

STAFF

MASTER OF
FOXHOUNDS
AND HUNTSMAN:
DR. RITA MAE BROWN
540-456-8787

JOINT MASTERS:
MR. DAVID WHEELER
434-977-1563

MR. BOB SATTERFIELD
434-361-1696

FIELD MASTER:
MRS. SUE SATTERFIELD
434-361-1696

HILLTOPPERS
MASTER:
MR. BOB SATTERFIELD

THIRD FLIGHT MASTER:
MRS. GRETCHEN ROBB
540-456-8347

PROFESSIONAL
WHIPPER-IN:
MS. DANA FLAHERTY
540-456-6156

HON. WHIPPER-IN:
DR. MARY O'BRIEN
540-886-1791

HUNT SECRETARY:
MRS. LYNN STEVENSON
434-361-2331

OUT HUNTING, WE OFTEN HAVE TO GET OVER OUR FENCES AS BEST WE MAY. BUT AS WE ARE NOT RIDING FOR EXHIBITION, BUT TO GET TO HOUNDS AS FAST AS WE CAN, IF WE CAN GET OVER A FENCE WITHOUT MISHAP WE ARE USUALLY SATISFIED."
LT. COL. M.F. MCTAGGART

From the Master

Opening Hunt, November 4, 2008, proved unusual. Two hundred and forty people appeared about half of whom were muffin hounds to see us off. We met them again at the breakfast, as always graced by a large ice sculpture. The Carriage House never looked better and we thank the Hollands for their unflagging generosity to Oak Ridge Hunt.

I lost count at eighty for those riding and they certainly won't forget the day. Warm, dry as a bone and sunny, conditions did not bode well. Figuring our one chance at scent rested on the north side of the road, (we usually hunt the south side for opening hunt as it is so pretty and more of it is pasture). After twenty minutes hounds hit the fox which lives behind the dairy barns. The scent lasted all of two minutes but hounds worked well together and I sent a silent prayer, "Thank you, Jesus, at least it wasn't a blank day." Later I was to send up other prayers.

Since the fox had foiled us by crossing Rucker's Run then recrossing behind those imposing dairy barns to cross once again, hounds moved along the high ground. My plan was to hunt to the dam hoping the mist from the falling water would help us a bit



with scent plus it would be a little cooler. About one mile from the dam on the middle path (there is a high one which needs to be cleared and a low one isn't feasible) hounds feathered. The tail action began to resemble propellers warming up for a flight. And fly we did. Poppy opened, Wheeler let out a howl along with Diane, Barley, Maple and before you knew it the entire pack charged down the heavy underbrush to Rucker's Run where it is steep, impassable.

I galloped to the one crossing we had which involved a fairly easy grade down and a steep one over rocks. By the time I reached the summit, the pack had crossed Rucker's Run in full cry. I did not yet see my quarry but I thought there might be a chance as hounds were bursting forth into the cut over millet fields.

Tally Yogi!

A black bear appeared out of a thin band of trees to

(cont. page 2)

From the Master cont.

blast into the next millet field. I judged him to be three hundred and fifty pounds. Let's say he was extremely healthy and that sucker could move. My lead hounds, Maple and Diane, flew perhaps one hundred yards behind and were closing. The one thought in my head was, "What if he turns and takes a stand?"

They were on legitimate quarry. No reason to call them off but I asked Rocco (borrowed for the day and what a fabulous guy) to move it and we burnt the wind reaching the millet fields.

The human field was nowhere in sight but I follow Fred Duncan's advice, "Hunt your hounds and don't look back". (Fred carried the horn at Warrenton for fourteen years, I think, and whipped-in to the great Dickie Bywaters for seventeen years prior to that. When Fred speaks, I listen.)

A moment of ominous silence followed as Rocco and I reached a curve. On the other side it's a rough incline down but if you hustle you can make the turn and get back down to Rucker's Run in four minutes, flat out. I waited. One peep was all I needed because what if the bear turned? My experience with hunting bear and also coyote is that they almost always hit a straight lick. Exciting it may be, but it does lack the

pitting of your wits against the fox.

The next thing I knew riderless horses whirled around me. People were popping off like toast. Mindful of Fred's advice, I pressed on when I heard the pack open again. Reached Rucker's Run in record time, crossed, realized the pack had treed the bear up high over the old shooting range. There's a road up there and the car followers viewed the entire thing with attendant excitement.

Given the horses, one still running about, the prudent thing was to call the pack back. They returned, swam across the run and sat like perfect children. Two, however, found the prospect of a black bear in a tree just too exciting.

Reports about what happened next were not in conflict, but not clear to me. John Morris tried to catch the two stinkers. The car followers remained mesmerized in their vehicles, I might add. No fools they.

The hounds, not wishing to end the party, moved away from the tree and down slid Yogi, tearing off in a big hurry.

Eventually, John did get the two hounds. The car followers, by now, were as exhausted and stimulated, shall we say, as the field.

We all met at the Carriage House. As usual, I never reached the food table but I did get that wonderful dessert, so I was happy. Later when I returned to my truck, Lynn Stevenson and Donna Gaertner had put some food on the seat for me. Bless them for I was about to drop.

I wish to extend my appreciation and gratitude to Dr. Greg Schmidt and John Noon Western for surrendering a horse to Emily Schilling so I could ride Rocco. Greg hunted one horse and John sat on the party wagon surrounded by women and I think alcohol. Of course the alcohol was there for



medicinal purposes only.

From the Master cont.

What a day.

And it heralded a good season so far and in November yet which is so difficult because of the dried leaves not yet pulped down by moisture and snow. Please, some snow this year.

Friday's hunt, November 7, at the Emert Farm in Buckingham gave us a chance to draw this new fixture, no expanded to 3500 acres, for the first time. It takes about two years to learn the foxes at a fixture and to open accordingly. It makes no sense to spend time and money opening if you don't know your foxes. Yes, you can make basic trails but a little knowledge helps the coffers. Hounds did open, short, maybe seven minutes but it sure held promise for the future. And who showed up but John Billerd and company. That was a happy surprise as John and I go back decades when we both rode with Farmington.

Wednesday we had to cancel because of rain.

Friday, November 12 we hunted from the kennels and enjoyed another bracing day with good hound work, difficult conditions and a couple of decent runs. Cherry Hill was canceled due to rain which intensified as the day wore on. Can't tear up the landowner's field with our trailers and Anne Henderson would probably still be looking at some stuck trailers had we gone.

November 21 was one of the most exciting days I've ever hunted. The hound work thrilled everyone who witnessed it. Hounds found in the first bottom over the pasture at Carl Campbell's. Scent broke and broke but they persevered. Some huntsmen would have picked them up and moved on so as to entertain the field. What could be more entertaining than to watch incredible hound work, teamwork? I realize not everyone feels this way and I recommend three-day eventing to

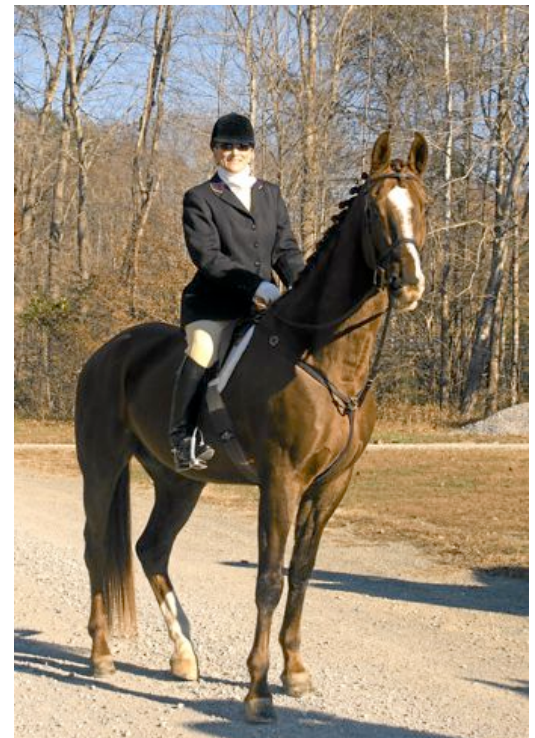
to them. (A great sport.)

Poppy, Diane, Willie, Wheeler, Buster, Rise, Maple, Barley, and the others refused to give up. I noticed that our fox did not do what he usually does which is head east or north straight up Ennis Mountain. A light bulb went off and yes, sometimes the wattage is dim, but today I was at 150 watts. I called them down to the tiny trickle of a stream, which feeds into a larger stream. Gouging the sides of the steep incline down to this are little rivulets.

Given the conditions, fairly dry and a slight overcast sky, and remember all those dried leaves so the dust is going straight up those wonderful foxhound noses, well, anyway, I knew we couldn't be three to four minutes from our fox. But where was the line?

That non-stop Poppy found and she let out a yelp of pure joy to be joined by Diane who seconded the motion. All on, they charged up the deep gully. Once on

(cont. page 4)



From the Master cont.

top, I was not far behind since it's passable there, the entire pack ran across the pasture. Stymied by the page wire, that super-intelligent Diane ran for all she was worth down to the coop by the mailbox and sailed over, followed by the rest. I headed for the coop then noticed hounds circling in the pasture on the other side of 611 halfway down the pasture.

Headed for the gate. Thank God, John was there so I didn't have to dismount and open. I was much closer to hounds not needing to take the coop detour, which is relatively far away.

Hounds circled three times then lit out straight as an arrow. You could have thrown a blanked over them. They jumped the coop between Carl's land and my own. It's not all that rickety except if you don't turn hard left you'll find yourself going straight down about twelve feet. Not a good idea but it's the only place to site the coop.

Vester and I hurried over. The cry was fabulous, just fabulous. Hounds put the fox to ground halfway down the Standard

Oil trail, on the south side. The den, enormous, had a large tree root over the top. Many other exits and entrances existed. This was a fox with architectural aspirations. Well, these hounds were digging like a backhoe. Dirt flew upwards. I dismounted, blew "Gone to Ground". Buster and Vandal wouldn't leave. The field relished the delightful sight of dirt-covered hounds with two still frantically digging. Rachel thought perhaps she should again join them. Pulling them out by their tails meant I was now looking like a dirtball. Who cares? Then Vandal got his nose out of joint because Rachel and Buster were halfway in the den and he couldn't fit in plus the tree root was in his way. So he hit the root. Those in the field with a back view of the den had to laugh.

Finally, I dissuaded the three Musketeers from the den.

A glorious day.

We hunted Snell, Sunday the 23rd, and hit hard early. Hounds crossed into impenetrable territory running only to
(cont. page 5)



From the Master cont.

emerge onto White Chapel Road. I went in the other direction thanks to my ears, which put us in a good place for a view. Emily Schilling had the great good fun to run with the pack about a half a mile down White Chapel Road heading south until hounds turned back into the eastern half of Snell. Snell at five thousand acres is a good fixture, most of our fixtures are big and some are huge. Hounds ran out of the fixture but thankfully we could ride on the neighbor's land.

Three does shot out across the dirt road, the fox, a big red, was right behind them and within two minutes the entire pack was behind them only to be followed by three more deer.

We stayed with hounds as long as we could but finally we just couldn't get there from here. No way through the increasingly dense forest and replanted pines. Hounds hit the ridge then shut up.

By far the most phenomenal hunt of the season so far took place at our Thanksgiving Hunt, November 28. As this is the junior hunt, our juniors took positions of authority. Sonja Johnson led first flight. Sara Green rode with Page Turner and Rachel Wade rode up with me.

Cool, slightly overcast, the day promised a bit of fun. We could have used more moisture but I cast low along the North Branch of the Rockfish River to find places where scent might hold. Of course, that doesn't mean the fox traversed those pastures but it was worth a shot and he did. We hit between Jim Klemic's land and my land on my furthest pasture. The fox ran a small circle then headed up where it would be drier. Hounds hung on and we didn't lose scent until we were up in the woods, but then hounds found again and down we came. Now in the middle of the pasture, we lost it. Diane, Poppy and my other much-loved hounds, worked and worked. Nothing. Again, trust your hounds. My grandfather must have told me one hundred times, "Trust your hounds." I did. Virginia, a good-looking hound with a quirky personality, struck into the low swampy area below Jim and Joan Klemic's beautiful house (pretty and original gardens, too). Boom, Virginia opened. All the hounds had cast

themselves wide, good kids, rushed to her. We were off and running again and we crossed Jim's road. Hounds crossed, climbed up onto D'Ambola's cut over land then jumped back down again to run along the grassy side of the road. They cut sharply left, followed a tiny stream, then went right up the leaf-covered, slippery steep bank which if you kept straight would lead you to an old cemetery, overgrown. Well, they headed up. They'd lose then find, lose, then find. Again, they opened in one voice, crossed the path up there taking us to a cabin of sorts. I don't know if this is Jim's or not, then circled and crashed straight down a ravine, relatively wide at the bottom. I stuck with them and to their credit, First Flight stuck with me. Sonja was getting a workout. We wound up on a high wide old farm path and came down on the south side of Jim's, crossed in front of the house, then hit a sharp right on the other side of the house for a much gentler climb. Clearly, our fox was playing with us and probably stopped every now and then to see if horses were heaving and sweating yet. No but some people were.

Had to stop. Diane was stepped on and couldn't use her hind end. Few things could be worse than to lose this hound from the third cycle of Oak Ridge breeding. It's a valuable bloodline and she's a hound dipped in gold.

She wobbled up to me occasionally flopping right over, and I held her until John could reach us. He rushed her to Dr. May to whom we are ever grateful. (Note: Diane is recovering. Her back is not broken but it is possible she is deeply bruised. She can walk but her hind end occasionally pains her. I won't be hunting her if there is any doubt at all, but she can carry puppies. This is one of those hounds that will retire to my couch. She's about perfect.)

After that worrisome moment, I mounted up again as did Emily Schilling, who dismounted to help me. Drs. Greg Schmidt and Julie Bullock were a help to Diane, too, and I thank them for alerting me to the problem so I could blow her back.

Well, off again and darned if we didn't hit Dana let out a "Tally Ho" that was surely

(cont. page 6)

From the Master cont.

heard over the line in Albemarle County and we took off like a bat out of Hell. Karen Osborne and Stuart Jones rode with Dana that day because they are just big kids with a few wrinkles. Large Juniors you might say. By now I had to hustle for the pack was getting ahead of me and the fox evidenced an agenda. Dana said he was a big, leggy red. Well, I jumped the coop across from the mailboxes, and silly me, thought I knew this fox and he'd go to ground on the other side of the staunch upright fence between Carl's back line and Tom Harvey's.

Not this guy. He hit the stream, foiled his scent for a bit, but hounds cast themselves on both sides of the stream, picked up. This devil then went up, up, up to the stratosphere. Took the log jump and clambered up since some trees have come down. Then across Tom's road to the wide path. Well, getting up that path wasn't too bad but then he came down, executed a tight little circle and I stuck with the circle. In retrospect I could have waited but I just didn't want to lose hounds

and as you all know, much of our territory, since it is so vast, is not properly opened. How frustrating it is to not be able to keep up with your forward hounds. Frustrating for the whippers-in, too, which I like riding at ten and two o'clock.

By now we're in East Jesus and the way up is over a crumbling bank. Steve Green, who can do anything on a horse and build anything off one, found the way up. It wasn't pretty but all of First Flight made it. How I don't know because by the time the last of them struggled the straight up six feet, the ground just have given way.

Back on the grassy path again. Then hounds left to go up the ridge before Ennis' Mountain's peak. They denned their fox way up there. You could see a very large rock, slab-sided, perhaps fifteen or twenty feet tall, jutting out and all the hounds were at the bottom, digging. How far was it up there? I don't know. Two hundred feet, more? But there's no horse could have negotiated it

(cont. page 7)



From the Master cont.

without risking injury. The incline was steeper than 45* in some places and small to large rocks infested the terrain. I kept blowing "Gone to Ground" and no one would come down to me. Mind, by now we'd been out for three hours, granted with checks and finding the line again but we'd been busy.

It dawned on me the only way to get my pack down was to climb up there and blow "Gone to Ground". So I did and in my best boots, too. I had to go from tree limb to tree limb to hold on otherwise the field would have enjoyed the sight of me sliding backwards only to fall over the embankment above the wide path. This was not appealing to me so I pressed on. Took me twenty minutes to get up there but I didn't tump over. I really wanted applause.

What I saw was thrilling. The boulder we could see was one of many covering a large area. I'll risk a guess and say it was at least fifty yards and all the gray rocks, some really big, looked to have been sheared by the glacier. As some of you know, the glacier from Canada stopped just before Humpback Mountain on the Blue Ridge, so it stopped over here, too. Actually, as I was catching my breath I could appreciate how beautiful and unusual this was. But what really floored me was this place is Fox Manhattan. Dens everywhere with

with hounds digging at one. Well, I blew "Gone to Ground" and bless them they trundled down the field below with me. Going down was easier than going up but still; I wasn't about to tump over.

I finally got there and begged anyone in the

field to give me a sip from their flask, Parched. Do you know not one of those sots had a drop left on them. I was ready to fall over. Priscilla Friedberg gave me a Jolly Rancher which helped a little. Hounds rushed for Tom Harvey's lake to drink and swim.

I damn near joined them. We'd been out for over three hours, most of it up and down so we walked back home.

The tailgate is worth mention. As you know our tailgates fill ones' stomach. It being my 64th birthday, the assembled sang "Happy Birthday". It was pathetic. Sound like a funeral dirge and I told them so. Well, this is Oak Ridge and they had another card up their sleeve. Up comes Pete Osborne to whip out his guitar. (People had been throwing pennies into his open case.) And a group of them, no doubt former choir boys and girls, sang the Beatles song, "Will you still need me, will you still feed me, when I'm 64?" but with their lyrics. To top it off, my Joint Masters, David Wheeler and Bob Satterfield, got down on their knees before me. What a pleasurable sight. A girl could get used to this.

All in all, one for the books.

Ever and Always,

- RMB -

DID YOU KNOW? THE HORSE'S STOMACH IS SMALL, AND IN HIS WILD STATE HE GRAZED CONTINUALLY. SINCE HE TRAVELED AT SPEED ONLY WHEN FLEEING FOR HIS LIFE, AND SINCE HE HAD NEVER BEEN INTRODUCED TO THE BEARING OF BURDENS OR THE TAKING OF HIGH JUMPS, THE ENERGY PROVIDED BY EVEN SPARSE FORAGE WAS SUFFICIENT. IN VERY HOT AND VERY COLD COUNTRIES THE HORSES REMAINED SMALL IN STATURE, DUE TO THE LACK OF SUFFICIENT FORAGE AT CERTAIN TIMES OF THE YEAR; IN MORE MODERATE CLIMATES THEY GREW TO A GREATER SIZE.

ALTHOUGH THE NATURAL AND BEST FORAGE IS GRASS, THE ASIATIC HORSES ON THE NORTHERN TUNDRA'S LEARNED TO LIVE ON ROOTS AND BARK, AND SO THEY DEVELOPED TREMENDOUSLY LONG AND STRONG TEETH AS A RESULT. WHEN THE HORSE BECAME THE SERVANT OF MAN THE WHOLE FEEDING PICTURE CHANGED - **THE HORSEMAN'S ALMANAC** -

Two Foxhunting Vignettes

Once upon a time, as in a year or so ago, there was a young lady who called her parents from college to say she wouldn't be making it home in time for "the day" of the holiday but would be there the following day, in time for the hunt, and consoled her mother for her lapse by saying: "Gee Mom, it's only Christmas. Not like it's Opening Meet or something!" True, so true, and only comprehensible to other foxhunters. Fortunately, her mother is one.

Once again, once upon a time, there was a freak storm over Middleburg. Ice and snow. Roads closed. People by the hundreds stranded. Community Center and Safeway opened to shelter the stranded motorists trying to get home for Thanksgiving. And, of course, wreaking havoc on the locals' plans for Thanksgiving Meets. One such was then whipper-in Kay Blassic (then Kay Thomas) whose husband Jerry had been hauling the stranded out of ice drifts with his tractor, including two carloads he took to their house. Kay reports she had not so much as a package of hot dogs on hand because they had planned to share the holiday with the Poes, Melvin then being Huntsman for Piedmont. Melvin's wife called, "I've got all this food but the electric lines are down. How will I cook?"

"Box it up! We'll be over on the tractor and bring you here. We've got power."

So over the river and through the woods on the tractor go Kay and Jerry, and as

they cross the hilltop they see coming across the snow covered meadow, what appear to be hundreds of foxhounds. Clearly there had been a serious failure at the kennels, and Kay said, "You go get Melvin. I'll try to gather them and get them back to the kennels." And off she hops from the tractor.

The hounds are thrilled; escape hasn't been as much fun as they thought it would be, and are grateful for a hound person offering succor and guidance back home. So off she goes, across what seems a lovely, level, snowy meadow playing pied piper for her train of hounds.

Oops, meadow not quite so level or so solid as she thought as she steps through the slush into the creek. Sodden, she makes it to the Piedmont kennels with her four-footed charges in tow, and she, Jerry and Melvin fix the escape route.

While Jerry and Melvin work, they send already frozen Kay and Mrs. Poe to feed the cattle. By this time, both women are weeping with the cold and misery. Cattle fed, duty done, the boxes of fixings are loaded and back, four people and all those boxes trek through the weather. What a great day!

They get home to the stranded tourists. Guess what? Two of the women are school cooks. They say, "You two get out of the kitchen, we are fixing dinner."

And so it was a Happy Thanksgiving after all for everyone, hounds and humans.

- Kathleen King -

IF YOU HAVE ANY COMMENTS, SUGGESTIONS OR ADS,
PLEASE CONTACT THE EDITOR: CINDY GREEN
1258 GREENFIELD ROAD, AFTON, VA 22920
OR EMAIL AT CCSGREEN@AOL.COM
PHONE 434-361-2136