

THIS IS NOT THE SLOW PACK

The 80th Opening Day of the Arapahoe Hunt

Marc Patoile
 Photos by Rebecca Patoile

The 80th Opening Day of the Arapahoe Hunt was greeted by drizzling rain on October 12, 2008. Dr. G. Marvin Beeman, MFH, is also the President of the Masters of Foxhounds of America and is the first to preside over that organization from a pack west of the Mississippi River. He warned the field of 80 riders that this was "not the slow pack and this is the 65th occasion upon which I have had the pleasure to ride with hounds on Opening Day with the Arapahoe Hunt."



The youngest rider was just two years old, Lauren Patoile, on her 43" tall pony, aptly named "Pocket." The oldest, Sylvia McDonald, 82 years young, and eighty riders of every age in between rounded out the field.

Sleeting rain drove into the top hats and bowlers that a few riders donned for this high holy day of hunting, when the season officially begins on coyotes. The 22 ½ pair of hounds were blessed and Vicki Dow, Libby Jones, Holly Matt, and Pam Rolph, as a toast to a good season for horses, hounds, riders and the quarry, then served a stirrup cup.

Hounds were soon off being hacked out a bit north and then east before being put into cover, just as Second Whipper-In (prof.) Irvine Manuelito capped to a view

of a coyote heading south. "Lieu into cover and try my lads, lieu into cover and try," urged Dr. Beeman to his pack of English-bred foxhounds. It didn't take much more urging as they were off on a run that took us five miles south where the hounds lost the line.

Dr. Beeman called the hunt at 2 hours 20 minutes. There were just five riders left in the front of the Field, which was testament to the speed of hounds, as there were eighty riders at the start. We trotted home six miles in sleeting rain.

Pocket the pony greeted the riders home, with his feet up on the side of the trailer to see out the trailer window. Everyone was pleased with a swell start to a new season in the countryside. **H**