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"The world may be divided
into people that read,
people that write, people
that think, and the
Foxhunters."

--William Shenstone--

From the Master

A New Season

Last season tried all the patience of the giving saints. The conditions, said by old-timers to be the worst in fifty years, blanketed most of the East coast. (P.S. I'm an old-timer, I confess.)

However, the last two weeks of the season, early March, provided some of the best hunting I have ever experienced. We had long, long runs, one lasting two and a half hours, finally ending in lifting hounds because the heat came up and everyone was shot. The foxes decided to show themselves, all dog foxes since the vixens were heavy and/or whelping. This surprised me as it was earlier than I anticipated.

Why things changed, I don't know. Those two weeks (and cubbing wasn't bad) almost made up for a hard, hard season.

What this season will be is anybody's guess. Our first day, Friday, September 19th, nothing happened very slowly. Hounds would get a line and couldn't carry it further than twenty yards. Sunday proved quite different. While the ground remained hard as a rock and dry as a bone, the morning was drenched with a heavy dew and the temperature at 5:30 am was 49 degrees lifting to about 52 at 7:30 am.

Hounds found but the pack



split, one group running tail. We did get them turned rightways and then ran to catch up with the other group. Since the leaves are on the trees and our territory is challenging, one could see little but you could hear. Granted those leaves also soak up sound but your huntsman's ears are good. All in all, it was a day in which hounds made the most of what they had. The young entry get excited, there's work to be done on those first casts but that's why there's cubbing. In the main, staff was pleased.

With luck we'll receive some rain, the mercury will fall and off we'll go. No matter what, the Oak Ridge hounds will try hard for you.

Remember: cubbing you're there for the hounds; formal season, the hounds are there for you.

- RMB -

A Reminder of Staff Duties

Huntsman and whippers-in concentrate on hounds. They can't really chat you up unless there's a long check and most clubs there's still no chatting from staff. Your huntsman does like to give you a brief report of conditions if time permits, but don't feel neglected if this doesn't happen.

Staff often doesn't make it to the tailgates until most of the food is gone and sometimes they don't make it at all. If a hound is injured or a puppy overwhelmed, our attention must go to the hound.

Friday there were fresh bear tracks down in the bottom of Mrs. Woods and they were heading our way. Late September/ early October there is a Tea-Time bear. It's been around for fifteen years and I don't want her or cubs killed. The scent smells like wet wood and it was much in evidence behind the old Carter shed. Young entry are smelling this for the first time and it can be confusing and in some cases frightening. Staff kept on their duties Friday until all hounds were in except

for one couple who we knew were not young and inclined to plop down in a creek and enjoy themselves too much. Some of us missed the tailgate and the company. We hope to make it to future ones but if we don't, please know that for us: HOUNDS COME FIRST.

A Few Facts About Foxhunting

1. Foxhunting is not a democracy.
2. One master at Oak Ridge speaks for all masters.
3. Never get between a huntsman and his/her hounds.
4. Hounds always have the right of way.
5. Be quiet.
6. Ride the horse you're on.
7. Hunt the territory you're given.
8. Don't question the master or huntsman. Chances are, in the field, you don't see what they see, hear or smell.
9. Keep your sense of humor.



This Sister Jane Weekend 2008

October 24-26 a convocation of those clubs who helped your writing master on her Sister Jane book tours will gather to hunt with Oak Ridge. Last year this was a success and this year looks to be even bigger. Added to the festival there will be a party for Jim Meads up at Horse Country in Warrenton, Friday night, Oct. 24. I'm not sure of the time but I think it is at 6:30 pm and Saturday night our big party starts at 6:30 pm.

Please note no club funds are used for this. I pay for everything as a thank you to all those wonderful people who helped me on the road. The only events for which the club is responsible are the tailgates which we normally do.

The clubs who come showed up at signings, many gave presentations, one even brought hounds.

Red Rock in Nevada organized a signing that ran for three solid hours, maybe a tad longer. At the end I had to soak my hand in a bucket of ice, then get up at three the next morning for a plane to the next city.

Marion Maggiolo also organized a signing that went on for hours.

The good will and enthusiasm of other foxhunters for Sister Jane certainly rolls back on Oak Ridge. It also proves, since many people read the series that don't foxhunt, that there's a wave of interest in the general public which is largely untapped. Given the anti-hunting forces this interest could be crucial to all of us and I wish I knew a way to harness it politically but I can't do both.

I know Oak Ridge will extend themselves to our guests and friends. It's a wonderful opportunity to meet good people.

That Sunday we have a joint-meet with Rockbridge here with the additional joy of Jim Meads loping along (Running Jim) camera in hand.

Can't wait.

-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.

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!

Joint Meet at Lexington, Kentucky

Day One: After weeks of thinking, planning, and packing, finally the day arrived to begin our trip to Kentucky and we were on our way. We (consisting of Sara Bateman, Mary Corbett, Theresa Gilbert and myself, Gretchen Robb) met at 5:30 a.m. in bitter cold at Sara's house to load everything into my horse trailer and Mary's jeep. She carried all the luggage, and I hauled four horses, hay, feed, blankets, buckets, etc. By 6:30 a.m. we pulled out. It was still pitch black outside, but a slight glow in the distance foretold the dawn.

The trip to Lexington is a very easy route. We took Interstate 81 until we hit Interstate 64 west of Lexington, Virginia. It is a straight shot from there. Traffic was light and we rolled on at 70 miles per hour most of the way, minus a couple of short stops for food, of course. Horses and crew were content. "Rose", who is Sara's GPS, kept us on the right road and we were doing just fine until we were about 30 miles outside of Lexington, Kentucky. At 3:00 p.m. the sky suddenly turned pitch black and it started raining bucketfuls. Conditions were so bad the dividing lines on the highway became invisible.

At this point Sara started singing and talking a mile a minute, thinking I must be getting tired by this time (which I was). My nerves were about shot and that damn "Rose" kept saying "recalculating, recalculating". After a near collision with a Semi in the middle of the thunderstorm, and with "Rose" still squawking constantly we finally made it to Shaker Village. Later we found out we had been driving in the middle of tornado warnings. "Rose" didn't tell us that.

We got the horses tucked in and fed at the 40 stall barn and already looking like drowned rats, we decided to unload the rest of our things in the morning when it hopefully would be drier and we could see.

After making ourselves more presentable, we met the Woodford Hunt in the winter dining room at Shaker Village and had a wonderful dinner with lots of new folks. Needless to say we all slept well that night.

Day Two: After breakfast, we headed down to the barn to tack up for the day's hunt, which was to be held at Shaker Village, and is

where the Woodford Hounds are kenneled.

It was a very brisk day, sunny, but with 40 mph sustained winds. Although the temperature was in the 30's, the wind chill certainly got our attention. The horses were feeling fresh and exceptionally well. (You know what I mean!) On top of the cold and winds, there were 32 couple hounds ready to go. A pack from Canada had come down and joined the Woodford pack. There were plenty of hounds!

We rode out from the barn through a herd of Angus cattle. One of those beasts decided to charge Mary. We managed to get through this and rode up to the big field where the hounds got onto a coyote and we were off and running. One coyote, 64 hounds and first flight were off at top speed. Don't forget the 40 mph winds also! It was quite a sight. Our usual quiet, well-mannered horses were running and bucking. We were all wired.

After about 40 minutes some of us (you know who you are), decided we'd had enough. I won't say who but you'll find out sooner or later. We went back to the huge barn and sipped port and ate chips till the rest of the field came back some 2 hours later.

After the hunt breakfast, about 3:30 or so, we changed clothes and Mary drove us into Lexington where we hit a couple of good tack shops. By then it was time for dinner, again at the Shaker Winter Kitchen. They have the most wonderful meals and will serve wine next year.

Day Three: Today's hunt with Camargo was about two hours away from

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Jt. Meet Cont.

where we were staying. Off we go again with dear “Rose’s” mouth recalculating more than we liked. Finally after a couple of phone calls to Courtney Ball, one of the Camargo Masters, we pulled into the fixture.

We were out about three hours. We returned to the trailer and tucked our horses away with good hay and water. Heath, Master Courtney’s wife, drove four of us in her truck to a beautiful hunt box about a mile up the road for a fabulous meal. It was now about 4:30 pm and we were hungry.

Mary Corbett, upon exiting the truck, had a little “mishap” which she will now recount.

*Mary’s School of Charm.... Lessons \n
Making a Graceful Exit.*

We all have our own hidden talents. We all have our flaws, which unfortunately sometimes are not so well-hidden. Some of us are graceful and poised. Some of us are perpetually clumsy.

To exit the rear seat of a vehicle a lady should ALWAYS make sure her feet are firmly planted on the ground before stepping away from the vehicle. Ignoring this rule could prove to be disastrous.

There were three of us crammed in the small bench seat of Heath’s pickup. In my haste to exit, my foot accidentally became caught on the running board. My next mistake was trying to slide down off the seat to get out, but in so doing, the rest of me became hopelessly wedged between the backseat and the floor of the pickup. Suffice it to say, it was not the most flattering pose for a “lady” in which to find herself. So there I was, unable to move, half in, half out of the vehicle wondering how long it would take the local Rescue Squad to arrive with the “Jaws of Life”.

All anyone could do was howl with laughter at my predicament. No one could compose themselves long enough to figure out how to help me out of this awkward situation. Gentleman that he is, Courtney Ball came to the rescue. After attempting a series of pushing and pulling maneuvers to no avail, he was finally able to push me far enough back into the truck that I became un-wedged. And so ends this true tale of how I earned the nickname “Floorboard Mary” (never mind what you heard about me when I was in high school). The next session of Mary’s School of Charm begins soon. Limited space, make sure you sign up early!

Thank goodness it was a wonderful, filling meal after the hunt because we arrived back at Shaker Village about 8:30 pm too late for dinner. We ended a day filled with adventure by going to bed early. Tomorrow would be a long drive back home.

Day Four: We were up at 5:00 am to get the horses fed, and we planned to leave no later than 8:00am. Dana Flaherty did leave at 8:00, but after receiving our breakfast we didn’t pull out until 10:00am.

Our trip was uneventful and we were making good time on the way back when we heard that Dana had two flat tires and was held up at Lexington, VA. We saw her pulled off the highway awaiting help from AAA. She still had a big smile on her face.

In the end John Morris came to Lexington with Dr. Mary O’Brien’s rig. Another man had come to help with his cattle truck and took the four horses back to the Lexington Horse Center where they

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Jt. Meet Cont.

were fed and watered after ten long hours on the trailer. They were no worse for wear but were happy to be back on solid ground again. Dana and John trailered back the next day with tires repaired.

It was a great four day trip. Oak Ridge was represented by Master Rita Mae Brown, Dana Flaherty, Teresa Gilbert, Mary Corbett, Sara Bateman, Emily Shilling, Sarah Twichell, Diane Gibbs, and Gretchen Robb. We laughed, we rode, we ate and then laughed some more. Next year promises to be just as much fun. Get your gear together and plan to join us on our third pilgrimage to Kentucky. Tally Ho!

- Gretchen Robb -



Deep Run and Keswick to the Rescue

Many old hounds were retired after cubbing last year. 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.

- RMB -

"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 -

Puppies

Maple has given us Merlin, Mo and Moxie and Auto has given us eight puppies, one of whom is named A-train which will make Manhattanites laugh or those who remember jazz classics. All are doing fine and small though they are, put them in their play yard and down those little noses go down to the ground.

Cubbing Notes

Traditionally fixture cards are not printed for cubbing. As this occurs during harvest time, each landowner must be contacted one or two days before the hunt wishes to go to that fixture. The weather conditions change from year to year and therefore so does the harvest. One can't assume because we hunted a fixture in early October last year we can do it this year.

Formal hunting place takes after harvest hence a fixture card.

Wednesdays

We will hunt the second and fourth Wednesday of each month unless it falls on a special day like Christmas. We'll go in the mornings until the temperature really changes and then we'll go at 3:30/4:00 pm.

Tea-Time Bassets

These irresistible hounds will go out at 4:00 pm on Fridays. For a time we'll hunt Tea-Time and then take them off the farm.

The ideal ratio for any pack is four made hounds to one young entry. The bassets with three exceptions are all just under one year or a year and a half. It's going to be wild for a year but young though they are, we've made progress.

Bassets hunt rabbits, a prey animal which is different from hunting a fox, a predator. You learn a lot including about foxes, since foxes hunt rabbits.

You may hunt on horseback or on foot. Karen Catron is foot field master. We know she can run.

At this point attire is common sense. Brush pants are useful and supportive shoes. In time, we'll spiff up but right now we're just trying to keep up without needing oxygen.

Information will be on the Huntline: 540-456-8787.

Don't forget Penn. National Hunt Show on October 13th. It's a great show. Come support our members as they compete for us.

Three Great Men

Oak Ridge has been deeply saddened by the recent loss of three remarkable men. Sir John Heilman, a man of great intelligence and charm, left us September 17, 2008. He and his wife, Inga Marie, allowed us to hunt Old Norwood, an interesting fixture, and hosted delicious breakfasts at their beautiful home.

Gordon Smith, ex-MFH of Amwell Valley Hunt, and a former member of Oak Ridge died September 21, 2008 as a result of a riding accident with Warrenton Hunt. An elegant rider as well as a true gentleman, he cut a dashing figure at the hunt.

Reverend Wheeler, father of Jt. Master David Wheeler, passed away October 4, 2008. Always cheerful and gracious, for many years he was our officiant for the Blessing of the Hounds. Our condolences to the families. We will not see their like again.

The Oak Ridge Challenge

The “First Annual Oak Ridge Challenge held on the racecourse at Oak Ridge Estate, was a successful experiment – fun for those who came, and a promising fund raiser for our club. A unique combination of riding games – racing on the track, jumper courses, games of skill, and a trail ride – offered something old and new for everyone, while giving all kinds of horses a chance to shine. The Wintergreen Pony Club offered delicious food, and even with a hurricane/rain reschedule, we were able to make money for our hounds.

Many thanks to all of you who helped during the day and brought your horses to play. Lynn Stevenson was there all day running the “office” and the tack sale. Maria Johnson, her family, and all the Pony Club crew not only handled the food, but set up and judged a great “small” jumper course. The Greens’ “large” jump course was not only beautiful and safe, but an appropriate challenge to ride. Priscilla Friedberg and her crew worked all day at the very popular “poles and barrels” venue. Andrea Denforth and her family manned the “Poker Ride

gazebo. Gretchen Robb’s team had the most fun watching over the “Grog Race and Broomstick Ball”, while the Osbornes contributed a well-designed “Handy Horse (and dog) Course that was delightful to try. And next year we’ll have a better sound system so you can hear the golden voice of Pete Osborne as our announcer. His commentary from the booth on the races was a comedy classic!

If you haven’t seen the photos that Cindy Green and Judy Pastore took, please try to. They captured the spirit of a special day. The list of event winners is too long to recount. You would recognize the names – and let’s just say that we “big” folks need to do some work to catch those ponies, and our younger members.

Now that we know this new event works, we’ll do it again. “The Second Annual Oak Ridge Challenge” will most likely be held in the spring. We’d welcome your feedback and ideas to make the next challenge even better. Thanks to you all.

- Sue Satterfield -

FOR YOUR INFORMATION: A HOUND’S SENSE OF SMELL IS DUE TO A MAZE OF BONY PASSAGES IN THE NOSE LINED WITH OVER 200 MILLION NASAL RECEPTOR CELLS WHICH TRAP THE INCOMING SCENT PARTICLES. A FURTHER UNIQUE ADAPTATION PREVENTS AN OUTWARD BREATH FROM BLOWING AWAY ANY SCENT PARTICLES DIRECTLY IN FRONT OF THE HOUND. A FLAP OF SKIN MOVES IN AND SEALS THE FRONT OF THE NOSTRILS, FORCING THE AIR OUT SIDWAYS AND BACKWARDS, LEAVING SCENT PARTICLES ON THE GROUND UNDISTURBED, READY FOR THE HOUND’S NEXT SNIFF.

A Note from the Masters

As we approach another season of foxhunting, the Masters would like to share with you their views of where ORFHC is and what we need to focus on for the coming season.

First, we have made significant progress in several areas over the past year.

- Membership has grown over the past years from about 60 individuals to over 100. During that time, our junior population has grown from 0 to more than 10. We are glad to be growing steadily when some other clubs are not so fortunate.
- Territory/New Fixtures – We continue to pick up new fixtures in a time when some other hunts are being severely impacted by new development and other factors. The Maki Family properties in Nellysford will afford great sport as we get them fully open. The new Dixon Family fixture south of Scottsville offers exciting new possibilities.
- The Hunt Ball 2008 was a rousing success any way you measure it. Everybody had a great time. Club members provided outstanding support in many ways and our neighboring clubs came in “tableloads”. The club netted \$21,000, an amazing result that far exceeded our expectations.
- New club events such as the softball game, have been very successful. The first Oak Ridge Challenge was well received, and even as a “trial run”, raised over \$1,000 for the club. The upcoming Sister Jane weekend and the Hound Auction promise to be great fun.
- The camaraderie and spirit of the club have never been higher. Members supported the Hunt Ball in full force. People enjoyed the summer rides. Members are participating in cubbing, having fun at the tailgates, and helping with upcoming events.

Second, we need to remind ourselves that the goal of this hunt is to provide good sport to our members and our guests. We need to do this in a manner that respects our landowners. And we need to pursue our sport in a way that is as safe for horse and rider as we can possibly make it.

- We all need to be aware that riding horses is a potentially dangerous sport, even if it's a simple trail ride or a practice session in the ring.
- Further, fox hunting can be an even more dangerous sport since it introduces so many new elements for horse and rider, especially horses moving on at speed in the company of other horses, hounds that need to be given the right-of-way, and the unpredictable nature of what might unfold during a given hunt.
- We are asking that club members focus not only on their own safety, but also the safety of others as we approach this season. In the past few months, at least 4 of our members have been injured in riding-related accidents. Most of these are experienced riders, so it can happen to anyone.

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Note from the Masters cont.

Third, as we prepare for the formal season starting on November 2, we are asking members to consider the following:

- Fox hunters need to demonstrate enough skill and knowledge to participate safely in this sport. This means you and your horse should be comfortable walking, trotting, or cantering in company and under control, in any flight. Even third flight needs to move on at certain times during a hunt.
- Members who feel that they cannot participate safely as described above will need to improve their riding skills or improve their horse's ability to deal with hunting situations. The good news here is that several of our members offer riding lessons and/or training aimed at helping your horse become a better fox hunter. These include Jan Green, Lynne Gebhard, Maria Johnson, the Osborne family, Page Turner, and Sue Satterfield. Contact information is in the directory.
- Also, we will be conducting a fox hunting clinic on November 8th led by several of the members just listed. This clinic will help improve your overall understanding of our sport, enhance your hunting knowledge, remind you of etiquette and turnout details, and use practical scenarios to simulate actual hunting conditions. We strongly urge members to attend, especially those who have been hunting less than 3 years.

We look forward to an outstanding season and many great times as we chase our clever friends across our beautiful, central Virginia countryside.

Tally Ho,
The Masters

AS EDITOR OF HARK TO THE LINE PLEASE SEND ME ANY
COMMENTS, CORRECTIONS, ADVERTISEMENTS OR IDEAS FOR FUTURE
ARTICLES. THE NEWSLETTER CAN ONLY IMPROVE WITH YOUR INPUT.

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