



# Hark to the Line

<http://www.oakridgefoxhuntclub.com>  
Huntline: 540.456.8787

*The Newsletter for the Oak Ridge Fox Hunt Club*  
*April 2007*

## Master's Report

*Huntsman*

*Dr. Rita Mae Brown, MFH*

*Joint Master*

*David Wheeler, MFH*

*Professional Whipper-In*

*Dana Flaherty*

*Hon. Whipper-In*

*Dr. Mary T. O'Brien*

**TASR  
Multi-Discipline Event  
Memorial Day Weekend  
at Oak Ridge Estate**

**Events for everyone  
throughout the weekend-  
with a Hunter Pace on-  
Monday**

**Details and entry forms at**  
[http://www.tasregistry.com/  
tasr\\_spring\\_open\\_07.htm](http://www.tasregistry.com/tasr_spring_open_07.htm)

### Did You Ever?

It may have been the winter of 1953 but it was the first half of the 'Fifties and I remember there was an odd heat wave in the winter. Seems like everyone my mother spoke to started off by exclaiming, "Did you ever?"

Well, did you ever experience a season like 2006-2007? I never did. Started out gangbusters, and then came the long, long six weeks of dry heat, enlivened by the occasional cold day. Finally, January held hope, although it was spotty, whereas usually January and February are good months. But still, we enjoyed some long runs, many viewings, and the hound work made those cold toes worth the tingle.

February 2, Friday, gave hounds hope that this would be a rock n' roll month. We met at the Run-In Shed at 9:00AM, rather a crisp morning, slightly overcast. Three couple of youngsters mixed into the pack, a bit much in retrospect, but they'd been doing great in couples so we thought, let's push it a bit.

We pushed it all right. John drove the hounds down in the party wagon. He no sooner opened the door than the whole pack exploded, as though shot out of a cannon. Emily Schilling tore down the road, wise, because there's

no point getting behind the hounds. I think Mary O'Brien may have been ahead of her, but still in Mrs. Carter's field. Dana, on the north side, did exactly what she was supposed to do, she stayed in position. I sat and blew the horn. I couldn't believe it. Puppies have moments of undisciplined exuberance, but this was outrageous and, of course, we had a rather nice little field that day.

Finally, Emily and Mary turned the hounds back. I noted that the older hounds, like Bracket, wore pained expressions on their faces. No sooner did they reach me, no sooner did I say, "Lieu in," than they burnt the wind going right back where they came from. Heads up!

Stupid me. It was when I saw my steady eddies that I realized they winded the fox and they caught the scent the second they stepped off the trailer. Now in the best of all possible worlds, they could have waited for me to utter the magic words or to blow, "Go in the covert" but still, I understand the enticement.

Mary sang out, "Tally ho." I thought I heard Emily, too, way up ahead still on the road, but just then, the entire pack opened. What a sound! Dana put the pedal to the metal and dropped farther north, I popped over the middle log jump

*(Continued on page 2)*

### SUMMER RIDES

Check the website for up to date information on our summer walk-and-talk series. No fees, but hound donations always welcome. Do bring a snack to share for the tailgate afterwards.  
[http://www.oakridgefoxhuntclub.com/  
calendar.shtml](http://www.oakridgefoxhuntclub.com/calendar.shtml)

Photos this issue courtesy of Diana Garland Photography.

[www.garland.exposuremanager.com](http://www.garland.exposuremanager.com)

just in time to see the whole pack curve over that little high pocket meadow, dip into the creek, run up the creek and then flame out and up, heading due north.

The best way to describe the rest of the hunt was: we never stopped. The few checks evaporated in minutes. Staff viewed on a number of occasions, a lush coated red dog fox. He certainly did his aerobics! He finally went to ground in a large running cedar patch high up near my border with Mrs. Woods'. The hounds started to dig him out when, a young hound, Powderball, seconded by Rise, opened about fifty yards from the spot. Off we ran.

By the end of this hunt, horses, hounds, and humans were sweaty and tired, low temperature notwithstanding.

But what a thrill. February was going to be February after all.

And the next two hunts were okay, not as fabulous as this one, but the next Friday's hunt saw scent break often and hounds pick it up, time and time again. The hound work that February 9 raised our spirits and we all just knew that we'd close out the season as we should: great runs.

At 4:10 PM, February 9, I received a fax canceling all hunting until further notice because of the outbreak of an equine rhinovirus, highly contagious. Greg Schmidt, DVM, kindly left a message on the huntline explaining exactly what the virus was, and why a cessation of mingling horses was absolutely paramount for the safety of all.

And that was our season. Did you ever?

The sting of missing the best part of the year was mollified by "The Men's Party", Saturday, March 24, at the Satterfields'. What a do. The food was out of this world, the whole setting and ambience of the party was really wonderful and the new people who came enjoyed themselves, as did we all. Pete Osborne, Chair, proved once again, that he can do anything, and we trust he will!

The success of this party, complete with treasure hunt, has emboldened Emily Schilling, and Jennifer Stegeman concerning the landowners' party, date as yet unspecified. How are we going to top "The Men's Party"? They're brimming with ideas, competition fires them. Kind of scares me.

Back to hounds, we've bred some of the "girls." Cross your fingers. We'll take a few hounds to the Mid-America Hound Show in Lexington, Kentucky for the Junior Handler's Class. We really don't have bench hounds. A sharp-eyed judge will find fault with every one, but that's not an issue for the junior handlers so much, and we want our young people to have the experience, if they so choose. The show will be held May 12 at Shakertown. (Some of you remember this place. Hopefully, it won't sleet this time!)

An anonymous benefactor has given us the funds to re-fence our kennels plus Herbie's run. We start soon. The partial enclosure of the feed and draw pen is finished and is serviceable and tidy.

We'll start Friday hound walks and treats come May. Right now, staff is frantically trying to get as much work done as we can before the bugs become hateful.

Staff pulled together this year. Dana, Mary, John, and Emily, whipper-in in training, made what season we had wonderful. Toot and Melvin, our Sunday man on the ground, helped in the kennels. Our foxpen mornings, long before dawn, have made a significant difference in entering young hounds. John, Mary, and I are out of bed at 4:00 AM on those mornings and we wouldn't miss one minute of it.

David Wheeler has helped ease the burden so much.

The field staff also worked better. Each year there's marked improvement in all phases of our club. The energy surge is palpable. I know you can feel it as I do. For those of you who started out with me, raggle-taggle back in 1993: Did you ever?

Yours,

Rita Mae



Photo courtesy of Diana Garland  
[www.garland.exposuremanager.com](http://www.garland.exposuremanager.com)

**MORE DIRT SANDWICHES, PLEASE****Double Duty from Lucy Rolston****Christmas Hunt - Cherry Hill**

Just what in the world was it about that first darned coop?  
Rita Mae took it first.....

She jumped it smoothly as soft spun silk  
We lined up as usual, but found it highly built...

Never so many refusals did I ever see at once  
Was that jump there to separate the talented or dunce?

But this one, alas, two times I tried  
With Dana watching from my left, I knew that I was fried!!

Had I known then, what I know now  
I should have just thrown in the cotton pickin' towel!!

Over on the "safe side"...jobs well done  
Was Rita Mae and riders watching just for fun!!

Now who was that this time and who just hit the ground?  
They had to be exclaiming as I went down!!

I came, I saw, I conquered, not that coop at all  
The deck was stacked against me....was it Murphy's Law?

My house named Fox & Folly, I now have found  
That jump was sheerly folly.... I ended up the clown!!

So when you're out there riding and confident as can be  
Don't end up as I did....the joke was on me!!

**Deja Vu**

Yesssss, I did it again...it's my deadliest sin  
But here my dear friends is a bottle of gin  
Why you may ask is the bottle so small?  
'Twas not at Oak Ridge it was a Rockbridge fall!!!

**Barbara Dixon**

Now, little did I heed to give me alarm  
When I rode my white horse to Cherry Hill Farm  
Though she did advise the ditch first must be crossed  
Why at the very first fence the mare gave me a toss

Fair Sonia did wait for me to remount  
Though neither of us had the resolve the fence to surmount

Dear Bob all in scarlet to our rescue came running (dear Penne was shoeless)  
The gate quickly he opened to let us catch up

Now Sonia on Tuffy and the fearless Kipling (WAIT MAKE THAT FEARFUL)  
and I, who by now from me had gotten quite an earful  
Set forth the field to rejoin and relate my shame  
But now linked in crime ultimately my fate did claim  
Dear Sonia farther down the line

Alas like our season which ended all too soon  
I'll stop now lest I appear a buffoon!

## Members in Print

Our own Kathleen King had a letter to the editor printed in the Washington Post. The article she is responding to is also reprinted here for context.

### Trouble in Horse Country

Herpesvirus Outbreak Highlights Economic Peril and a Need for Cooperation Sunday, March 18, 2007; Page B08

Nathaniel A. White  
Director of Virginia Tech's Marion duPont Scott Equine Medical Center in Leesburg.

The equine herpesvirus type-1 infection that led to the state-imposed quarantine of Virginia Tech's Marion duPont Scott Equine Medical Center and several farms in Virginia and Maryland has awakened the equine health-care profession and the horse industry to the reality of an infectious disease outbreak.

We have learned just how essential horses are to the region's economy, the value of working relationships among industry representatives, university experts and government officials, and the importance of supporting veterinary research into infectious diseases.

Although it does not affect humans, EHV-1, which usually causes a mild respiratory disease, can cause devastating neurological disease in horses. One of four equine herpesvirus variants, this strain is highly contagious and can be spread by aerosol of the nasal secretions, direct contact between horses and indirect transmission by caretakers and equipment. Biosecurity measures can inhibit the spread of the virus by limiting exposure, but in the face of an outbreak, a quarantine to restrict the movement of horses is the most effective method for containing it.

Once news of the EHV-1 outbreak and subsequent quarantines rippled through the equine community, horse commerce in Northern Virginia all but stopped. Mandated and voluntary cancellations of shows, racing events and sales curtailed revenue generated by those events. Similarly, income from services offered by feed companies, equine dentists, blacksmiths, veterinarians and other professionals was negatively affected. The hit to the overall local economy cannot yet be calculated, but many sectors will feel the pinch. Beyond the facts about infection, the rumor mill is still circulating misinformation, which likely will persist far beyond the lifting of the last quarantine. Misinformation, which we tried to combat with daily postings on our public Web site, ranged from the rumor that the state borders were closed to the belief that all equine events had been canceled by the state veterinarian. Why is any of this important for those who don't own horses?

According to the Virginia Department of Agriculture and Consumer Services, there are approximately 170,000 horses in Virginia, making it the fifth-largest equine state in the United States. Virginia's horse industry generates nearly 20,000 jobs and more than \$352 million in wages and salaries. More than 700 horse events in the state generate annual spending in excess of \$167 million. Overall, the industry adds more than \$1.2 billion to Virginia's economy. Maryland's equine sector has a similar impact.

The neurologic form of equine herpesvirus appears to be increasing in virulence and has the potential to severely affect the health of the region's horse population -- and thus the economy. The best way to minimize the effects of this and other infectious diseases is to invest in research for vaccine development, treatments and methods of control. The 2006 Equine Industry Research Summit, organized by the American Association of Equine Practitioners, concluded that funding for equine research is inadequate, and a landmark study by the National Academy of Sciences recommended that federal agencies involved in biomedical research establish a method to jointly fund new, competitive, comprehensive and integrated animal health research programs.

This outbreak is a wake-up call for the horse industry. Equine health-care professionals, owners, universities, industry representatives and government officials must work in concert to develop communication systems for disseminating information and to secure increased funding for veterinary research to minimize the effects of future outbreaks on our horses and the larger economy.

### Response to Trouble in Horse Country

Kathleen King  
Whipper-In, Ashland Bassets

While, as a very concerned horseman, I agree with everything stated by Dr. White, Director of Virginia Tech's Marion duPont Scott's Equine Medical Center, and the inset box included in his message concerning the recent equine herpesvirus type-1 (ERVI) outbreak in the area [Close to Home, OUTLOOK, The Washington Post, March 18, 2007], there are very important facts which have been overlooked. First, while it is not presently known to be capable of infecting humans, EHVI can affect other species, and the herpes type viruses are both highly contagious and easily mutable in and of themselves. They lend themselves to genetic manipulation. Second, we all know that it is merely a matter of time before a naturally occurring pandemic reoccurs, and we also know that bioterrorism is a high priority for irrational enemies. This makes the incidence of a highly contagious disease in animals in the area a matter of universal concern. Therefore, Dr. White's conclusions fail to address the real issue: Virginia is not prepared and has demonstrably failed to handle a significant possible danger to public health. Why?

Dr. White correctly points out the horse community is both large and highly integrated into the commercial and social network in this area. A great many urban dwellers also are equestrians. Further, farm workers often work at more than one farm or stable, as do farriers, vets, and even merchants such as deliverymen. The traffic among and between horse people is tremendous. Thus, the opportunity for the spread of this disease was high.

Nevertheless, and this Dr. White fails to point out when he states that "beyond the facts about infection, the rumor mill is still circulating misinformation, which likely will persist far beyond the lifting of the last quarantine," it was the very fact that the horse community itself took action, efforts that dramatically affected their economic well-being as well as their pleasures, that prevented this disease from potentially becoming a disaster. The Office of the State Veterinarian of Virginia has throughout this crisis been ineffective, inept, and totally incompetent in the timely identification of the existence and nature of this contagion and in acting to prevent its potential spread. Yes, Virginia Tech did the right thing. Yes, certain farms where horses were located which might have or had been exposed to EHVI were officially "quarantined." Yes, there was a mandatory cancellation of two races ordered by the State Vet. But, and this is the important part, no official notice of the "quarantine" was ever given to farms or landowners of adjoining property; to this day, adjoining landowners whose land share fences, farm workers, daily commerce, and visitors with affected premises have no official knowledge. Further only two equine events, both by one organizer on one weekend, were ever "mandatorily" closed. The State Veterinarian of Virginia is part of the Department of Agriculture and Consumer Services, a misnomer if ever there were, and on its website is another Virginia sponsored entity, the Virginia Horse Industry Board. This Board and the Virginia Horse Council maintain a complete, online database listing the critical contacts for the major equine organizations in this state. Yet, although the State Vet knew (or should have known) of the incidence of a disease that suggested to any informed veterinarian that there might be a risk of EHV and knew (or should have known) how to contact people who had every reason to help distribute accurate information and to provide reliable advice to that office, no preliminary advisories were sent to anyone.

Since the economy of the horse in Virginia is, as Dr. White observed, large, and since Virginia is by virtue of that economy graced by a large and most prestigious complement of equine veterinarians, a professional heads-up would have been both prudent and possible. Further, while the probable existence of the EHV was becoming increasingly established to state officials, again, absolutely no information was made available to practitioners so that they could be aware of a need for enhanced awareness. After almost a week of apparent dithering and several days of phone calls by the State Vet to personal friends who had no official standing with his office or with the point-to-point racing organization, less than twenty-four hours before a scheduled race meet the State Vet sent an email to the secretary of a horse organization not affiliated with the race meet scheduled but who was the spouse of the affected race organizer to announce that the State Vet ordered those races cancelled because of "proximity" -- a distance of six miles -- to one quarantined farm. Yet no information was conveyed to adjoining farms to those premises. In fact, on the very day of the cancelled races, horses from farms adjoining the quarantined premises traveled in total ignorance of the situation halfway across the state to participate in hunts and to Lexington Horse Center for sale. It was the race sponsor who asked the State Vet if other affected organizers and groups had been informed, and it was the fact that the horse community itself, knowing the dangers inherent in EHV1, took action to stop interaction among

their equines that worked, not official channels. We imposed our own "quarantines" and acted on our own to prevent the spread of the disease -- all based on that "rumor" and "misinformation" derided by Dr. White -- because there was no timely comprehensive action to curtail contact among susceptible animals or official information about how to protect them. Horse people saved themselves, their horses, and the equine economy, no thanks to the State of Virginia. Why?

Indeed it is quite clear, despite Dr. White's opinion to the contrary, that had this matter been left in the hands of Virginia officialdom, the outcome might have been very different. It is equally clear that either the Virginia Office of the State Veterinarian does not have planning in place to deal with contagion in the agricultural communities -- or it does not have any idea how to implement that plan. This lack of protocols or lack of will to utilize them is the real issue that must be addressed immediately. Yes, we need to work on a vaccine for EHVI -- but that will only help us horse owners and our horses. What we really need is to confront the fact that our government officials do not understand the actual relationship between human and animal diseases and are not prepared to take the actions needed to protect public health. Perhaps if it had been "avian flu," things would have been different since someone else has already identified that potential -- but it is far more likely that the real threat will not give advance warning. We need officials who have the imagination to see and the guts to act. One can but hope that someone, somewhere, will see to it that this situation is corrected.

### Counterpoint: The Information Superhighway

Becky Birnbaum  
ORFHC Webmonkey

Speaking from the perspective of the average horseowner, one thing the State Veterinarian of Virginia did extremely well is to post timely and useful information on their website (<http://www.vdacs.virginia.gov/animals/ehv.shtml>). Throughout the scare, posts were made almost daily with detailed information about how many horses were affected, where they were located, where the suspected transmission took place, and what the average person could do to minimize risk to their horses. I found it very comforting to know exactly what was going on when the media just reported the number of cases per city.

It's probably not realistic to expect the State of Virginia to maintain an accurate database of all horse owners and to launch into a large-scale communication plan at a moment's notice on what I'm sure is a limited budget. Nor would I expect my veterinarian to call all of their clients unless the problem had escalated to where there was a reasonable risk to me. To do so may have even escalated the panic factor. Given the mainstream media's lack of knowledge or interest in the story, the State chose an effective vehicle for information these days: the Internet. Many emails circulated the list-servs with information copied from this website: I would argue that very little misinformation crossed my monitor.

While the horse community continues to be a somewhat slow adopter of technology, still relying heavily on word-of-mouth to

## The Tale from the Tail

(Continued from page 5)

conduct a lot of our business, I can personally attest that we are getting there. Dreamhorse.com is a popular place to list your horse for sale. We have email addresses for at least half of our membership roster and also maintain an email list of "friends" of the club that has grown to 145 addresses just through the same word of mouth. Most hunt clubs in Virginia now also maintain websites, and many actually post current information about events instead of just static pictures and contact information. I can assure you, this was not the case when I took over the ORFHC website just 2 years ago.

The Internet has matured to the point where it is considered a first line of communication for most businesses and fulfills our growing need for instant gratification and up-to-the minute information. Anyone with access to a computer (and they do have them at the library if you don't own one) can put forth just a little bit of effort and get rewarded with a lot of information.

For those of us shopping for our next hunt horse this summer, Gretchen also passes along this dictionary of terms used in ...  
**HORSE ADS**

**Friendly:** comes up to you in the pasture, but you may not be able to catch him

**Seasoned:** tired

**Bombproof:** ready for retirement

**Gentle:** this doesn't mean anything!

**Good with kids:** doesn't like adults much, perhaps has a sore back

**Man's horse:** you'll have to be a weight lifter to stop this one

**Needs experienced rider:** bucks, spooks, runs away, or rears

**Prospect:** the horse may be able to perform as required in a few years

**Broke:** green-broke

**Green-broke:** not broke

**Ready to start:** halterbroke

**Loves trails:** hates arenas

**Successfully shown:** no one was killed at the ONE schooling show he was taken to

Happy horse-hunting!

Since third flight is new to ORFHC, I was asked to fill in a few of my own thoughts about it.

Third flight presents opportunities for green horses and new riders, absolutely NOT together, to become part of the foxhunt scene.

Foxhunting is not for the faint of heart. To begin, a rider must first be able to walk, trot, and canter, and be comfortable trotting up and down hills on the horse being ridden. The tack must be clean and properly adjusted before the hunt begins.

For the experienced rider, it provides the opportunity to bring along the new and green horse. Otherwise these folks have a very hard time to safely join the hunt.

Some things happen in third flight to prevent us keeping second flight in sight. Things such as horses that won't cross streams, or horses that take a huge jump over a tiny stream and lose their rider. Many things can happen. By the time these problems are solved, the rest of the hunt is so far ahead that we sometimes never see or hear them again!

This brings on the challenge of trying to find out where the hounds are, but being very careful not to cross the line of the fox, thereby confusing and messing up the hounds.

Some things third flight (and 2<sup>nd</sup> and 1<sup>st</sup>, also) need to keep in mind is not to use this time for conversation. It disturbs the huntsman's and the hounds' concentration on their job. This is also not a time to have a riding lesson.

Third flight, as well as second, should always have a tail, i.e., someone who can see what's going on ahead of him and be there to help out when needed, such as directing someone on how to go back safely to the trailers, or help open and shut gates. The list could go on and on. Each mishap is different and unpredictable.

New riders are always given time to get their hunt attire together. It takes time as these clothes are expensive.

Third flight can be a lot of fun and a great learning experience for all. It's certainly been fun for me and I've learned a lot. It's a whole lot more than just riding through beautiful country following the horses in front of you. Everyone on the hunt should be helpful and mindful of others.

A good booklet to get your hands on is "Riding to Hounds in America" by William P. Wadsworth, MFH. It's an introduction for the foxhunters and quite informative. Cost is about \$5 or less.

Tally Ho  
Gretchen Robb

