

**Staff**

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**Master's Report**

Starting with Aesop's Fables, people have commented, written about the sly intelligence of foxes. Thousands of years later, we at Oak Ridge have had ample opportunity to observe same.

Our cubbing proved brisk, few slow days. Opening Hunt, after one hour of moving along, burst one red fox and one coyote from the same fixture, flying in opposite directions. The hounds, much closer to the coyote, pressed on and he took them all the way down to the Excel station on Route 56. What a merry chase. After the wonderful hunt breakfast, the Carriage House donated to us by the continued astonishing generosity of the Holland family, I thought I just might drop by the country store, Excel station, to see if the hounds had run up any bills! You never know. All was well.

After Opening Hunt, we enjoyed some decent days and some terrific ones, and then deer season came in. Well, our foxes quickly figure out what lands are closed off to us and run straight there. The number of times the field and I sat at the edge of Jimmy Carter's to listen to the pack, in full cry, were many. If we didn't pick up that fox, then we picked up one who flew straight to Foxden, then to curl around behind Sara Bateman's where we can go.

Finally deer season ended January 1 and already the runs are pretty good. Hunting is rarely consistent, which is part of the appeal. You never know. We've pushed out foxes each hunt but apart from the Run-In Shed, or the Kennels, it has taken a solid hour to get them running. And then, they do run. The ones at Oak Ridge have devised every possible difficult strategy. The Cistern foxes can be hideously clever. There's one fellow who makes a beeline for Rucker's Run right in the middle between the only two eastern fordings we have. There he turns, circles back, just to jerk us around, then heads out like an arrow. By the time we're all across the Run, he's disappeared.

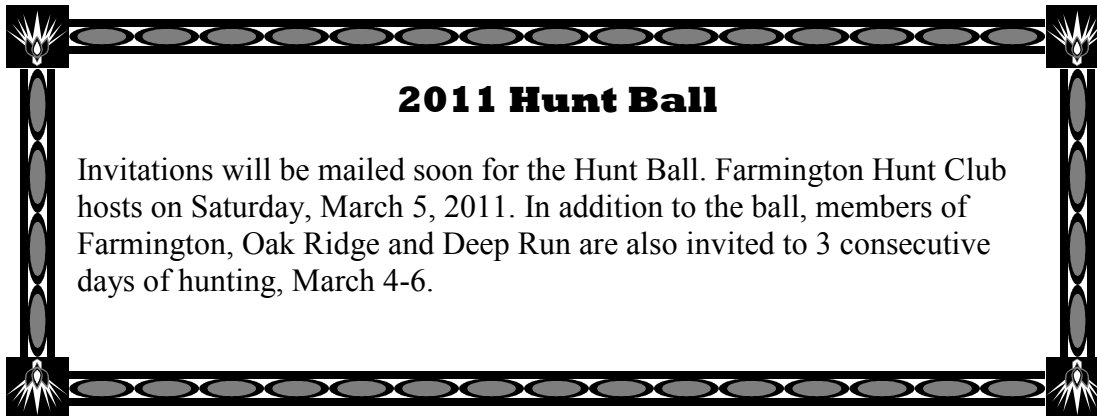
That's the excitement of it, trying to keep up with our quarry. At the home fixture the foxes are traveling in twos. At Oak Ridge not yet. On January 9, we scoured the pheasant field before crossing over to the Old Wilson House, finding many tracks but not in pairs. Again, after a lot of work in very cold conditions, hounds did get up a spectacular red halfway between the Old Wilson House and the ruins of the Bibb House. Just getting through proved tough until he finally consented to run along a farm lane up in the woods. He circled around back again to the Old Wilson House, hounds never flagging, headed down the trail there to that lovely bottom along Rucker's Run, but a tree blown down in the path, blocked everything. The surrounding woods are so thick and full of thorns you can't pass. Well, it was a fitting end to a tough day and he again proved just how sly foxes are.

Hounds and I look forward to the rest of the season. We hope to show you good sport and we're always happy to see everyone.

Up and Over,

Rita Mae

P.S. Have already gone through a pack of toe warmers. What about you?



## 2011 Hunt Ball

Invitations will be mailed soon for the Hunt Ball. Farmington Hunt Club hosts on Saturday, March 5, 2011. In addition to the ball, members of Farmington, Oak Ridge and Deep Run are also invited to 3 consecutive days of hunting, March 4-6.

## SUNBEAMS

A shaft of pale light splits a gray cloud. Outside it's a dusting of snow, ice and very high winds.

Looking back on summer's sunbeams, much brighter, I am reminded of all the wonderful people who showed up to walk hounds.

The hounds like to have admirers, so it made them happy and me. Having members come along for the walks is also very good for the youngsters who, up until then, have only seen John, Toot, Melvin, sometimes Bo, Emily and myself. Meeting more people is good for them. A few are shy but they overcome it.

When their first day of school arrives, they may be a bit overwhelmed, but not nearly as much as if they didn't have contact with their walking friends.

Hounds and I thank the following who braved summer's sweltering mornings. If I forgot anyone, please forgive me and call Lynn Stevenson to add your name. These are in no alphabetical order: Diane Gibbs, Eileen Lang, Lucy Rolston, Becky Wood, Karen Catron, Donna Gaertner, John Western, Riley Harvey, Anne Aucker, Lynn Stevenson, Gib Stevenson, Cheryl Tsakis, Cole Tsakis, Ford Tsakis, Bo Truslow, Emily Schilling, Liz Pritchard, David Pritchard, Sara Bateman, Vey Martini, John Morris, Toot Morris, and Melvin Morris.

Hounds send wet kisses. Mine are a bit more civilized.

RMB

## CHRISTMAS GIFTS

Your gift is small but useful. The weather canceled our hunt at Sara Bateman's. All the gifts were in her basement.

I loaded them in the truck and will bring them to hunts. If you haven't picked up your present by the end of January, contact our hunt secretary, Lynn Stevenson,

RMB

### Congratulations to our members receiving colors and buttons this year!

#### *Colors*

Julie Bullock, DVM  
Sandy Cryder  
Sue Migliore  
Julia Schiebel  
Ann Smith  
Bo Truslow  
Deborah Wray

#### *Buttons*

Tori Ashley  
Karen Catron  
Mark Catron  
Vey Martini  
Keith Pitchford  
Cheryl Tsakis

