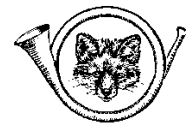


The Babbler

THE NEWSLETTER OF THE COMMONWEALTH FOXHOUNDS

Commonwealth



Foxhounds

SEPTEMBER 2011

2011-2012 Season in Sight; the Chase Is in the Air

If the dog days of summer offer a silver lining, it has to be the promise of the start of foxhunting a few short weeks away. Neither the hot air billowing out of Washington nor the oppressive heat and humidity can smother the joy waiting to bubble up at the smell of freshly oiled tack and newly polished boots.

Forget the weeds in the flower beds—every break in the weather means a chance to ride our way back into foxhunting form. As you read this edition of the newsletter, we are a short five weeks away from the start Open Cubbing. It may be 90-plus degrees outside, but we're in the homestretch to the start of our 2011 – 2012 foxhunting season. Are you ready?

Our calendar is filling up quite nicely and we want to make sure you are up to speed on all the CFH events from now until Opening Hunt. We have a very full roster that includes paneling, the fall **Hunter Pace**, **Open Cubbing**, a **Fox Hunting Clinic**, and, we're happy to report, **Virginia Hunt Week**. So, start prepping your tack and cleaning those hunt coats. Don't forget the crucial safety maintenance on the horse trailer—we're marking off the days for the fun to begin.

(First, a reminder: Before you can ride out for any meet – including Open Cubbing – you must renew your **Virginia Hunting License**. The easiest way is to visit www.dgif.state.va.us where you can renew and pay for your license on line.)

Enclosed in this mailing you will find the flyer for our upcoming **Hunter Pace** at Woodpecker Farm on **September 17**. Bring your friends and their friends, too. Spread the word about how much fun our hunter pace events are. Send any interested riders to www.commonwealthfoxhounds.org to download extra copies of the flyer as well as the all-important and required waiver.

If you can't ride that day but would like to help, please call the joint Masters Bob or Sandy Hoyer to let them know you can volunteer, or send them an e-mail at RbrtHoyer@aol.com. We need willing hands that day for a variety of tasks, so please think about helping. Either

way, we hope to see you there!

We also hope to see you at the **paneling** or work days we've scheduled to prepare the trails and jumps for a fun and safe Hunter Pace event. A heartfelt "Thank you!" is due to Mr. and Mrs. Charles Linton for their continued support of CFH and for their hospitality for our fall Hunter Pace and during the regular season.

In fact, we are extremely fortunate to have some very generous landowners granting us the privilege of riding out across their land for our meets as well. We'd like to express our sincere "Thank you" to all of them for their generosity. Make sure to thank them in person when you see them.



CLEANING UP MOTHER NATURE

Back to the work days – as a group, we need to spend some time clearing trails and checking for dangerous spots or obstructions that may have happened over the summer.

We need YOUR help clearing trails to be ready for both the Hunter Pace and the hunting season! We ALL enjoy the privilege of riding over some of the most beautiful land in the area, but without the assistance of all of our members, trail clearing is a difficult chore for the few faithful that show up.

Bring your favorite "implements of destruction"—chain saws, hedge trimmers, gas-powered weed-wackers, pruning shears, etc.—and be dressed for walking through the woods. We will spend several hours clearing trails, and then tailgate afterwards, so bring a dish to share and your preferred beverages.

Our **paneling/work days** for Hunter Pace all start promptly at 9 a.m. at **Woodpecker Farm** on: Saturday, September 3; Sunday, September 11; and, Friday, September 16.

Our other **paneling/work** days are scheduled as follows: Sunday, September 18, 9 a.m., **Ingleside Plantation** Sunday, September 25, 9 a.m., **Ingleside Plantation** Sunday, October 2, 9 a.m., **Lawfield** Sunday, October 9, 9 a.m., **Lawfield**

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OPEN CUBBING, VIRGINIA HUNT WEEK, AND OPENING HUNT

Close your eyes and imagine the creak of the saddle as you swing up and onto your faithful mount's back for the first **Open Cubbing** meet. Hear the hounds restlessly pacing, just waiting to be sprung from the hound trailer. Are you smiling yet? Riding out, reconnecting with old friends, catching a glimpse of a fox or two – what a fortunate way to spend a morning.

Our Open Cubbing meets will be held as follows:
Saturday, October 1, 9 a.m., **Ingleside Plantation**
Saturday, October 8, 9 a.m., **Lawfield**
Saturday, October 15, 9 a.m., **Ingleside Plantation**
Saturday, October 22, 9 a.m., **Ingleside Plantation**
Saturday, October 29, 9 a.m., Ingleside Plantation

Make a special note of that last October meet. We will be hosting **Virginia Hunt Week** guests at our last Open Cubbing meet on October 29. As in the past, this will be a phenomenal chance to meet foxhunters from other clubs (and perhaps even from other countries). In the tradition of foxhunters everywhere, we will be providing our guests with a hunt breakfast after the meet. As the date approaches, we will be asking you to RSVP your attendance and to sign up to bring a dish to share. This promis-

es to be a great October!

Lastly, **Opening Hunt** is scheduled for Saturday, November 5, at 9 a.m. at **Ingleside Plantation**. Invitations will be in the mail in late September or early October.

PUPPIES!

Our lovely Nimble, pictured, produced a litter of 10 adorable puppies this year. Honorary Whipper-in Julie Mitchell and her supportive spouse, Scott, housed Nimble and the pups (once they arrived).



The playful lot will be “k” puppies, and Scott and Julie hosted a puppy naming party for them this last weekend. We can't wait to see these youngsters graduate into the pack.

So enjoy these hot summer days. It is widely said that the term “dog days” came from the ancient belief that Sirius (the Dog Star) was in close proximity to the sun during the July-August time frame and was responsible for the hot weather. We like the dog days of summer because they always give way to the cooler days of early fall. And, under the aegis of St. Hubert, the cooler days belong to the hounds. See you in the hunt field!

FOX HUNTING CLINIC

Commonwealth Foxhounds is well-known as a friendly hunt that welcomes newcomers to the sport. If you know someone who would like to learn a bit more about fox hunting, we will be holding a Fox Hunting Clinic on Sunday, October 16, at Woodpecker Farm, from 9 a.m. to 4 p.m. The clinic will cover what foxhunting is all about, the traditions of foxhunting, safety rules and etiquette in the hunt field, proper attire for the hunt

field, and, the ins and outs of cross-country riding to the hounds.

The fee is \$50 for Riding participants, and \$25 for non-riding or “audit” participants. Hunt attire is not required, but we suggest britches and polos. Safety helmets are required, as well as proof of negative Coggins for your horse (if riding). Also, if registering as a Riding participant, the fee covers one capping fee during the season.

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