

In Full Cry



In the early 1950s, the Fox River Valley Hunt enjoyed a period with a large, enthusiastic membership. It enjoyed success in breeding hounds, the cooperation of most local landowners and farmers, and an extensive local territory. The pace of most Barrington area residents' lives was less frenetic than that of residents in communities closer to the city.

And yet, as early as 1930, when the Jewel Tea Company built its headquarters in Barrington and designed Jewel Park, the area began to attract corporate interest. This was to increase substantially after World War II. There had always been a number of commuters who traveled daily to Chicago on the Chicago & North Western Railway. For some years the railway operated a club car on the line, called the Northwest Passage. But to the average resident of Chicago or the North Shore, Barrington still represented a rural destination reached only by poor roads and requiring a full day for a visit. A weekend in the country was preferable.

In the '50s, Freund Brothers, a farm implement dealer, sold International Harvester equipment out of their store on Franklin Street in Barrington before moving out to Northwest Highway. Most of the more successful farmers would meet in town at Bert's Bank Tavern on Saturday mornings to compare notes on how their planting or harvest was coming along. Other times, farmers might be found gathering at either the Old Heidleburg on Algonquin Road, the Sutton Tap, or Reggie's at Little Cuba. Little Cuba or Cuba Station as it was known to many oldtimers was originally called Langenheim, after Louis Langenheim, an early landowner in the area. After dairy farming became prevalent in the late 19th Century, the platform at Cuba Station was used as a milk drop. Farmers brought their cans of raw milk to the platform for delivery on the early morning train to Chicago and picked up the empty cans from one of the afternoon trains. This continued until the mid-1940s.

Cuba station never developed into a town, although a blacksmith shop and Kraus' General Store were located there. From 1892 to 1894, there was a designated post office in the general store. Mail was postmarked "Langenheim-Cuba Station." In the 1920s, a dance hall at the corner of Plum Tree, Kelsey Road, and Northwest Highway was quite a popular destination on Saturday nights.

But changes were apparent. Whereas the countryside had undergone a gradual transformation to country estates coexisting with established farms — some in second or third generation ownership — more people began to find the area attractive. Demand for residential property of less extensive acreage increased in the 1950s.

Many of the new residents were horse people who had discovered the area through attending the annual Barrington Horse Show. For those enthusiasts, this was idyllic country. A beautiful trail system provided by the Riding Club, an active fox hunt, a popular horse show held every August, a two-day schooling show held every May, and nearby Arlington Park Race Track offered a range of equestrian activities second to none in the Midwest.

The hunt membership gained quite a few of these newcomers, and the annual Hunt Ball would traditionally be the highlight of the local social season. Decorating for the ball was left to the wives of the hunt members. One year, the decoration committee decided that the dormant trees with colorful foliage still attached should be cut, potted, and placed in the Barrington Hills Country Club for that dramatic autumn effect when the men arrived, dressed in their scarlet coats, accompanied by their partners, dressed in either black or white gowns. In their haste to collect and set up the trees, the group failed to notice a sizeable wasps' nest still attached to one of the branches. As the evening got underway, the heat inside the club wakened the wasps from their hibernation. A low humming sound warned of the presence of the uninvited, angry guests. Eyewitness George Van Hagen said, "they caused the party to move quickly outside until they could all be rounded up."



l. to r. Paul Cook, Harold B. Smith, Paul Jones, S.L. Reinhardt, Robert Engelman, Thomas White, Percy Oliver, Fredrick Gohl, Joshua Derry, John Bennett, Andrew Dallstream, Justin Webster, Dr. Ferdinand Seidler, George Van Hagen.

The winters of 1950 and 1951 were long remembered for great amounts of snow, causing an early end to the hunt season. The winter of 1952-53 was quite the opposite, however. A relatively mild winter meant that the hounds were able to go out 50 times from September through March. For the uninitiated, hunting generally is halted in the spring to allow the vixens peace while they whelp. In September or early fall, cubbing season begins, which is when puppies learn how to hunt and the cubs learn how to run.

By the 1952 season, the Longmeadow Hunt had disbanded, and several of their members had joined the Fox River Valley Hunt, just as Denny had predicted. Most notably, the hunt gained the two Pauls and Robert "Bob" Engelman. The two Pauls were Paul Jones, head of Cummins Chicago Corporation and later president of the Glenview State Bank, and Paul Cook, head of his own insurance firm. Bob Engelman, who lived in Highland Park, and the two Pauls boarded their hunters with Al Moore at Big Oak Farm. Coincidentally, Bob's thoroughbred hunter, Laddie, was previously owned and shown extensively by Chip McIntosh, Orville Caesar's grandson. McIntosh stabled Laddie at the Round Barn.

During those grand days of the early '50s, Denny, being rightfully proud of his pack, took them to the Bryn Mawr Hound Show in Pennsylvania. At that time, it was the premier hound show and the Fox River Valley Hunt proved extremely competitive in the English division. Alex Higginson faithfully returned from England for the show, and the two Masters looked forward to meeting there annually so Denny could apprise "Hig" of the offspring from the original drafts.

THE THIRTY-SEVENTH ANNUAL
BRYN MAWR HOUND SHOW
RADNOR HUNT CLUB
PHILADELPHIA • PENNSYLVANIA
FRIDAY • SEPTEMBER 6 • 1957



In 1953, the Fox River Valley Hunt hosted the fourth Annual Hunter Trials. The Chicago area hunts had agreed four years earlier to hold these trials because the local horse shows had become so popular - the competitors were showing the fancy horses, leaving the fox hunters completely out of the ribbons. The Hunter Trials were to rotate each year so all the area hunts had a chance to host them. The fourth year, they were held at Denny's South Farm. The course was laid out immediately behind the kennels, in the field where the Irish Bank for the Horse Trials is now, adjacent to the Forest Preserve and the Riding Center. The course used the existing tree lines and was a true test for a field hunter.

Denny's explanation of the reason for the trials is insightful. He explained:

"Fox hunting is not a competitive sport; the only reward for bold, fast riding is the opportunity to see what hounds are doing. Fox-hunters who wish to compare their horses may do so, however, in hunter trails. The performance of a hunter counts everything, appearance counts nothing except insofar as good conformation inevitably contributes to good performance. A good hunter jumps boldly and big, folding his legs neatly. He gallops smoothly and without wasted motion that might tire him and his rider on a long day. He is temperate and easy to control. He will lead the way over a jump without undo urging, and will follow another horse without undo excitement. He is free from any unsoundness that might hinder his ability to endure a long day, and is in condition to carry his rider safely to the end of a hunt".

The Chairman of the 1953 Trials was Howard McCully, father of junior member Susie. Howard had excellent organizational skills, which were critical for hosting these trials successfully. When he had been transferred to the Chicago area, his desire to have horses on his property for his three children influenced his choice of Barrington as his home. He purchased the old schoolhouse, once known as the Mickey School, on Donlea Road between the Jackson Farm and Big Oak Farm.

Nineteen fifty-three was a significant year for the hunt. It was a significant year for Barrington, too. At the 1953 Annual Meeting, it was noted that the hunt had lost country in the southwest part of the territory. A large parcel of land on Elgin Road, better known now as Route 25, was purchased by Leonard Besinger. He proposed a development to be called Meadowdale. Prefabricated homes, the first of their kind in Illinois, were to be built on 60 foot lots. These homes would offer low-income housing to veterans and to Chicagoans who desired an escape from deteriorating city neighborhoods.

The Countryside Association was very quickly alerted and mobilized into action. Founded in 1936, this was a very loosely organized group of local residents who handled civic events in the countryside west of the Village of Barrington. They formally asked the Fox River Valley Hunt to work closely

with them to prevent this type of development from spreading eastward. They proposed the incorporation of large tracts of that countryside as the Village of Barrington Hills. In 1953, a smaller area in the far western part of the countryside had already incorporated, also in response to the rapidly changing circumstances. This area was known as Middlebury.

Five men organized the founding of the Village of Barrington Hills. Andrew Dallstream, a lawyer who was then secretary of the hunt and also chairman of the Cook County Zoning Board of Appeals, which gave him insight into the future demands on the area; Newton Noble, a longtime resident residing on Bateman Road; Harold Byron Smith, president of Illinois Tool Works and a resident of the countryside since 1932; Thomas White, also a longtime resident of Barrington; and Orville Caesar, president of the Greyhound Corporation, owner of the Round Barn property and of Dorvillee Farms along Brinker Road. They worked diligently on the legalities necessary for the incorporation of a municipality, and gathered the necessary residents signatures on a petition. At the same time, the farmland along Elgin Road, first settled in the late 1830s, was undergoing devastation by bulldozers at an alarming rate. Within one week, the beautiful rolling hills would be leveled, and many 300-year-old oak trees destroyed. Approximately 15 houses were constructed, ready for interior finishing touches and occupancy.

This rapid development did not go unnoticed by Jay Cardwell. He, too, had left the city in 1924. He had come to a rural setting to plant trees, not wantonly destroy them. Jay, born in 1873 and raised on a farm in Missouri, had witnessed the industrial revolution firsthand. In his early years, he saw horses only as a means of work and transportation. He had some difficulty comprehending how his daughters found pleasure in horses as recreation, even though he enjoyed riding with them on Sundays. The incredible destruction of the countryside to build Meadowdale was, to Jay, the unhappy realization that he was in the middle of the 20th Century. Faithfully, every Saturday morning he would drive his granddaughter, Vicki — who was Gina's daughter — over to the construction site to count both the number of new houses and the number of felled trees since the preceding week. This became a routine when Vicki spent weekends with her grandfather. Jay emphasized repeatedly the many years that went into the growth of those beautiful trees, which were pushed into a mound to be burned on site. To Jay, the wanton loss of firewood was also a tragedy. It was truly incredible just how fast these prefab homes could be put together. Because this type of construction had never been undertaken before, people could not comprehend the residual effects it would have on the area as increased amounts of traffic converged on lightly used country roads.

Change was no longer something subtle, only hinted at in countryside gatherings. It was now occurring with a visible sense of shock. It was particularly obvious to those who, because of fox hunting, were close to the land and were more aware of the impact these changes were having on nature.

With his loss of hearing increasing, Denny felt he needed a Joint Master. Since Harry had moved to Peoria, Denny had led the hunt by himself. He wisely knew that he needed someone who was knowledgeable on the changes impacting the area. Thus, charter hunt member Tom White was made Joint Master in 1954.

Also in this same year, with profound regret, Denny wrote the hunt committee a letter explaining that with the building and traffic in the area it was his opinion that live hunting would become impossible.

So drag hunting was tried with limited success. Drag hunting is accomplished when a burlap bag is dampened with the scent of fox urine or bedding and then dragged over a prescribed course that hounds can follow safely. It should be recalled that, when the hunt was originally formed, the founders as well as Denny were proud they had a live hunt, like the Mill Creek and Oak Brook Hunts, also in the Chicagoland area. Drag hunting was limited to the Wayne-DuPage and Longmeadow Hunts. For Denny to recommend drag hunting indicated the success of his creation, to the point where it had almost grown out of his hands. He wanted to start a live hunt and breed a first-rate pack of hounds, which he had done, and now he had gone full circle back to a drag hunt.

The main problem in the hunt's attempts at drag hunting stemmed from the fact that the excellent pack Denny had spent the last 13 or so years breeding had all been entered on live fox. The pack was thus very reluctant to acknowledge an artificial line. Hounds do, in fact, know the difference. Recall Denny's statement that his Longmeadow pack "showed a life and enthusiasm they had never exhibited on the drag."

The hunt's second problem involved the person hired to lay the drag lines before each hunt. This young boy knew nothing of hounds, hunting, or the country, so it was often a futile exercise. He was, however, quite pleased to have such an important job. The staff that hired him did not openly discuss the drag, hoping to disguise the fact and still offer fun sport. The youth, being so proud of his first job, rushed out and painted the words "DRAGGER MAN" on each side of his ancient jalopy. He then proceeded to arrive at every meet and offer to hold horses or open that first gate for the field, causing much conversation.

The third and greatest problem the hunt encountered in its attempt at drag hunting was that the scent attracted the curiosity of every fox in Kane, Cook, and Lake counties. After a lovely view, hounds were still off and running the real thing!

With his hearing almost gone, with his dislike of drag hunting and the changes to the countryside, Denny hunted less and less, and left the day-to-day operations to Tom White. This prompted Tom to ask the membership in 1955 to assume a greater portion of the financial responsibility for the hunt, which still rested to a large extent with Denny. Tom foresaw that Denny's contributions could not continue indefinitely.



FOX RIVER VALLEY HUNT

BARRINGTON, ILLINOIS

September 28, 1954

DENISON B. HULL, M.F.H.
115 De Windt Road, Winnetka, Illinois

THOMAS C. WHITE, M.F.H.
Barrington, Illinois

F. DONALD BATEMAN
President
Barrington, Illinois

JOSHUA J. D. DERRY
Hon. Hunt Secretary
Barrington, Illinois

ANDREW J. DALLSTREAM
Treasurer
Barrington, Illinois

HUNT COMMITTEE
F. Donald Bateman
John L. Bennett
Andrew J. Dallstream
Joshua J. D. Derry
J. Courtney Fitzpatrick
George H. Gruendel
Denison B. Hull
Harry A. Lowther
Percy H. Oliver
S. L. Reinhardt
F. Peter Sachs
Harold Byron Smith
Carol Throckmorton
Thomas C. White

To the Members of the Fox River Valley Hunt:

We were not such pigs about taking blue ribbons at the Bryn Mawr Hound Show as we were last year, but just the same we did very well, bringing home five blues and the Ladies' Challenge Trophy for the best English stallion hound shown with three of his get. We won it with GOBLIN last year and with LIMERICK this year. Our hounds were good, but competition was tougher than ever.

If our hounds are good looking, you should be aware that they are good workers, too, if you have watched them cubbing. I can tell you with certainty that they are one of the best packs in the country. The truth is that they are so good we are faced with trouble -- bad trouble. For as the pack has improved, the country has deteriorated until now we no longer have enough country for full time foxhunting.

This change has come rather suddenly, and until last year it still seemed possible to reverse the trend. But the continued process of paving roads, subdividing land, and building houses, culminating in the Meadowdale development, has accelerated the change until it is obvious that no amount of effort can reverse it.

There is still enough country for cub hunting on a somewhat restricted scale. But when the weather gets cold and the foxes run far and straight, we are in for trouble. The number of long hard runs has been increasing each year as the pack has improved, until now your Joint Masters cannot conscientiously face the responsibility of turning a pack of hounds loose in a country where they can get completely out of control. Apart from being killed on the highway (as they have been the last two years), the hounds can get themselves and us in very serious trouble.

This is not just imagination. Remember, please, that winter before last when everyone else had quit, we were still hunting until March 17th, and hounds were running from end to end of the country every hunt. What happened then can happen any time after November first -- and the likelihood of trouble is infinitely greater this year.

But if we cannot continue as a 100 per cent fox hunt, there is no need to quit -- there are too many enthusiastic young riders in our field. We can, and should, put on a simulated fox hunt by using a drag. Heretofore I have been very much opposed to the idea. Today I am convinced that it is the only salvation for the hunt.

You can make a drag what you wish. It can be a training ground for steeplechasers (as in the Aiken Drag Hunt), or it can be so much like a fox hunt that only the experts can tell the difference. We shall try to make it the way you would like it. We shall not please everybody all the time, of course, but we'll do our best.

Sincerely,

DENISON B. HULL
Joint M.F.H.

In April of 1956, Denison B. Hull tendered his resignation as Master of the Fox River Valley Hunt. Retiring after 16 years had to be as emotional as abandoning a child raised and nurtured from infancy. This gentleman had spent the greater part of his adult life as Master of two packs, had built three kennels, had been a competitor and a judge at the Bryn Mawr Hound Show, and had hunted with countless other hunts as a visiting Master. Nevertheless, all the indicators of change were in the air, and Denny felt it was time to dismount.

April 30, 1956.

Mr. Gilbert Mather,
226 Walnut St.,
Philadelphia 6, Pa.

Dear Gilbert:

This is just to let you know that effective tomorrow I shall no longer be Master of the Fox River Valley Hunt. I sent in my resignation several days ago.

Although the Forest Preserve District has not yet bought my farm the real estate subdivisions have come so close that every hunt last season was a drag hunt. We were simply forced to it. After sixteen years of foxhunting I just don't care about running a drag hunt. Anyway, it's a big question how long it will be before the Forest Preserve buys the farm and whether or not they will permit the hunt to continue. As it looks right now, however, the hunt will be able to maintain recognition. I have left them fifteen couple of hounds which are all excellent in their work and well mannered. They will have the same huntsman I have had for several years, and Tom White, who was my Joint Master the last two years, will continue for one more year anyhow. Therefore I think I can make an informal report, although it is not supposed to be my job, recommending that no change be made in the status of the hunt this coming year. Believe me, I shall be the first to recommend dropping it if it doesn't keep up to scratch.

I expect to keep up my interest in the Masters Association and, of course, in foxhunting, and shall try to be a regular attendant at the annual dinner and at the Bryn Mawr Show too. With best wishes, I am

Yours sincerely,

DBH: OK

DENISON B. HULL.

In 1957, Tom White succeeded Denny as sole Master of the Fox River Valley Hunt. Patrick Regan's son, Aiden, was now the huntsman. Tom was not prepared to maintain the hunt in the tradition that Denny had, but was fully aware of the enthusiasm of the members. He continued trying to lay the drag line so they could have some excitement while ensuring the safety of the pack. He was acutely aware of the impact that the increasing demand for real estate was having on the Barrington area. The Village of Barrington Hills was finally incorporated, becoming the largest incorporated village in the United States. The village adopted five-acre zoning. The Cook County Forest Preserve proposed to acquire a very large parcel of land in the middle of the hunting country, which included Denny's Big Oak Farm. Traffic and building sites on existing farms were becoming a common sight.

JOHN PEEL'S HORN

Recently Patrick Aidan Regan, whipper-in of the Fox River Valley Hunt, was asked to blow the original hunting horn owned by John Peel, at the Music Festival given by the Chicago Tribune. It was quite a sight. Seventy thousand people were present in the Soldier Field stadium, when he came under the spotlight in the middle of the field.

The horn is cracked from end to end and unless the fingers are held over all the holes it is almost impossible to blow. In fact it would actually take both hands to cover all the holes in the antiquated instrument.

It is doubtful if the audience appreciated the notes that poured forth from the horn, but it certainly churned up the imagination of foxhunters who were present.—Easy Mark

At the end of the 1957 season, Tom felt that he could no longer hunt the area safely. He was succeeded as Master by longtime President F. Donald "Tony" Bateman. Tony had greatly enjoyed polo in the early days, always had a major role in the Oak Knolls Gymkhana skits, and had found fox hunting enjoyable. Residing on the east side of Hart Road near Oak Knoll Road, he brought to the mastership the unique distinction of having hunted for 17 years without ever having bought a horse. When someone retired from riding, he would take over their horse, or he would borrow one. But he never bought one for himself.

In early January 1958, with heavy snow on the ground, longtime member George Van Hagen rode his last hunt with Tony, who passed away in July of that year. George later wrote of that occasion:

January 1958
Fox River Valley
Barrington Il.
George E. Van Hagen

A DAY TO REMEMBER

In January, the Fox Hunting season is almost over-except for a few hardy souls who wish to venture out in the snowy weather. So it was on January 4th when a handful of us appeared at the kennel, bundled up with warm coats and ear muffs, ready for a bout with Freddy Fox. Our fine master, Tom White and huntsman Aiden Regen cast the hounds in Hull's Woods, directly across from the kennel on Donlea Road. This produced no results and the field, composed of Fred Gohl, daughter Janet, Dr. Ferdinand Sideler, Fox River Valley Hunt President Tony Bateman and myself, ambled along behind, quite proud of ourselves for being on hand to enjoy such a fine day. The rolling hills around us were covered in a blanket of heavy snow. The sun hung in full array, on a blue cloudless sky and gave real testimony to one of those delightfully perfect mornings.

As we realized we would get no sport here, Mr. White decided to pick up the hounds and head south to what we now jokingly call "deer Country." Today, after plowing through much snow, sometimes up to the horses bellies, maneuvering over fences drifted high, falling into several snow filled ditches and forging a rushing brook, we heard the excited voices of our hounds and knew we were in for a hot chase.

We took off at a fast gallop. Tony Bateman and I headed for the highway that ran nearby, expecting the hounds to cross. Experience had taught us that unless we stopped cars in advance of the hounds reaching the highway we stood to lose them-so intent were they on giving us good sport that they would not notice the impending danger of moving cars. Instead, our quarry today ran parallel with the highway and commenced a long circle, possibly five miles in diameter. The pace was so fast that we caught only short glimpse of the hounds and could not see what was in front of them. Our trail led through several woods, over plowed fields covered with more snow and then burst out over a hillside looking across a large open expanse that offered our first real view of the chase. There ahead of us, possibly a mile and one-half was a long ribbon of hounds, trailing along in full cry. From this distance they seemed to bend and weave, like birds in flight. Still ahead of them somewhere was our elusive game. On we rode until several lines of barbed wire fencing caused us to pull up. This had to be opened and then replaced, giving us time for a breather. Then we were off again. By now the hounds had disappeared into a long patch of woods and we had lost contact with them. The field split up and picked their way through the trees looking for hounds. Suddenly Mr. White rode up and shouted that he had seen something moving in the brush and riding up to it, thinking it a stray hound, had been surprised when up popped a big four-point buck deer who scampered off immediately. But where were the hounds now? We decided to ride along the outside

of the woods and take our chances on relocating them. Upon completing our circle of the woods, and finding no further sign of the hounds the field elected to head homeward. After reaching the stable some of us returned in cars to look for the hounds and huntsman. Mr. White found them much later in the day still hunting. They had found a fox in their mad dash across country. The hounds had finally run the fox to ground and a valient sight it was to see those weary battlers staggering home behind their huntsman, after a rather full day and some good wintry sport.

This story was written in January 1958 but was never printed. I found it among my papers recently. At the time I wrote it I didn't realize that it was to be the last hunt I was to share with my dear friend and neighbor, Tony Bateman, who passed away that year. I thought it appropriate that it should appear now in memory of this man who was a great inspiration to the sport and whose long service as ambassador of goodwill marked him with a stamp of a fox hunter in the grand tradition. Tony served as President of the Fox River Valley Hunt, 1946 to 1957.

George E. Van Hagen



l. to r. Joshua D. Derry, MFH, F. Donald Bateman, MFH, Sylvia Bennett.

Joshua D. Derry followed in Tony's footsteps as Master. He was a resident of Ridge Road and had been a member of the hunt committee for many years. Assisted by Gina Reinhardt, who became president, Josh, as he was known, continued to schedule hunts at the same meeting places, even though new landowners were acquiring the properties. Meets were held at Penny and Healy Roads, Plum Tree Road, and at the corner of Route 25 and County Line Road.

Since the sale of Denny's farm to the Cook County Forest Preserve had been completed, the hunt was required to lease the buildings and kennels on a monthly basis. Josh found hacking to the meets perilous with the increased traffic, and after the 1959 season, he resigned. With his resignation, he strongly advised that if the hunt was to survive, it could only do so as a drag hunt. He added that he "could not in good conscience ever be part of a drag hunt."



Fox River Valley Hunt

BARRINGTON, ILLINOIS

January 30, 1960

JOSHUA J. D. DERRY, M.F.H.
Barrington, Illinois

MRS. S. L. REINHARDT
President
Barrington, Illinois

ANDREW J. DALLSTREAM
Vice President
Barrington, Illinois

GEORGE E. VAN HAGEN
Hon. Hunt Secretary
Barrington, Illinois

LEE VANCE
Treasurer
Barrington, Illinois

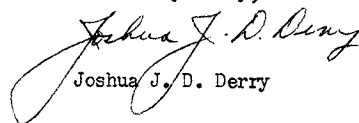
Dear Jenna:

After a great deal of thought and observation, I have come to the conclusion that live fox hunting in our country is no longer feasible due to the subdividing of large tracts of land into building sites and to the encroachment of highways and increased traffic thereon. In my opinion, drag hunting is the type of a hunt that can be operated successfully in the Barrington area. As my interest lies solely in live fox hunting, I do not feel that I could conscientiously assume the responsibility of Master of a drag hunt.

So effective February 1, 1960, I submit my resignation as Master of the Fox River Valley Hunt and recommend that the Hunt Committee give serious consideration to drag hunting in our present country in the future.

I have enjoyed my tenure as Master and want to thank all concerned for the splendid cooperation I have enjoyed.

Yours very truly,


Joshua J. D. Derry

Mrs. S. L. Reinhardt
Oak Knoll Road
Barrington, Illinois