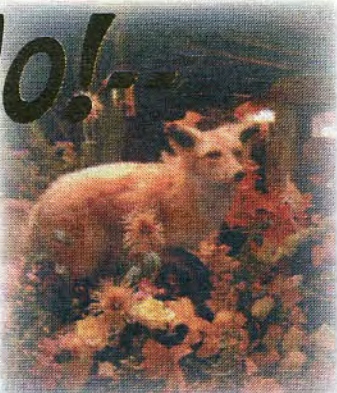


--Tally Ho!

Iroquois Hunt Club Opens Formal Season

By: Erik Shields



The fox and coyote hunting season began in traditional fashion with the sounds of french horns and baying hounds.

Riders, horses, hounds, farmers and spectators gathered in front of the Iroquois Hunt Club on Grimes Mill Road for the annual Blessing of the Hounds. The Blessing marks the beginning of the formal fox/coyote hunting season and celebrates the patron saint of the hunt, Saint Hubert.

Spectators gathered for the blessing.



The former Reverend Canon Christopher Platt, put it best by commenting, "the blessing of a hunt adds a degree of reverence to what might otherwise be little more than a chase."



Above: Ashley Johnson and Margaret Maloney prepare for the hunt.

The day started off with a pre-Blessing brunch at the clubhouse featuring four-cheese grits and bourbon glazed cherries. After dining with friends and guests the riders saddled their horses and gathered in front of the old mill built in 1803 by Phillip Grimes. With riders, horses and spectators in place the hounds were brought out for the Blessing by the Right Reverend Stacy Sauls, Bishop of Lexington, and Reverend John Madden of Saint Hubert's Church. There was a short sermon followed by the blessings of hounds, horses, riders and even

the fox and coyote – if the idea of blessing the fox and coyote before a hunt seems confusing you might not know they do not aim to kill the animals, only to scare them away from the farms. Individual riders came forth to kneel before the Reverend to receive Saint Hubert's medal, embossed with the hunt logo on one side and an impression of St. Hubert on the other. The Hunt Ball was held at the end of the day with good drink, traditional Kentucky fare and the musical stylings of Mingoze Riff.

The hunt takes place on property owned by over 100 landowners. In return for allowing the riders on their land the farmers' crops, livestock and pets are kept safe from harm. Riders make it a point to take care of the land on which the hunt rides, doing their best to leave no trace they were there. Their respect for the land is equaled by their respect for the land owners.

The Iroquois Hunt Club was



Above: Joyce Edwards, James Hunt, James Barker and "Red" Kelley

founded in 1880 by General Roger D. Williams, president of the National Foxhunter's Association. Williams served as the Master of Hounds at the annual meetings of the Iroquois Hunt Club which took its name from Iroquois, the first

American horse to win the English Derby. When General William retired from hunting in 1914 the Iroquois Hunt followed suit. It wasn't until 1926 that the Hunt resumed. In 1928 the IHC purchased Grimes Mill and renovated an old mill house into a clubhouse. A year later the Iroquois Hunt was recognized by the Master of Foxhounds Association of America. For more information on the IHC visit www.iroquoishunt.com and for more information on fox hunting in general check out "Fox Hunting in North America" by Alexander Mackay-Smith or "Story of American Foxhunting Vol. 1 & 2" by J. Blain Van Urk.