

ROCKBRIDGE HUNT JANUARY 2004 NEWSLETTER

New Members

We have had a pretty good passel of new members this year (so far!).

New member information has been deleted from the electronic version of this newsletter. Rockbridge Hunt members may request a roster from the Secretary, Blair Jones.

MFH

Cindy Morton
463-6025

President

Carol Atwood
463-1000

Treasurer

Katharine Conner
463-7816

Honorary Secretary

Blair Jones
544-7359

Stewards

Sandra Worthy
343-2713

Fred Burks
258-2828

Kathy Eichelberger
947-2966

Paula Ursoy
966-1001

Newsletter Committee:

Blair Jones

abjones@vt.edu

Erica Jones

Emjones@vt.edu

Cindy Morton

mortonc@wlu.edu

Hunt-mail list serve:

Contact mortonc@wlu.edu

Anyone wishing a fairly up to date but not very fancy 4 page membership list, please contact Blair Jones email abjones@vt.edu or phone evenings before 9 pm 540-544-7359. If you call after 9pm the cats are in charge of answering the phone and they are not very helpful.

ROCKBRIDGE HUNT JANUARY 2004 NEWSLETTER

SAVE THE DATE !!! Annual Rockbridge Hunt Ball Saturday, February 28, 2004

The hunt ball will be held at Evans Hall at Washington & Lee University. Cost is \$55 per person (a bargain considering the evening includes a silent auction, open bar, dinner, and dancing to "Donny Cash and the Flames"). The doors will open at 6:00 pm for reception and heated bidding on silent auction items; dinner will be served at 7:30 pm and the bar will stay open until 11 pm..

We are in need of items for the silent auction. Please remember that the auction is our main money maker for the night. We make a minimal profit, or sometimes no profit, on ticket sales. So, be thinking of items you can ask local vendors to donate, as well as items or services you can donate. Services have been popular auction items in the past, but we will accept anything you wish to donate – horsie, houndish foxy or any other subject. Take items to the Hunt Lodge or contact the following hunt members to pick it up. If you can't get the item to us beforehand, please give us a description of the item in order to have bid sheets prepared. For donations or descriptions contact Jean Taylor, Pam Moskal, Laura Jarvis, Erica Jones or Louise Golian.

Raffle:

Raffle tickets are currently on sale for this print which will be "sold" at the hunt ball. [The donor requested that this print be raffled off versus being put up for auction]. Tickets are currently for sale and will be up to the close of the silent auction. This print is a **framed P. Buckley Moss** entitled "**The Hunters**". Tickets are \$10 each and can be obtained from Pam Moskal. Pam is also looking for volunteers to sell a book of tickets. The more tickets sold, the more benefit to Rockbridge Hunt.



Farm and Family Showcase

RH members participated in the foxhunting seminar on Saturday at the Farm and Family Show in September; braving the complications of hauling horses on the same roads as fans getting to the home Va Tech football game scheduled for that afternoon. Carol Atwood wore a microphone and discussed foxhunting as a sport while members and a select group of hounds milled around in the riding ring set up on the hill behind the displays and vendors. She also fielded questions from the crowd concerning hunting as a sport and the alleged exclusivity of hunt members. After a bit the group went out of the ring to give a good display of hound obedience. About 12 members showed up with their equines and were willing to put themselves on public display.

"T" McDonald said she heard that it was estimated that that was the best attended "seminar" of the whole show; in any case it definitely was the best attended equine event.

As an aside, this "showcase" has been cancelled for 2004 due to the financial drain of putting on this display for some 40,000 visitors. Organizers are hoping it can be revived for 2005.

In Memory of Betty Baird

ROCKBRIDGE HUNT JANUARY 2004 NEWSLETTER

We would like to thank Kevin Baird, his family, and the Farmer family for a generous donation to the Rockbridge Hunt in memory of Betty Baird. The funds were generated by endurance riders and volunteers of endurance rides in the Roanoke area for the past several years.

Additional donations have been made by a few Rockbridge Hunt members. Betty's enjoyment of the Hunt was known by all of us who rode with her and we appreciate these donations as a special memory. Thank you, family and friends of Betty.

Katharine Conner

In Memory of Viola Wise

Viola Wise, Honorary MFH and charter Rockbridge Hunt member, passed away on January 13th. She is survived by a brother living in Lexington. Friends held a gathering on Saturday afternoon.

Although the early Rockbridge Hunt minutes are sketchy at best, Viola is mentioned in the first set of minutes we have from 1962 and basically continues to be mentioned in all the other minutes on file. From 1968 to 1982 she was either Master or Joint MFH; and for almost all of that time was also Secretary-Treasurer. She also had various tasks over the years such as being on the horse show committee, hiring judges, getting trophies and ribbons, and organizing the post horse show party that apparently was held for a number of years ("hunt members are requested to bring extra whiskey.."). In 1972 she started discussion on an initiation fee for new members. In 1973 she discussed plans for the "club house". From 1979 through 1981 she participated discussion on the "barn roof is leaking" (or not leaking, apparently, some years). And in 1976 she started discussion on building a house for the huntsman. By 1982 she first mentioned the word "retire" which the hunt finally let her do the following year; but she retained the position of Secretary-Treasurer for some time after that. It was at this point she was awarded the title of "Honorary MFH". Her retirement from riding was unfortunately encouraged by a number of broken bones in the early 80's.

Minutes aside, from the early days of the hunt she acted as huntsman for the hounds, housing them on her farm of Route 252 until the first kennels were built in the time that the clubhouse was built. She also cooked unnumberable hunt breakfasts for the club, back when breakfasts were held basically after every Saturday hunt. Many of the hunts were held from her farm, and the annual horse show was also held there. Gene Clapsaddle told me the first Rockbridge Hunt he went on was out of her farm.

Viola also took an early lead in the 'pinks' issue for female staff persons according to Carol Atwood. The color of coats to hunt in has changed over the years fairly dramatically from the 1700's but there was a time when it was not considered 'proper' for women staff and MFH's to wear a pink coat. She decided to ignore that convention, which certainly makes it easier for the field members!

My first contact with Viola was when she had the fairly unenviable jobs of taking reservations for breakfasts and trying to find volunteers to organize and cook the breakfasts. Later on I got to serve on the executive committee with her. I'll say this baldly and may offend someone, but I think that she has put more effort and time into Rockbridge than any other member that I know of. *Erica Jones*

Joint meets

On Sunday, February 15, Oak Ridge has invited us to hunt with them. Information will be available by email and on the Rockbridge hunt line. We plan to hunt at Rockbridge on Saturday, February 14. Since the joint meet on Sunday will require formal attire, the Saturday meet will probably be in casual attire. Check the hunt line.

At our closing meet on Saturday, March 27, we will host Glenmore Hunt. This is always a fun day. Everyone, including our guests, will bring their meat of choice for the grill. The rest of the breakfast will be provided. Rockbridge Hunt members will pay a nominal fee to cover costs.

Check the Rockbridge hunt line (540-462-1113). Make breakfast reservations with Carol Atwood (540-463-1000) no later than the Thursday evening preceding the breakfast.

ROCKBRIDGE HUNT JANUARY 2004 NEWSLETTER

Clothing Choices

Generally speaking, at Rockbridge Hunt we have two categories of attire – formal and casual. Casual means that you should be turned out neatly and safely but those are practically the only limitations. Formal attire has very specific requirements. At Rockbridge Hunt we are fairly lenient in interpreting those requirements and newcomers to the sport are not expected to acquire the required clothing immediately.

Whether it's a day for formal or casual attire or something in between, raincoats are fine. Yes, it would be wonderful if raincoats were all black or navy or brown but – good grief – hunting in colorful raingear is preferable to having people stay home.

When the day calls for formal attire, please be prepared to ride in formal attire. But also be prepared for a last-minute change. If it's an extremely hot day, coats may not be required. If it's an extremely cold day, insulated coats (parkas) may be permitted. If it's raining, raincoats will be allowed.

Anyone who wants to wear an approved safety vest may do so. Again, it would be nice if it was an appropriate color.

If you are accompanying junior riders – make sure they are dressed warmly! It's hard to have fun and learn to enjoy the sport if you're miserable.

If you invite non-riders to a breakfast, please warn them that the riders will be dressed for an outdoor sport and the heat will not be overly warm! There's no point in turning up the heat and having people get overheated and opening the doors.

Cynthia Morton, MFH

Fall Hunter Pace Thank You

The following folks helped at the fall hunter pace at Broadview. Sara Wood did a great job of organizing. She & Katharine Conner-marked part of trail. Carol Atwood-for everything; trail clearing, allowing us to have it there, etc.. Fred Burks-manned the check point at Alan's cabin (handing out drinks to happy riders on a day like that always a stressful job!). The Shepherds – Lola and Wilson - personed the start box and Mr. & Mrs. Secker-ran the finish timing. The Jarvis'-did a little of everything-organizing people to run things, bringing tent for registration, setting up for food service, and helped throughout the day. Blair and Erica Jones cleared trails before hand, and managed the very difficult job of THE FOOD!! Joanne VanSiclen put up tape on clothespins for making it easier to take down trail markings with help from Pete VanSiclen in carrying the backpack and also help trail marking. Jean Taylor-helped mark the trail and was on the hunter pace committee. Tom Debevoise-helped clear trails with the chain saw, and Barb Debevoise and Sherry Spain -helped mark the trail. . . . Judy Mundy-helped unmark the trail after the pace. Rockbridge hunt would like to thank the landowners:- Mr. & Mrs. James Tilson and family, Mr. & Mrs. Alan Tilson and family, and Mr. & Mrs. William Harris

Rockbridge Hunt Fall Hunter Pace Results (on Sunday, September 28, 2003)

Junior Optimum

1 Tina Seeley and Jon Conyers

Hunter Optimum

1 Brenda Baird and Kevin Baird

2 Jenna Armitage and Anne Biasioli

3 Brooke Allen, Laurel Loux and Sharon Smith

4 Catherine Meyers and Jeff Meyers

5 Martha Allen and Brenda Simpson

Hilltopper

1 Sally Mann and Larry Mann

2 Anna Alford and Lynne Gilbert

3 Tom Debevoise

4 Susan Bailey, Rebecca Eley and Barbara Rowe

5 Lynne Garland and Paula Ursoy

6 Robin Barnhill and Tracey Huffman

Trail

1 Frank Farmer and Sandra Worthy

2 Mary Harvey and Joy Watkins

3 Shelby Bingham and Pam Moskal

4 Sally Moore and Terry Whitmore

5 Anita Claytor and Laura Shull

ROCKBRIDGE HUNT JANUARY 2004 NEWSLETTER

Expenses	Income (entries)	\$1231	Profit
Awards	\$90		\$867
Food	\$110		
Postage	\$74		
Misc	\$90		

Pony Club News

Congratulations to the Old Dominion Region Junior D Quiz Team for placing 1st and winning gold medals at Championships East this summer at the Virginia Horse Center. Three of our RH PC members, Carrie and Grace Fowler and Arielle Podlejski were on the team!

Remodeling

The hunt did major renovations to the huntsman's (former) abode this summer and did a face lift to parts of the lodge. The renovations were obviously long over due, but a necessity in order to rent the place, which we did in August (2003).

On the interior the house had the bathrooms gutted and new fixtures installed. The kitchen got a new floor, appliances, counter top and a range hood, and the cabinets were painted. All the rooms were repainted and the wood floors sanded and refinished. The basement was refinished and made inhabitable. On the outside windows were glazed, outside trim painted and a French drain installed in the front yard.

The kitchen and restrooms in the lodge are decidedly more cheery now with new paint. The restroom fixtures were replaced. In the kitchen the cabinets were painted, a floor (over the existing concrete) was installed and a dishwasher appeared. Windows were also re-glazed. The renovations came to a total of \$54,000 for the 2 structures.

Hound News

Currently we have 42 total canines in the kennels with 35 of them actually hunting. These numbers are about "normal" for us. For youngsters there are 9 5-month old puppies – 2 females and 7 males from a cross of Turtle and Waffle. There are also 6 18-month olds from a Waffle and Timber cross. Their names are Taffy, Tabby, Turkish, Turn-up, Tater and Tracer (the only male of the batch). Over all David has been pleased with them this year. He will probably breed another bitch this spring.

Food

There have been two well attended breakfasts this fall and we ran out of food for both of them. Seems more folks showed up than called up. Please, if you don't call and want to stay, at least find the head chief and see if he/she thinks there is enough to go around. You might be sent out to fetch an order of fried chicken as supplemental calories.

Fred Burks did a breakfast after a November hunt at Montafon. Kay Morton, Diane Long, Judy Mundy, Cheryl Haas and Erica Jones did the breakfast for New Years at the lodge.

Carol Atwood will accept proposals from anyone wishing to host a meal. Generally it is better if this can be done early enough to go into the fixture card, but post-fixture card breakfast proposals have been accepted also. The hunt will supply eating utensils (paper plates, napkins and silverware). The kitchen in the lodge is not well equipped or laid out to do much serious "cooking" per say but there is a nice supply of stainless steel trays, large salad bowls, flat hors d'oeuvres trays and other serving utensils. There may be soft drinks, salad dressing, chips and crackers, coffee and tea available so ask what is there. There is a very large coffee pot, a much smaller one, and a popcorn popper in the kitchen. Cleaning supplies are supposed to be stocked, also. You are expected to arrange for hors d'oeuvres, main meal, drinks and desert. You will be cheerfully refunded for all food expenses incurred (whether or not all the food was

ROCKBRIDGE HUNT JANUARY 2004 NEWSLETTER

consumed), so keep track of expenses. Any rumors about the hunt not reimbursing for expenses are untrue, inaccurate and unfortunate. The secretary will very cheerfully refund your expenses..

Breakfasts can be as fancy or as informal as you want. There are table cloths available and some hostesses bring “decorations” but this certainly is not necessary. We used to have the services of Alice Hance to help with set up and clean up, but Alice has “retired” as of January 1, 2004, so you will have to arrange for clean up also.

Some suggestions for organizing a breakfast. The most important part is probably picking a menu. Stick with something you are familiar with, or ask a real cook for an opinion on an unknown recipe. The best approach is always to have made that recipe before hand, or at least something fairly similar to it. The problem with the larger recipes is, who wants to have enough chili to go for 25 dinners straight?, but usually you can make a smaller version of it. There are cookbooks published with recipes in multiples of 25 and 50. Large quantity recipes are almost always measured more by WEIGHT than volume. For instance, a salad recipe will start with “7 pounds of lettuce plus 3 pounds of other vegetables cut up ... “ for tossed salad which will eventually serve 50 (approximately 4 ounces per serving). The weight vs. volume approach will give you a much more accurate estimate of how much food you need.

I’ve almost never started with a family sized recipe and expanded it, with the exception of deserts. The number of ‘servings’ listed in most cookbooks usually seem to wildly over estimate appetites. For instance, the recipe may call for 4 chicken breasts. Well, one breast is just not the same size as another one. From the really big ones you might get 2 servings and from a scrawny laying hen, barely one. And expanding a small recipe is prime territory for making a major math boo-boo and a major mistake.

For deserts and hors d’oeuvres you need to think pieces. One rule of thumb given to me years ago was to plan for 3-4 “pieces” per person for pre meal munchies. Running out of hors d’oeuvres is the approach you should plan for; after all, this is not the meal. For desert, the knife (or serving spoon) is everything. If you cut those brownies smaller, they will go further. So picture how many slices you can coax out of what you have. If you have a more fluid desert you will have to fall back to volumes. Think what a 1/3 cup, ½ cup or what ever of this desert look like. Push comes to shove you can dish it out to make it go further. Ice cream is an excellent backup desert extender too.

Drinks: Coffee grounds and soft drinks packages all state how many servings you will get from that package. Coffee- generally certainly not everyone has a cup. Hot tea is pretty straightforward if you use tea bags, but we have made up a whole (small) pot of hot tea, also. There are some serious tea drinkers in the group, but generally coffee drinkers outnumber tea drinkers about 3 to 1.

Erica Jones

Famous Newsletter Editors:

It seems the Jones have made the front page news in the January edition of the Glenmore News.

Field Etiquette

There are good reasons for all of the “rules” about riding in the field. Some reminders follow:

Coffee housing – This can be very annoying to your captive audience riding right in front of you, to folks trying to hear what is going on, and certainly to the staff trying to decipher hound comments. Hearing about someone else’s troubles at work just does not do anything to enhance the outdoor experience. The trick here of course is to talk to your buddies without your voice carrying. Speak softly.

Larking. This is fine if the field master is larking, but generally to be avoided if your fearless leader is not. He/she may know something you don’t (ie, the landowner has decided they don’t want horses digging up in a certain spot; the footing is famously bad, there is a wire strung across behind the jump, etc etc). Panels in the field suffer a lot of use and abuse and the fewer times they get jumped, the better. Hunting is not about jumping.

Larking can also be annoying/dangerous to folks that are trying to calmly ride through the gates, especially if they don’t know you are about to levitate your horse into the air. A lot of horses get exceedingly miffed when other horses “get” to jump and they don’t and riders can pay dearly.

Going in early. This is fine, but let your field master know so he/she will not send a posse out after you (or more likely, wait at gates, confusing intersections, etc etc , for you to not appear). Pick your route of retreat so that you will not be anywhere close to hounds or go where hounds may be directed to hunt. This might mean you will need to take the least direct route.

Annonymous

ROCKBRIDGE HUNT JANUARY 2004 NEWSLETTER

For Sale

For sale. Two horse trailer. Used but maintained. Large horse box. Contact Judy Mundy.
For sale – Ladies melton size “16” (those British and those funky ladies clothes sizes! Used one season.
Contact Diane Long.
For sale – Ladies medium weight melton. Size 38” Contact Paula Ursoy.
For sale – dressage saddle 17” (?). Very comfortable. Odd color. Make offer. Contact Erica Jones.

Virginia Hunt Week ReCap

The first four days of Virginia Hunt Week 2003 centered around Richmond. Most of the country is fairly flat with sandy soil. Hurricane Isabel did a tremendous amount of damage in this area. Many people were without power for three weeks. Several of the hunt clubs had to do drastic amounts of clearing to be able to host Virginia Hunt Week. That was time and energy they would gladly have spent elsewhere. Everyone could see the devastation and how much work had been done.

The first day of Virginia Hunt Week was hosted by Colonial Fox Hounds. The Master and Huntsman is Michele Schultz. This is a relatively new club with a very young pack of hounds. Think of all the work and problems that plague every hunt club and then imagine getting things done with only a handful of people. And then imagine being without power to your home and kennels for three weeks! The members are working hard to open territory and build a pack. The fixture, Cherry Lane Farm, is a Century Farm featuring a mix of fields and woods. Hounds had three brief runs on fox, a solid beginning for a young pack.

Reedy Creek Hounds hosted the second day of Hunt Week. It was a long drive but that means great territory – well away from major highways and towns. MFH Jim Culleton has access to a tremendous amount of acreage all around the Reedy Creek kennels, and there wasn't quite as much hurricane damage here. The pack of black and tan Pennmarydel hounds hunted well and sounded wonderful but the day turned warm very quickly and scent disappeared.

The first weekend of Hunt Week brought us to Deep Run Hunt on Saturday. They had a great day of hunting with several good runs. Toward the end of the day the entire first flight saw the hunted fox cross the pasture we were standing in. He paused and then slipped away. When hounds arrived they had difficulty because of the stiff breeze. Huntsman Tom Kneippe lifted hounds to the edge of the woods and they immediately resumed their run. The fox was put to ground at an old building on the property.

Princess Anne Hunt's Opening Meet was a lovely way to complete the first weekend of VHW. Joint Masters Mike Adams and Jack Ferguson hosted the considerable crowd at historic Sherwood Forest Plantation. Although the hunting was hampered by more warm weather and a civilized start time, the day was beautiful.

Monday found us at Keswick Hunt. This is a great pack of hounds and this fixture, Jaclyn Hall, is tremendous – it's beautiful to look at and ride over and it's positively groomed for foxes. The entire field, which was quite large, was treated to a view of the hunted fox crossing a harvested cornfield, followed by the hounds. We were at a fair distance but it was a beautiful sight. That was just a small part of a very successful day of hunting.

Farmington Hunt Club was our host on Tuesday. We met at Millington Stables, another gorgeous piece of real estate. Unfortunately it was an extremely warm day with winds picking up by midday. Warm is no exaggeration - it was sixty degrees when I left home in the dark. It was already hotter than hunters like by the time we started hunting. The first flight was quickly whittled down to a very manageable thirty riders and we saw a lot of hound work for the first hour or so. This is another great pack. They worked hard and they worked together and pushed the track in unfavorable conditions.

I don't know who builds panels at Farmington but I'm quite sure someone rides along with them and makes pronouncements like, “No, you can't put a panel there.” The jumps include an occasional big one but they're solid and well-built and set like jewels. Virginia Hunt Week has afforded me the opportunity to hunt several different fixtures and the panels are uniformly well done.

If you love hunting but don't jump, go to Keswick and Farmington. They have some beautiful fixtures with a good amount of open country. The women who lead second flight, Sally Lamb at Keswick and Kay Butterfield at Farmington, are the best of foxhunters. They know the country, they know the game, and they do an excellent job of getting to the right place. Hunting second flight at these two hunts is better than hunting first flight at many others. I have the deepest admiration for these two field masters and the wonderful job they do.

ROCKBRIDGE HUNT JANUARY 2004 NEWSLETTER

On the first Wednesday of Virginia Hunt Week I had to retreat and hunt at home. Middlebrook Hounds was the meet of the day. MFH Fred Getty's pack is quite close to my home hunt and I have hunted there several times. He has wonderful territory and a quality pack of blue-tick Pennmarydel hounds. I'm sure they had a day of good sport.

The second Thursday found us back on the road to Old Dominion Hounds. The wind from Tuesday afternoon had ushered in a cold snap. We saw snow flurries on the drive and had a little sleet hit us as we mounted up. Hunting started with a short burst on a very local fox and continued at a brisk pace all day. The hounds sang and we ran. This fixture, Windrush, is very close to the mountains so the terrain and footing were much more familiar to me – plenty of rocks and not many bogs and no sand at all.

Joe Kincheloe, MFH was our charming host for Bull Run Hunt's meet on the second Friday at The Hill, Larry Levy's attractive farm. Once again, this was a fixture that seemed perfectly groomed for foxhunting. It's a truly beautiful property. Several BRH members told me what a slow day this was but I thought it was perfect. We had several good chases. It's true that hounds didn't find foxes immediately – that's revenge on Joe for bragging. The pack had to work a bit to get the foxes running but that's what some of us come to see.

I have to admit that I took the day off on the second Saturday. I hated to miss riding with Casanova Hunt but since our opening meet was early on Sunday, I had a few things to do. Casanova's is as fine a pack as any and I've heard they had a great day.

My home hunt club, Rockbridge Hunt, hosted Virginia Hunt Week with our Opening Meet and blessing of the hounds on the second Sunday. The fixture, Broadview Ranch, is the original home of the hunt club. The property is still in the family of the club's founder, W. E. "Tex" Tilson, and some of Mr. Tilson's grandchildren and great-grandchildren hunted that day. Foxhunting is dear to their hearts and they are excellent hosts.

The weather was certainly warmer than is ideal for hunting but it wasn't terrible. Hounds chased a coyote up into the rocks on Short Hill Mountain and back down again. The field got a good idea of why "rock" is an integral part of the county's name. The chase ended near Plank Road at an old building when the coyote was put to ground. After a brief respite, hounds started working another line and were starting to move on it when the huntsman, David Conner, elected to stop them and call it a day. The second quarry was likely a red fox that's provided sport on previous occasions but his den is on adjoining property where coyote trapping is in progress. Hounds had started onto this property when they were stopped.

The weather on Sunday wasn't too oppressive because it was a bit cloudy. That turned into rainy weather for Glenmore Hunt's meet at Cobble Hill on the second Monday. This fixture is actually within the city limits of Staunton but you would never realize that. The coverts are thick, trails are winding, and it's quite easy to get lost. The pack is in a rebuilding phase with lots of very young hounds. Huntsman Chris Knoedler has been at Glenmore a short time but he's made great strides in working toward the pack and the staff that he wants. Intermittent heavy rain made their job difficult.

Oak Ridge Fox Hound Club was our destination on the second Tuesday of Hunt Week. The fixture was Tea Time Farm, home of MFH and Huntsman, Rita Mae Brown. This is another lovely farm with a good mix of woods and fields throughout the area. The club recently celebrated its tenth anniversary and that landmark of longevity shows in the maturity of the pack. They had a good chase on a venerable local fox but the day warmed up very quickly and the hunting deteriorated.

Again, on the last Wednesday of the Week I hunted at home. Bedford County Hunt is another nearby club. We enjoy occasional joint meets with BCH so I'm familiar with their territory and their wonderful pack of Pennmarydel hounds. I've heard that they had a great day of hunting in spite of the warm weather.

Virginia Hunt Week is such a wonderful institution. For those of us who belong to one of the participating hunts, it's a chance to meet our neighbors. As a Master of one of those hunts, it has given me an invaluable opportunity to meet the other Masters in the Virginia district. I would never find the time to hunt with all these packs if I didn't set aside the time as a vacation.

Participants from outside the district get a surprise. No hunting is better than that found throughout Virginia. No one is friendlier than a group of Virginia foxhunters. No countryside is prettier than Virginia hunt territories on early autumn mornings. The traveling is difficult but it's the same for everyone. The small group that attends most of the meets is like a band of gypsies, moving and meeting and laughing together, borrowing boot jacks and safety pins, sharing snacks and drinks and water for the horses, driving in the dark and checking directions for the best route. People make acquaintances and borrow horses and offer stabling. It's unique.

The participating hunt clubs deserve our thanks for making it work. The participants deserve our thanks – for coming, for making this a success, and for doing it with such good spirits and camaraderie. My fellow organizers, Rita

ROCKBRIDGE HUNT JANUARY 2004 NEWSLETTER

Mae Brown and Graham Pitsenberger, deserve special thanks for their hard work and their grace under pressure. Getting VHW running while trying to keep our own clubs running is not an easy task.

I also want to thank B. J. Clark. For several years she has traveled to Virginia just to take photographs at Virginia Hunt Week. Not only does she get to most of the meets, every night she prints up proof sheets and photos. We get to see the proofs the next day and the day after that we get to pick up the prints we've ordered. Most foxhunters have very few good pictures of their favorite sport. It's wonderful to have that special image of a favorite hunter preserved, not to mention the spectacular scenery of Virginia in October. BJ's phone number is 937-482-4427 if you are interested in some late purchases. Cindy Morton and Erica Jones have some proofs of some of the hunts; in particular some of the later hunts (us and Oak Ridge).

Cynthia Morton, MFH

ROCKBRIDGE HUNT JANUARY 2004 NEWSLETTER
