

Hunter's Corner

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The neat pad marks of the fox and the splayed, sprawling tracks of Dixie had crossed the ice on Martin's Creek and headed down the north side of light house. West of mile distant Point Prim and its Cameron Island, with Mount Buchanan behind me, I saw where the fox had given Dixie some trouble when he took to the ice but not for long.

It was about this time I developed a little trouble of my own. First one slipped on the moorings and then another followed suit. I couldn't very well follow on holding my shotgun, a big double-barrelled 10 gauge, in one hand and my pants in the other, so struck off across the fields to a farm house for a couple of wire nails... nails are a good substitute for buttons at times.

The family were sitting in at the dinner table and with true Scotch hospitality coaxed me to sit in with them. The old-fashioned boiled dinner smelled awfully good but my hunting fever was running high and besides I was quite shy in those days and didn't accept their kind offer. The lady of the house offered to sew a couple of buttons on for me (I was really blushing at this stage) but I settled for a couple of nails. I was heartened when I reached the shore by hearing the distant notes of the hound in the far distance and coming steadily closer.

I took my stand at the edge of a wood road that ran parallel with the shore. I didn't have long to wait. My heart gave a great bound when I espied the fox coming straight down the wood trail. I can see that fox now as vividly as I could then—a matchless creation of blood red on white snow—tongue hanging from the side of his mouth, black legs moving in a tireless lope and white tipped brush trailing low. I had buck fever of the worst type. The 10 gauge roared and I saw miniature geysers of snow erupt from the impact of the B.B. shot. The fox halted so abruptly it skidded to its side on the ice under the snow and then darted to the shelter of a thicket on its right. The left barrel spurted smoke before the fox gained the bushes but again the pellets made spurts of snow dance harmlessly down the length of the wood road.

In a sort of daze I walked to the spot. No sign of blood but a patch of skin and red fur the size of a dime rolled fluffily across the snow. I hadn't missed entirely. In a moment Dixie arrived. He was close behind the fleeing fox. Flecks of blood from a cut foot stained his belly and he looked tired. He paused long enough to give a look of reproach which seemed to say "You could have ended the chase if you were any good", and then took up where he had left off.

Suddenly I was tired and the gun weighed a ton. I knew the rest of the party would be strung along the back trail and my spirits lifted when I heard the deep BOOM of a shotgun a quarter mile distant. I felt elated when I heard the baying of the hound cease. One of the party had made the kill. It was brother Dan. When I came up he was holding the prize aloft... an old dog fox in prime condition and heavily furred. When he chided me about my miss I showed him the tuft of skin and fur. It matched a bare patch on the top of his brush midway between the rump and tip. I shot over him with my first shot and behind him with the second. Even yet I find myself making the same mistake at times.

Homeward bound we were a tired but happy party of hunters, but the excitement wasn't all over. As we neared Galleon's Creek the winter night was dropping fast and trees snapped with the frost. Dixie was bedded down between us in the straw apparently dead to the world but suddenly he lifted his muzzle and sniffed. Before we could stop him he was out of the sleigh and up the bank into the woods. All was bedlam for a few moments. I remember Ding shouting: "Look out there's a fox in there", and then Dixie opened up in full cry.

I have a vision of Billie running up the road, his long legs covering ground like a horse to where the wood ended a few hundred yards ahead. In a matter of seconds so it seemed the deep black of a gunshot rang out. We could hear the hound crossing the road and entering a field and then his deep baying ended in mid note.

Darkness descended as Billie came down the road with Dixie trotting at his heels and a nice fox draped over his shoulder. Billie said: "I figured he'd cross the road when he came to the point of woods and head south for the swamp along the Orwell River." He guessed right and we were a fox richer on our way home. In the intervening years I have learned that unless one gets the fox soon after it's started the chase is liable to be a long one. The fox is on game animals that is well able to look out for itself... we have more foxes today, a lot more, than we had 45 years ago.

Back Stretch

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Joe will have Vella La Vella 2.08 1/2, Colonel Hanford 2.10 1/2 and two or three others to campaign. Last year he raced the trotter Rajah Hanover 2.13 1/2 at Old Home Week and won with him in 2.15 1/2 and this led to his sale to Myron Bell of this city.

We have received from Carl MacKenzie, Race Secretary Truro Raceway, a copy of their 1953 race program. Racing dates start May 18th and June 2nd with half-mile dashes, and night racing commencing on June 17th and will be held every Wednesday and Saturday nights through Thanksgiving Day, with no dash for less than \$200, and featuring 19 early closing events with total purses of \$15,900. With these are two Free For Alls with purses of \$1,500 for three heats to be raced Dominion Day and Labor Day. The other classes are for trotters and pacers. The total estimated purse distribution is expected to be \$70,000 and all drivers will carry the U. S. T. A. track insurance in 1953, paid for by the Truro Raceway, Ltd. Truro Raceway, Ltd. has been a well managed concern, carrying out its promises, keeping their track in good order and ending up the season with the good will of horsemen and the public. Our best wishes for success go out to them again this season.

At the Cape Breton horsemen's dinner and in the Venetian Gardens last week, presiding Judge Ken MacDougall urged the horsemen and harness racing followers to give the Turf Club and Sports Centre Directors their support and they would be rewarded with the finest harness racing season ever enjoyed in Cape Breton. The program would open May 18th and that would start a racing season that would present over \$60,000 in purses. Another big meet is planned for Coronation Day, when the Coronation Stakes will be presented. On this day the Turf Club will present a novel feature, the giving away of a car to the lucky ticket holder. August 3rd to 8th will be known as Racing Week in Cape Breton when such events as Downeast Free For All, The Cabot Trail Free For All, the Marjorie M. 2.10 Class and the Stake will be raced.

Ken pointed out that over \$30,000 had been spent by Cape Bretoners to bring in new racing speed, the largest amount ever invested by any organization in the Dominion. Jimmie Ferguson, Secretary of the Turf Club, stated that last season over \$45,000 had been spent in purses and \$24,801 had been turned over to the Board of Censors as their share of the money that passed through the Pari Mutuel. Ralph DeYoung, President of the Turf Club, congratulated the 'shy Horsemen's Club for putting on the big function. One of the outstanding things of the season was the formation of the Vel Stables, composed of Murvale Vall, Gordon Elman and R. J. "Dick" Logue, a group that invested \$11,000 in bringing horses to Cape Breton. These and other horsemen, he said, would give new interest to the sport and he was confident that 1953 would be one of the best years ever.

From Orlando, Florida, Lloyd Murray, formerly manager of the Bank of Nova Scotia here, writes: "An enclosing a Directory of the trotters and pacers here this season. Thought you might be interested. I watched a lot of them working out this morning including Meadow Rice 1.58, a beautiful horse. I am sure you would find lots of interest around the track. I look forward to the Guardian every week and read the Back Stretch and Spung Jenkins 'The Hunter's Corner'... Thanks, Lloyd, and the Directory of the Ben White Raceway gives a complete list of all the horses in training there this winter and spring. When on the tracks the horses carry numbers corresponding to the numbers in the Directory, to facilitate identification. Each horse is identified by name, record if any, color, sex, age, gait, sire and dam, owner and address. The Directory is published by the Greater Orlando Chamber of Commerce for the convenience of owners, trainers, officials and visitors of Ben White Raceway. The horse numbers are furnished by Roosevelt Raceway. Ben White Raceway is the largest winter training headquarters in the world for trotters and pacers and is owned and maintained by the city of Orlando. It is governed by the Fairway Park Board, and city appointed commissioner. In the beginning the track had only 120 stalls and one half-mile track. As more and more stables were shipped south facilities were enlarged until now there are 551 stalls and three tracks.

In the same mail we received a similar Directory from W. G. Dystant, an Islander who is well known to many people here and who is evidently spending his winter in the sunny south. Billy also sent us the latest issue of The Horseman and Fair World which gave the performances of the various stables at Ben White Raceway and other southern training tracks... Thanks, Lloyd and Billy and we certainly are glad and all your efforts will be to, to learn that you are enjoying yourselves.

Latest news from Orlando is that Del Miller drove the Bill Gallon two-year-old filly Stenographer over the half-mile track in 2.23 1/2, the last quarter in 33 1/2. That is the best time for a trotter over the half-mile track there this season. The free-legged colt, The Rajah by Nibble Hanover, set a season's pacing mark for the half-mile oval for Del Miller, being clocked in 2.21 with the final quarter in 32 seconds, and the fastest time over the mile track trotting was by the two-year-old filly Tiana that stepped in 2.22 with the last quarter in 32 1/2 seconds. In the Del Miller stable there are 12 two-year-old trotters which worked in from 2.23 1/2 to 2.31 and ten two-year-old pacers that were timed from 2.21 to 2.35. This is supposed

to be the best string of two-year-olds that Del has ever had.

The Horseman and Fair World, which is published in Indianapolis, Indiana, is one of the foremost publications of its kind in the world. It was started some 75 years ago and just recently the oldest member of the staff, Miss Belle Ketrion, who has been with the publication for 48 years, retired. She is 86 years "young" and has held every staff position in the office but the editorship. In her long career she has acted as assistant editor, made up the ads and pages, read proof, saw forms to press and was official bookkeeper and cashier. When the Horseman Futurities were organized in 1907 it was Miss Ketrion who set up the book-keeping system and handled the administration of those classics now in their 46th year.

As a tribute to her a leading breeder has named an extremely well-bred foal "Belle Ketrion" and will be raced in 1955. In addition to her many activities with The Horseman she has assisted in every worthwhile cause in church and other activities. In concluding a tribute to her The Horseman has this to say: "There are tables of world records and 2.00 miles set, but we believe there should be a table for Aunt Belle Ketrion, who has been a dean of all publishing people. We are indeed grateful to her, whose loyal devotion has been of inestimable help and assistance in carrying on through the wars and depressions with us. She is of the school which knows how to task too difficult, too hours too long. We have changed her title to consultant for our future reference and guidance."

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Among the 210 trotters of 1952 is the six-year-old Playalong, that took a record of 2.08 1/2. He was sired by Playdale 2.04 1/2 and his dam was Ethel Budlong by Calumet Budlong 2.02 1/2, grandam, Ethel Aubrey. Playalong was bred raised and received all his early training from Brent Howat, East Royalty, who sold him as a five-year-old to Myron MacArthur of Kensington, who resold him to a party in the United States. In 16 starts last season he was first to the wire 11 times and was four times second, certainly a wonderful showing. No doubt there are many other trotters by Playdale that if given proper training would hit the 2.10 list. He was an exceptionally well bred horse and will be greatly missed in the breeding ranks here.

According to The Horseman and Fair World, Sharky Bellini, a 19-year-old gelding made the winner's circle at Dufferin track, Toronto, in January. It took him until he was 16 years old, that is until 1949, before he took a standard record of 2.14.

The Alberta Harness Racing Circuit is going ahead by leaps and bounds and we hope to see it as big a success in a few years as it was some 40 years ago when they were turning out world's champions. Over \$25,000 has been put up for summer racing there, which has been organized by Calgary horsemen. Edmonton will put on a four day meet in mid-July, featuring a purse program totalling \$11,200.

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Sport Echoes From Prince County

The O'Leary Maroons came through as we had predicted they would, but in a manner, we must confess, quite different than the way we had it figured. "The Maroons will win," we told all and sundry, "because they will establish too big a lead in their own rink for the Borden puck pursuers to whittle down. The O'Leary boys are tough to take in their own back yard."

Yessir, that's what we said, and the Maroons couldn't have liked the insinuation that their rink had anything to do with their chances of winning. They proceeded to spot the Nationals two goals in their own halliwick, and then travel to Borden, and wipe out the deficit down in the car-ferry town, with all the home-town supporters looking on. Looked almost as if they had the whole thing planned to show us how wet we were about their abilities.

Don't think we ever enjoyed a basketball game so much as the St. F. X. - St. Dunstan's go at the S. D. U. gym Monday night. The game was a thriller throughout, and the lead kept shifting as the fast action progressed. With only a few minutes to go in the last quarter, the Saints had a seven-point lead, and looked good to take a fairly comfortable cushion to Antigonish with them. Then the Xaverians put a fat blond boy

named MacFarlane into the game, a player who up to that time hadn't seen any action. "Just a spare time whom the coach is giving a little workout to justify bringing him on the trip," we figured.

In the course of about two minutes this "spare tire" had shot two baskets from outside, had gone right through the centre for another, and had sunk a foul shot, for seven points, just enough to bridge the gap. Shortly afterwards he was carried off the floor with a twisted ankle. We don't know whether the fat boy was having himself a lucky evening, or whether St. F. X. depends on him for a quick blitz while his wind lasts.

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