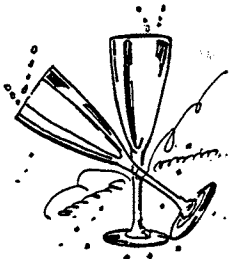


## Anniversary Celebration



Similar to the '80s, the Fox River Valley Hunt found itself with new leadership in 1990. Joint Masters Dave Buckley and Sue Johnson decided to step down, as they had brought the hunt through a very difficult period of transition following Gina's retirement and subsequent death. William McGinley who had been hunt president since 1981 and was in his 22nd season of hunting, was appointed Joint Master with Vicki. Also that year, Tony Leahy, formerly first whip to the Deep Run Hunt in Virginia, was hired to hunt the hounds.

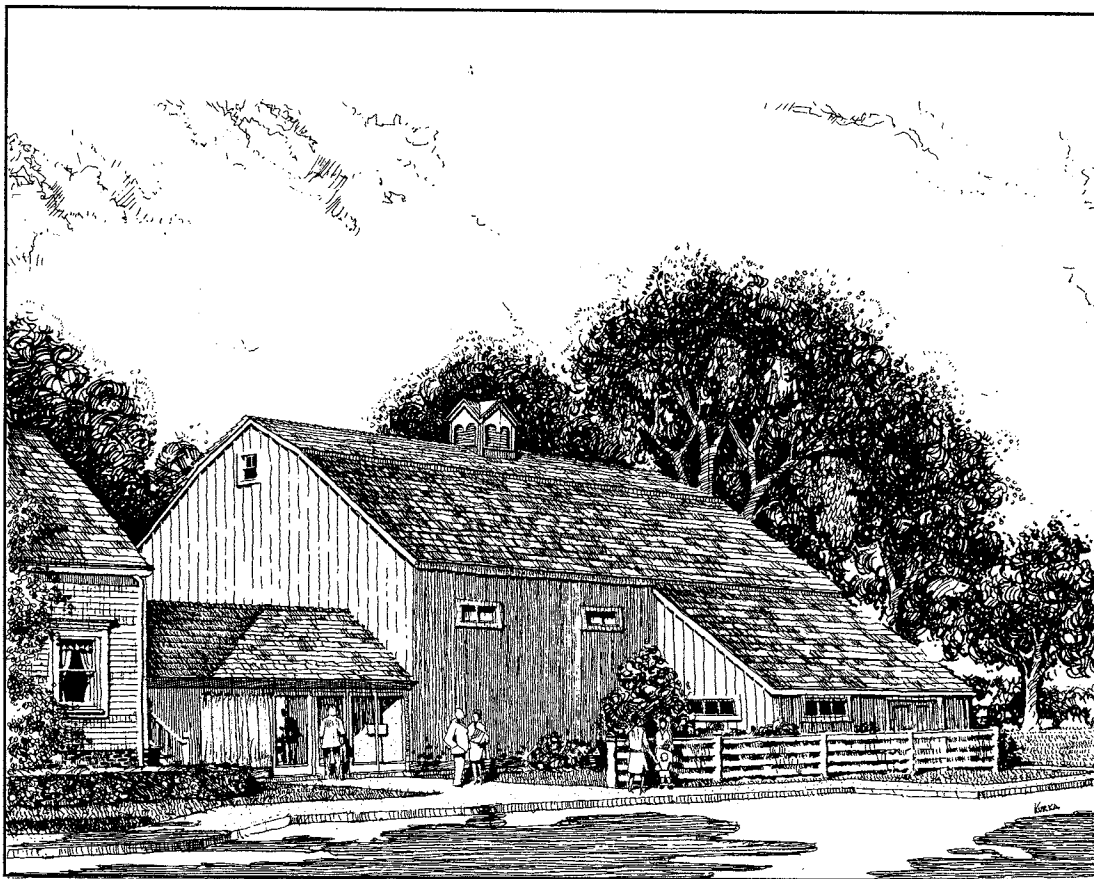
It was Bill's desire to find a challenging new way to expand recognition of the hunt within the community. He encouraged an ambitious recruitment program for both social and riding members.

With this in mind, Sue and Dave were inspired to recommend that the hunt, in celebration of its 50th year, host a renewal of the historic Barrington Horse Show. So without benefit of prior records, Dave, acting as horse show chairman, recruited a steering committee consisting of hunt members Faye Sinnott, Ginger Swift, and Doug Hanks, as well as new members Bruce Duchossois and Bill Mattran. With the committee formed, they proceeded to organize a nationally recognized A-rated horse show in less than six months.

Barrington had not seen a major show since 1978, the year before the roof of the Riding Center collapsed from the heavy snows. With little to go on except for Bruce's past experience, the committee proceeded to secure permission for the show from the Barrington Countryside Park District, the Cook County Forest Preserve, the Village of Barrington Hills, and neighbors living near the Riding Center. They had only a short time to contract for stabling, hospitality, and vendors to accommodate 250 horses and hundreds of exhibitors and spectators. The herculean task of acquiring sponsorship for a five-

day show was accomplished in a short time. Indeed, this was a major undertaking. The office at Horizon Farms and the meeting room at the Riding Center became command posts for the many preparations.

As with the early shows at the Caesar's Round Barn, a beneficiary was chosen for any proceeds the show might generate after all expenses were paid. At the time, the Barrington Area Historical Society was engaged in its ambitious project of restoring and reconstructing a historic barn into a museum and archival center. This center would present the agricultural and equine history of the Barrington area from the earliest days of settlement to the present time. It seemed only natural that the show should support such a worthwhile project.



*Barrington Area Historical Society Museum Barn Project.*

The 1990 horse show program featured a drawing by local artist David Kurka of the barn as it would be located on the society's West Main Street site in the village. The barn, a well-preserved post and beam structure, was built in 1905 by a Bohemian farmer, Joseph Pekny, in Fox River Grove. It had been carefully dismantled in the spring of 1989 and was stored at Horizon Farms. A scale model of the barn was on display at the show.

Held from July 18 to July 22, the show drew more than the anticipated entries. A most memorable part of the show occurred on Sunday in a ring set off by itself and reserved for local rider classes. It was well represented and very well received by exhibitors and spectators alike, recreating a nostalgia for the legendary shows held at the Round Barn. Along with the camaraderie of the exhibitors, it was a reunion for people who had been a part of those earlier shows.



Among the spectators were Jack and Ginny Arnold, who had managed the Riding Center in the '60s; Bob Breen, who had managed the Round Barn in the '50s; and Major Bate's daughter Dan Dan Flint, who had been secretary for many former Barrington shows. Also in attendance were Hank and Debbie Cooke, who had always lent their expertise to local horse shows, and Herb Walbaum, former manager of Caesar's Dorvillee Farms, which owned the Round Barn. That Sunday program was highlighted by a parade of foxhounds which brought back cherished memories to those who had been a part of the hunt in years gone by.

The organizers of the show were duly rewarded when, later in 1990, the Illinois Hunter and Jumper Association presented the Fox River Valley Hunt Horse Show with the Best "A" Rated Horse Show of the Year Award. Quite an honor for the committee's initial effort.

In anticipation of celebrating 50 years in Barrington, Fritz Gohl volunteered to chair the 1990 Anniversary Hunt Ball. Striving to create a memorable and unique occasion, he planned to present the gala evening under a large tent at his property on Sutton Road. Fritz, aided by social member Pamela Hartmann and his fiance Janice Tepke, devoted a full year to the preparations for the ball.

In May 1990, when the new huntsman took over the training of the hounds there was a sizable litter of puppies to be entered and the challenging process of training the pack to his particular style. This was done at daily exercise. Exercise requires that the huntsman have some able and reliable assistance. In this task, Fritz and Janice tirelessly assisted Tony. Throughout the hot sultry days of the summer, Fritz, often attired in a rubber wet suit under his clothes, would ride his bicycle down Donlea Road to the kennels and walk out with the pack and hopefully lose some weight. Frequently at checks, Fritz would remind Tony how to count hounds. His method was simple: "You just count the feet, then divide by four." In reality, much planning for the upcoming hunt ball was done during these daily walks.

The Shawnee Hounds, a hunt from Southern Illinois, accepted the Fox River Valley Hunt's invitation to bring their hounds to hunt and join in the 50th anniversary celebration. The invitation had been extended when the Fox River Valley pack and members had spent a hunting weekend there in 1988.

That gala weekend in September included the annual Blessing of the Hounds followed by a wonderful evening of dinner and dancing at the ball. The Shawnee members presented the Fox River Valley Hunt with the classic print, "The First Taste," which now hangs with honor in the Riding Center meeting room. After dinner and the introduction of special guests, the huntsman was quite surprised at the competency of the participants in the horn-blowing contest. The sound of "gone away" wafting across Spring Creek Valley that September evening surely produced an awakening tingle in the two packs kenneled at the Riding Center awaiting the next day's sport.

Nineteen-ninety proved to be much more than just an anniversary year. Bill's efforts at new recognition for the hunt within the community, the success and enjoyment of so many at the horse show, and a fulfilling season of foxhunting all meshed to produce a new awareness of the priceless heritage and intrinsic enjoyment found in this equestrian atmosphere.



*William McGinley*

