.

Don't follow too closely behind or beside another horse. Leave at least one horse length between horses.

SCENES FROM NOVEMBER 4TH, OPENING HUNT



DR. MARY O'BRIEN RECEIVES THE JEAN BEEGLE SERVICE & LEADERSHIP AWARD.



HONORARY WHIP EMILY SCHILLING RIDING OUT AFTER HOUNDS.



JUNIOR EMMA WADE LISTENS INTENTLY TO THE MASTER.



AT THE BREAKFAST MEMBERS TOOK TO THE DANCE FLOOR TO STRUT THEIR STUFF.

**Congratulations
Class of 2007**

Colors

**James Culleton
Thomas McEldoff
Haley Osborne
Lindsey Osborne
Emma Wade
Rachel Wade**

Buttons

**Susanne Nifong Baker
Hannah Gardner
Teresa Gilbert
David Gilliam
Marilee Lindbeck
Nicola Steffanina**

Welcome New Members

**Pattie Boden
Mark and Karen Catron
Darek Chamera
Mary Corbett
Andrea Danforth
Rachel McMahan
Susan Migliore
Kathryn Morgan
Frederic Rouay
Julie Taylor
Cheryl Tsakis
Deborah Wray**

More Tales from the Tale (cont.)

If you hear “Staff” back your horse off the trail and wait. The horse should face the trail. If you hear “Reverse” turn your horse around and go back where you came from, keeping in the order you were already in.

When crossing water, once across, wait and make sure the person behind you gets across. Then you move on and that person waits for the next person and so on down the line.

If you should have an “unexpected dismount”, you should bring a bottle for the club bar complete with a poem to read at the next hunt. Juniors bring a six-pack of soft drinks and a poem.

If you must go in early for any reason, **your Master must be informed.** Someone may be sent in with you to lead you safely back and insure you don’t interfere with the day’s sport. It is always wiser to leave in pairs.

In parting, everyone on the hunt should be helpful and mindful of others. Again, I recommend the booklet *Riding to Hounds in America* by William P. Wadsworth. The cost is \$5.00 or less. It is an excellent introduction for new foxhunters and a good brush-up for all of us. Tally Ho!

- Gretchen Robb -

A Hunting Spider

If you can identify a happy motorcyclist by the bugs on his teeth then you can identify a happy foxhunter by the spider webs on his or her cap.

On October 7, fall in its first blush, provided us with crickets singing louder, katydids clicking outside the windows at night, banana spiders so fat they’re scary and the huge pileated woodpeckers bellowing in the woods. The game shifts around a bit, some already considering winter quarters. A few trees, willows mostly, started changing colors.

While hunting, I pay attention to everything around me whether plant or animal. At this time of year I can’t miss the spiders. The wolf spiders on the ground are huge and the banana spiders are big splotches of black and yellow.

Banana spiders tend to be emotional. Walk up to a web, poke it gently with a twig and she’ll do her trampoline shake. The more upset the spider, the more she’ll push herself back and forth. By this time of year, the

spiders you see are female having dispatched the males. For spiders it’s: Divorce, never. Murder, yes.

The bananas, along with some others, are ones that spin magical gossamer webs. Usually you see the web and can avoid it. What gets you are the long filaments attaching to trees and bushes.

Trotting through the woods, that October day, I noticed ground webs or fairy nets, little conical webs down into holes, odd triangular webs on trees and of course, the full blown wheel spider webs.

Silver Investor and I along with the hounds are first. Usually we clear the webs for you all. Sunday was no exception. We were at Tea-Time and had a nice go early on but by eight-thirty, scent was rising. So hounds and I dropped down by the creek bed moving up towards the mailboxes. It’s low and while it had been dry, there’s some moisture there.

A Hunting Spider (cont.)

By now the dew burned off which had helped hold some scent so we had to really cast about for any tantalizing oral bouquet.

One enormous spider web spanned the entire path. Silver Investor saw it and dropped his head, thanks old fellow, so I hung on the side in a poor imitation of a Plains Indian. That web was so big, I caught some of it. Well, Vestor didn't have a spider in his ear so he didn't notice that I had sticky strands all over my shoulder.

All was well until I blew the horn. Fizzle.

Tried again. Gurgle.

Vestor was embarrassed since I can usually produce a loud, clear tootle.

I shook my horn to clan out the spit that collects. (That's why you'll see seated horn players with a towel on the floor sometimes.)

Tried again. Piffle.

I looked inside the bell and glaring back at me with eight tiny black eyes was a displeased banana spider.

In theory, given her size relative to mine, she should have easily been dislodged. Mind you, she wasn't the world's largest banana but she wasn't the smallest either.

You've seen insects crawl up a wall or upside down on a ceiling. Usually they have tiny, tiny spikes on their feet and legs that allow them to defy gravity. Spiders, depending on the spider, also have a bit of sticky if they need it.

I'd already carried a leaf spider on my cap that day only to discover our natures were incompatible. But at least the leaf spider didn't return my gaze with fury.

No amount of shaking dislodged Mrs. Banana. This current arachnid relationship was lasting much longer than that with Mrs. Leaf and at least Mrs. Leaf didn't interfere with my duties although I hoped she didn't drop off my cap and down my neck.

Blowing was useless.

The hunt was winding down but hounds kept their noses to the ground. On October 7 we'd only had 17 inches of rainfall. By that

time we've usually had double that. So getting in another long run on hard ground did not seem promising. Still, it's nice to signal to one's far-flung two whippers-in just where we are.

I looked at her again and she gave me the truly "hairy eyeball".

Poppy and Powerball, when I suggested to the pack that we call it a day, stared at me then moved up to the main road. I asked again at the St. Thomas Equinus sign. This time Powerball charged off, not speaking and the others followed. Now I know my hounds. Even though silent, they would not dump me in a pack. While they're pretty good citizens even the young entry can suffer from an excess of enthusiasm.

Trust your hounds.

If you don't trust your hounds what the hell are you doing out there? PopPop (my maternal grandfather) must have said that to me a hundred times. So I didn't chastise my children but followed them.

Rise, Powerball, Warner and Poppy charged to the large round hay bales. Within a trice, the rest joined them. On top of the bales rested this morning's breakfast, a remnant of a joint bone. A few bales behind, scat right on top of the bale and on the ground, more fresh bones. Hounds leapt onto the bales, others circling below. Of course, our quarry was in there refusing to honor us with his presence. Who can blame him? Also the temperature had to be in the high 70's by now. We were all boiling in our jackets. But that's hunting, you'll boil or freeze.

Unpleasant words were exchanged between our fox and Powerball who adamantly refused to come off those hay bales. Mrs. Banana chose this moment to depart, dropping out of the horn and onto a hay bale. Given her loud outfit, she was hard to miss.

It was a good parting for both of us as there was no future in the relationship.

-- RMB --

Kennel Fencing

A member who wishes to remain anonymous gave us the funds to re-fence the old kennels and to close in Herbie's run. We've been chipping away at it and the old kennels are completed. Herb's run should be finished by the third week in January.

A new well was dug to service Herbie's run and to provide water to the new, as yet un-built kennels.

Another member, again wishing to remain behind the curtains, provided us the money to clear the site for the new kennels. As the ground has teetered between hard as a brick then a bog we're waiting for good conditions

and the availability of the bulldozer wizard. The unparalleled generosity of these members is overwhelming. I so wish I could identify them because they deserve our gratitude. Hard times are upon us with gas prices and worse to follow yet.

The place looks terrific and the hounds know it. Spring, when Cindy Chandler (who has donated Leland Cypress, her expertise and she always throws in bulbs and goodies) designs the gardening, the place will be both practical and pretty.

Oak Ridge hounds live the life!

Deep Run and Keswick to the Rescue

Many old hounds were retired after cubbing. Two died in their sleep after fabulous hunts. Strange to say, this happens frequently. It's as though an old hound is an apple tree giving off it's most beautiful and full bloom right at the end.

How happy I was that they lived rich lives doing what they were born to do. Having said that, I miss them (Bouncer and Buckle among them) beyond measure.

Bless Tony Gammell and Adrian Smith, huntsmen of Keswick and Deep Run respectively, for drafting us good, made hounds. These two young men, at the top of

their careers, don't have to give us anything. Their doing so is a vote of confidence in Oak Ridge and we are grateful not just for the hounds but for the lift.

The drafts have blended in with the pack and are hunting nicely.

Should you ever hunt with Keswick or Deep Run, do thank the Huntsmen for their kindness as well as the Masters. As these are subscription packs, the huntsmen must have the master's approval to draft hounds.

We are indeed fortunate to have many friends and we are the better for it.

"TO HUNT HOUNDS IS AN ART. WHEN A HUNTSMAN HAS A PACK OF HOUNDS THAT WILL HUNT AT THE TOP OF THEIR FORM AND WHEN HE CAN MAKE TWENTY COUPLE OF HOUNDS DO WHAT HE LIKES, HE FEELS ON TOP OF THE WORLD."

- THE DUKE OF BEAUFORT, K. G., MFH -

Big Beans

New Year's Hunt witnessed the glorious announcement of Bob Satterfield becoming a Joint-Master.

Our club is growing so much, new territory being added, that David and I, both of whom have demanding careers, were struggling just to maintain.

Bob is truly the man for the tasks at hand and David and I danced a jig when he succumbed to our siren call.

If Oak Ridge had a motto, it would be,

“A stranger is a friend you haven't met yet. Bob embodies that as all of you know.

Congratulations to Mr. Satterfield who will be buoyed up as always by his great looking wife, Sue. I don't understand how I get older looking and Sue just keeps improving.

Come to think of it, Bob doesn't look half bad himself. He's fitter than men in their thirties and smarter than twenty crickets.

Folks, fasten your seat belts, this airplane is gaining altitude! Bob's in the cockpit.



Make plans now to attend the Oak Ridge Hunt Ball, March 29, 2008.

Tickets are \$80 per adult and \$40 per junior under the age of 21.

We'll be rocking and rolling with the Waller Family Band.

Dinner will be superb, with excellent wines flowing.

The Silent Auction will be fabulous.

Get a group of friends together and reserve a table. Non-members are welcome.

Reservations taken on a first-come, first-serve basis.

For more information contact Lynn Stevenson 434-361-2331