



THE RAPP SHEET



January , 2021

HAPPY NEW YEAR

Hopefully, 2021 will bring the end to the Covid 19 pandemic, lots of foxes to chase, and a healthy and happy New Year to our members, staff, hounds, and horses.

Hold on Tight, the Rabbits have Come! **by Colin Fraser**

As many of our more seasoned members know, the game densities that make or break our days in the field seem to wax and wane with each year. What they might not know is that predators' own wellbeing is decided by the availability of *their* preferred quarry.

Think back to the early days of the pandemic, when foxhunting was cancelled and many of us drank coffee looking out the window instead of drinking port from the back of our favorite horse. Many of us saw a remarkable number of young rabbits cavorting in our lawns and gardens.

Cottontail rabbits, which can make up the majority of a fox's or coyote's diet, undergo boom and bust population cycles, the cause of which is not fully understood. What we do know is that the most recent population spike occurred in the spring of 2019. This means that the lactating vixens and female coyotes had plenty of milk to sustain their litters and grow the population.

So hold on tight friends, because across our region, the next generation of foxes and coyotes is on the move. BUNNY HO!!

A Note from Jeff Riley

Thank you to everybody for the support and kindness during the rotator cuff surgery and recovery. The cards, food, wine, rides for Barney, and the dog play dates were sincerely appreciated. More than anything it was a great comfort knowing that you all cared so much. This past weekend I was back on Copper and I'm working with Susan to regain some riding confidence - especially going downhill! My goal is to join you in the hunt field by February.

With appreciation, Jeff

Introducing RH Whippers-In

In this edition we are introducing two of the whippers-in. With three old timers with RH (Barton, Virginia, and Laura), we have the addition of Shannon and Juli. Shannon and Juli are introduced in this edition. Virginia, Laura, and Barton will appear in the February edition. **Whippers-in** (or "Whips") are assistants to the huntsman. Their main job is to keep the pack together, especially to prevent the hounds from straying or 'rioting', which refers to the hunting of animals other than the hunted fox or trail line.

Meet our Whipper-Ins

Shannon Brown

Originally from just outside Ottawa, Ontario, Canada. I grew up on a small hobby farm, went on to working at a hunter/jumper, driving barn. I learned how to drive single and pairs, horses and ponies, and did some competitive driving/showing in Canada and USA. From there went to work as a groom at former Canadian Equestrian Team /Olympic Show Jumper, Jill Henselwood's - Juniper Farms.

I hunted with Ottawa Valley Hunt for years in the field, while working as a travel counsellor for Dept. Foreign Affairs and International Trade. Helped at kennels and did some whipping in. Also rode for a wonderful master and mentor Anne McKibbin, and taking care of her hunt horses.

Moved to Ohio 2015-2016 Helping take care of hunt horses and a member's horse at Chagrin Valley Hunt. After a year there went back home to Canada and worked at a very busy eventing barn Stevens Creek, for a fabulous lady Teddy Laframboise, while still helping at Ottawa Valley Hunt.

I was hired as professional first whip to Old Dominion Hounds, and moved to Virginia to work with Jeff for the 2017-2018 Season. Then due to US Govt. Changes and Visa issues had to resign from that position. So, hunted as an honorary whip occasionally with Jeff and Julie at ODH for some of the 2018-2019 Season. Also, road whipping with Charlie for Charles and Boo Montgomery at Bull Run.

I was fortunate enough to be able to now help at Rappahannock, which I am very grateful for.

Highs for me,

Listening to hounds strike a line and run! There's nothing like it!

Watching the little puppies grow up into great hounds.

Standing on hilltops in the beautiful countryside watching hounds.

Walking in with fellow staff and members after a great day, discussing the day.

Lows for me,

Cancelled days due to weather or footing.

There can be a sad side to whelping puppies if one doesn't make it.

Not being able to get to where you're needed sometimes due to terrain or fencing.

Fixture Card

We will not have a printed fixture card in January. We will still go out on Wednesday and Sunday. Please check the monitor for time and location.

Visit the Rappahannock Hunt webpage at rappahannockhunt.com



Hello Rappahannock Friends,

My name is Juli Robards. I live in Orlean, Va. with my husband Hugh, our three terriers, and a very fat cat. I am also the proud mother of an 18 year old daughter named, Grace Gardill from Johnstown, Pa. My experience as a foxhunter began quite out of circumstance, which I like to divide into two segments.

Part1: the "hunt to ride" segment, which lasted from 1990 - 1997.

I have not been a life-long foxhunter, as I was introduced to the sport at 30 years of age, by my riding instructor, and now dear friend, Tyrrell Sharp. At the time, she was the field master and life-long member of the Rolling Rock Hunt, Ligonier, Pa. When I re-located from California to my home state of Pennsylvania in the early nineties, I was eager to get back to riding and had no horse. We hooked up for lessons after I purchased an OTB. It was her observation that I should consider leaving the ring and join her for a day foxhunting; something I knew nothing about. I had no idea how this would change my life.

My OTB was not the ideal ride, and I soon found myself borrowing horses that were more suitable fox-hunters. I was introduced to a very special Percheron/Quarter cross. He became my beloved Romeo, that tolerated me for the following twelve seasons. Had it not been for the encouragement of Ms. Sharp, the blessing of a talented mount and the generosity of my fellow hunt members, I would not have enjoyed the excitement and thrill that a newcomer has in the early days of learning about our sport.

Part 2: The "ride to hunt" segment 1998 to present

Then, RRH had a change of Huntsman. The new Huntsman came to RRH and was there for just one season. The next hire, was a gentleman from "over the pond"; Hugh J. Robards, former huntsman twenty seven years, and Master of the Co. Limerick, Ireland. It was obvious to me that this guy was different. First and foremost, no one could understand a word he said, and none of us could keep up with him... White horse, scarlet coat disappearing into thin air... This got my attention, and I started asking questions to him at the end of a days hunting. It was not long before I began to appreciate that I had a lot to learn. My curiosity about the events of the day, eventually lead me to see my hunting day in a different light. The more questions I asked, the more I realized that there was much I did not know or understand. After several seasons hunting with RRH and Hugh Robards MFH, I was hooked on the science of foxhunting, and this intriguing Robards fellow...

One day out with the RRH, I was asked by Mr. Robards to leave the field and push several wayward hounds off the bloodline of a wounded deer. This was the first time I had been asked to help with the hounds. It was then that I got my taste of whipping-in. I truly enjoyed being asked to help, and found myself becoming more interested in what hounds were doing whilst hunting. Hounds and hound work took over. I found it fascinating and wanted to understand the magic between a pack of hounds and their huntsman. I was happy to take an opportunity when given, to go off to help with hounds. This is when I began to study hound behavior, learn names, recognize their appearance, voice, drive and vices, if any.

My education as a Whipper-in is a work in progress, and that is what I love about the position. I whipped-in to my dear husband, Mr. Hugh Robards, M.F.H for four seasons, with the Saxonburg Hounds in Pennsylvania/ Sally, South Carolina, and the Middelburg Hounds, Virginia, for three seasons, until his retirement after fifty-five years foxhunting, in 2017. Since then, I have had the pleasure to be whipper-in to Mr. Jeff Woodall, at the Old Dominion Hounds for one season and now with the Rappahannock Hounds. I love everything about hounds and enjoy spending 2-3 days each week in the Rappahannock kennels. When my work schedule permits, I travel to the kennels to assist Mr. Woodall with the walking of hounds, feeding, worming and cleaning. My duties, in the field are varied. I ride to the road to protect hounds from traffic, send stragglers on to their huntsman, stop hounds if they divide, correct hounds if hunting wrong quarry, look for lost hounds, encourage young entry, count hounds throughout the day, position myself to see as much of their work as possible, so I can report back to the huntsman at days end and last but not least, catching the huntsman's horse should it be necessary... I truly love each day I have out with hounds, hunting with our huntsman, Mr. Woodall and the Rappahannock members. The only thing that I dislike is wind while hunting wind and the huntsman's mood on a poor scenting day!

