



SKYLINES

Newsletter of the Skycastle French Hounds



Summer 2012

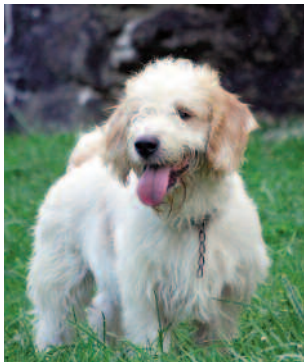
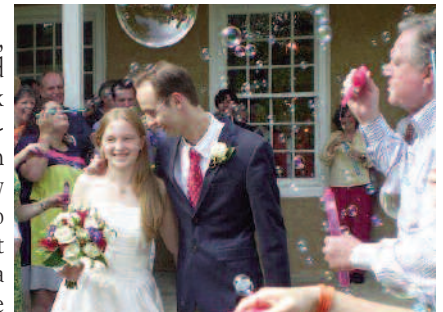
Gillian Wiedorn, Editor

Hunting and Exercise, Summer 2012

Our 2012-2013 season began well in June. Walking out and hunting three days a week has gotten the pack in fine shape. White Acres Farm, George Jefferis's, Bob Berry's, the Hallmans', Church Farm School and Marsh Creek all have had game. Our thanks to them all for letting us use their land for training hunts this summer. Our hard-working staff—Gillian and Paul Wiedorn, Gene Bolt, Phyllis Allen, Dick and Holly Gross, Ginny Beards, and Laura, Nick, Lisa and Henry Booth—have made this summer's training and exercise really work.

Some mornings were very good indeed. Saturday 9 June at CFS, hounds worked two rabbits on the hedgerow border to the pond, one to ground below the track, and the second back out along the stream to ground near the lane. Wagtail was super. Wednesday 13 June at kennels, Wessells and Wagtail did well working with the pack, running one from the tenant house to the stream, then another in the center hedgerow in and out and to ground to finish up. The heat was bad on the 16, so we walked early. On Sunday the 17th at CFS there were lots of rabbits—and deer to cut our hunt short. Back at kennels we got everyone well stretched. On Wednesday June 20's training hunt at Marsh Creek Sabine and Quarry got up one rabbit at the trail split and ran it to ground, then it was heat and no more game. A hot morning June 23: we walked hounds. Sunday was little better, with a blank at the farm early and a walk for the rest. On Wednesday June 27 we hunted at George Jefferis's with nice runs to ground on 2 rabbits, Sabine was super finding in the heat, and Wagtail did well. On Saturday and Sunday, due to the continuing heat we walked all hounds at kennels.

Our July 4th early morning hunt was a very pleasant, though rabbitless walk. Two woodchucks to ground, a cat treed and no riot on the deer that broke out near the top beside Pikeland Road. Hounds worked thoroughly, and young Wagtail did well, drawing in cover the whole time. The main event of the day took place at 2:30 pm at Historic Yellow Springs. The wedding of Gwen Knight and Erik Keimpema was celebrated in the garden, followed by a delightful reception tea in the newly renovated air conditioned Washington Building. They flew back to Sweden Sunday, and we'll again be without one of our best whippers-in. Saturday July 7 was a very good hunt at Jefferis's. Hounds found almost immediately and drove their first rabbit into a heavy tree trash pile, then worked the tree plantings and the woods edge back towards the start. A rabbit broke out on the far side. Sabine and Magpie opened immediately and ran it into the back tree line for a doubling run down into the bottom tangles to ground. A third rabbit was viewed crossing the gap at the middle upper edge of the cover into the center tree plantings. Hounds picked up the line and worked it back and forth through to the far side and back to the center to a mark in one of the tree holes. We then gathered the pack to head to the cool of the kennels. Young Wessells worked very well with the pack all morning. I checked on hounds late in the afternoon to give them fresh water and a stretch in the cool of the barn while cleaning runs.



The Young Entry.....Gallion.....Wagtail and Wimsey.....Wessells.....and a young Cottontail.....at Kennels

Happily the interior of the lodge room was below 80° F, with the fan keeping the air moving. On Sunday again, due to the continuing heat we walked at kennels. Wednesday 11 July we walked the pack and reviewed the schedule for the next week for daily medications and walking out the 14th, 15th and 18th during Jim's and Marsha's trip to England. Laura and Paul alternated carrying the horn and got hounds out for long walks in the heat, and all went well. Gillian and Paul, Gene, Lisa and Laura, Ginny and Phyllis all pitched in and did a great job. Saturday 21 July we hunted at kennels. Gallion and Wessells worked well, and we walked the rest afterwards. An early walk was the answer to heat on Sunday and Wednesday the 25th. Saturday 28 July at Marsh Creek was a fine morning. Two rabbits were run and marked in on the oval—the second a nice run. Hounds got up the third in the left meadow on the far field hedgerow line and ran it right almost to the woods into heavy briars. Salsa finally came out from underneath looking very pleased. Sabine was the star, finding all, and Wagtail was very good.

Wednesday August 1 in the heat we walked at kennels. Saturday was a cooler hunting morning at kennels with two rabbits run to ground, one down to the carriage shed and the other on the right in the center hedgerow above Dowlin Road. Sunday the 5th we walked all in heavy fog. We had a good three couple training hunt at CFS August 11. Starting on the right side of the lane, two deer got up in front of hounds as they worked the center stream cover. One ran ahead and crossed the far road and the other broke out the left side to cross to the trail hedgerows. After some initial excitement, hounds settled down and worked the length of the stream to the far road. Whippers-in Laura and Henry Booth and Ginny Beards were in the right spots to prevent riot ahead, and had the rear covered as well. It was a good training exercise and staff did an excellent job. We then crossed to the trail hedgerows where hounds pushed several rabbits in and out of the dense hedgerows for short runs and views from lane end to road end and back. Salsa and Sabine were the stars of the morning,



Laura Booth,
our Diana

making the initial finds on all game. Cleanup was not too bad back at kennels, and we got the rest out and fed to end the morning. Sunday morning at kennels, cool and wet, was a fine training workout for Wessells and Wimsey, with Mischief, Uwchlan, Robin and Vesper leading the way. At the start we hunted up by the tenant house corner and quickly found. Rabbits were running all over the main house yard, but they settled on one at the corner and drove it down to the carriage shed and stream cover to ground after Mischief opened. Uwchlan and Vesper were the drivers there. Hounds worked up the stream cover, then crossed to the upper field hedgerow where Mischief got the second going. They worked it back and forth and to ground inside the hedgerow line, then we crossed to the center field cover patch which proved to be blank. They drew along the center field border, then I lifted them to the left lower field hedgerow to draw back towards kennels. The rabbit broke out the lower back side and ran for the road. We drew right to try to get up another toward kennels to no avail, and then headed in. Mischief had really been super, and was obviously tired after doing a great job. At her age, an hour's work is her max, but what an hour she gave! Young Wessells worked very well, as did Vesper and Robin. Ginny Beards, Gene Bolt and David Harshaw gave excellent coverage. Cleanup was lengthy, then we walked the rest of the pack, giving all a good stretch, and fed hounds to end this nice morning. We had a nice morning at MCSP on Wednesday 15 August with a three couple including young Gallion, Salsa, Sousa, Sabine, Magpie and Larry. Two rabbits were found and run to ground in and out of the cover around the track perimeter. The outer fields and center hedgerows were drawn blank, though all worked thoroughly. The rest of the pack got a good walk back at kennels. Saturday's August 18 training morning at CFS was very good. Deer again broke out from the right center stream line cover, and again staff were perfectly positioned to stop hounds. They all came quickly to horn and dug into the cover before crossing the creek to the field east of the running track, and got to work in the hedgerows seeking rabbits. They worked the area thoroughly, getting up two rabbits that got back in to ground quickly. Scenting was tough as all was sodden after the heavy rains last night. It was biospot and ivermectin day back at kennels, and after getting the rest out, we dosed and fed the pack. Sunday's August 19 training morning at George Jefferis's was cool and pleasant. Drawing the center tree plantings, we pushed a deer out of the bottom toward the kennel woods, but hounds worked the plantings area thoroughly with staff in the right place. Several tiny rabbits dove for the old tree holes and most escaped. Drawing back toward the side field, hounds worked a big rabbit into a brush pile, where Salsa and Larry pushed through from top to bottom, but couldn't get to him. Back in the plantings, Sabine and Robin and the rest drove another rabbit out into a dense tangle to ground. Young Wessells was in the action the whole time. Back at kennels we walked the rest and fed hounds to end the morning. We walked hounds at kennels in the heat on Wednesday August 22, and Logan Mazanec came to bid farewell to Gallion before her trip to the South Carolina Outer Banks for an internship this year. Saturday the 25th at

Hallman's hounds put a rabbit quickly to ground in the upper hedgerow, and another in the hedgerow corner above the barn was run in and out and to ground under the old equipment. The rest of the area was blank except for a fawn that Lisa almost stepped on as we were ending the day. Magpie was the star of the morning. Sunday we hunted Susan Kolhas's in Glenmoore for the first time, and found two rabbits; the second on in the woods at the top of the hill was all Salsa as she drove it to ground at the base of a tree and practically had to be pulled out of the hole. Hounds were covered green with burrs from a big field patch we had worked on the way in! Cleanup was lengthy back at kennels. We just walked the pack on Wednesday to end the month.

Saturday September 1 we walked all and got half the pack groomed, then I went to the **Ludwig's Corner Horse Show** grounds and with Phil Heth's help set up in our big tent for the conservation groups and hounds. We have given the tent for over 20 years to help get out the news about protecting open space, watersheds and farmland here in Chester County, and will continue to do so in the face of heavy development pressure. Let's all work to make sure that the last crop in the county is not an asphalt strip mall parking lot. Sunday we finished preparations and got the rest of the pack groomed. At the show, September 1-3, the conservation groups, French & Pickering Creeks Conservation Trust, Green Valleys Association, Hope Springs Equestrian, Nokota Horse Foundation and Ryers's Farm for Aged Equines had successful days at our 40'x40' Conservation Space Tent. On Monday, the Kimberton Hunt, Dr. Addis's Warwick Village Hounds, the Ardrossan Beagles and the Skycastle French Hounds had a good parade of hounds at mid day, and there was a lot of interest during the day in the hound packs and the conservation groups in the tent. All in all it was a very successful show with over 600 horses in the classes, despite showers Sunday afternoon and much of Monday.



Hunting in the Beans



Coming In



End of Day

Wednesday September 5 Gillian, Paul and I walked the pack at kennels. Saturday September 8 at Bob Berry's hounds worked every inch of hedgerow and the big bean field to no avail, but it was good to see young Wagtail and Gallion learning to dig in the thick briar cover. Sunday at kennels hounds flushed several rabbits out around the house and worked one down to the stream. The upper covers were blank. Hard-driving Uwchlan was plastered with burrs. The rest of the pack were walked out each day for a good stretch. Wednesday the 12th we walked at kennels. Saturday was a hairy day at CFS, with a big buck tempting the pack at the start, but they settled and worked hard to get lots of rabbits out of the track hedgerows for short runs to ground.

It has been an interesting summer, with the wildest heat and rain swings in recent memory. We pray that the hunting season's weather will be kinder!

We owe our sport to our wonderful landowners.

Important Dates: *Saturday, September 29—Skycastle OKTOBERFEST Party*
Sunday, October 7—OPENING MEET and Blessing of the Hounds at Kennels, White Acres Farm
October 24-28—NATIONAL BASSET PACK TRIALS, Aldie, Virginia

CONDUCT IN THE FIELD

We are all deeply indebted to farmers and landowners for permission to hunt on their properties, and for their cooperation in protecting game for our sport. We must be constantly alert to prevent damage to property and injury to livestock at all costs.

The following are a few common sense rules of behavior for people who hunt with our pack.

1. FENCES. Climb rail fences at the post where strongest, not in the middle. Slide under wire fences when possible. Don't stretch the wires. If a fence is broken, secure it if possible and immediately report it to staff.

2. GATES. If a gate is opened, make sure that the last person through closes it securely. If barways or rails are let down, make sure that they are put back up.

3. GROUNDS. Keep off lawns and gardens near houses, and winter wheat or other soft seeded ground, including golf greens, tees and traps.

4. LIVESTOCK. Keep well away from all livestock in fields and paddocks so as not to excite them. Move quietly around the enclosed area, rather than cross it, unless following the Field Master.

5. SMOKING AND ALCOHOL. No smoking or drinking permitted in the hunting field. One of our meets is at a school that asks that there be no alcohol on the property.

6. PARKING AT THE MEET. Don't park on driveway edges or where inconvenience will be caused to others. Be guided by the Field Master on arrival.

7. HOUNDS. Silence is golden when Hounds are drawing, or at a fault, or working a patchy line. And don't call to or urge on, alagging Hound. Hold up and notify the staff quietly.

8. Finally, be guided by the Field Master. Keep behind him unless Hounds are running. Keep at least 30 yards behind Hounds when running, and hold up for the Field Master as soon as they hesitate on the line. If no Field Master is present or appointed for the day, keep forty yards between yourself and the Huntsman and Hounds when hunting so as not to turn rabbits back into cover, and a good twenty yards when moving off or going home.



SKYCASTLE FRENCH HOUNDS 2012-2013 SEASON

| AGE | ENTRY | SIRE | DAM |
|-----|---|----------------------------------|---------------------------------------|
| 12 | Magpie '01 Mischief '01 | Luron (des Ajoncs de l'Aulne) | Ipine des Ajoncs de l'Aulne '00+ |
| 11 | Sabine des Ajoncs de l'Aulne '02 | Haxel de Fin Renard | Mireine des Ajoncs de l'Aulne '04+ |
| 7 | Quarry '06 | Luron de Mounaidieres '96 | Mireine des Ajoncs de l'Aulne '04+ |
| | Robin '06 Roguish '06 | Oarsman '03 | Pampa de la Bonne Franquette '04+ |
| | Gebeba's Larry '06 | Raven des Marais de la Dives | Rafale des Landes Medocaines |
| 5 | Salsa '08 Sousa '08 | Gebeba's Larry '06 | Mischief '01 |
| 4 | Teasel '09 Trompette '09 Tuppence '09 | Riddle '06 | Sabine des Ajoncs de l'Aulne '07+ |
| 3 | Uwchlan '10 | Gebeba's Larry '06 | Quarry '06 |
| 2 | Vicar '11 Vesper '11 | Gebeba's Dreamboat | Trompette '09 |
| 1 | Gallion des Roccs du Plessis '12 | D'Armor des Roccs du Plessis | Ukraine des Roccs du Plessis |
| | Wessells '12 Wagtail '12 Wimsey '12 | Cezar de la Font Française | Souza '08 |



In Memory of Patricia Duncan Stephanoff

Some people brighten a room when they come in. Pat Stephanoff was one of those special people. I first met her in 1967 when I moved here from New York City and discovered the wonderful Skycastle crowd and hounds. Over the years since, she, and all of Elizabeth Streeter's original field, have been great friends as well as strong supporters of our little pack.

Pat died in July at age 92. She is survived by her three children: Nika G. Ashey (Brian), Alexander N. Stephanoff (Emily) and Kyra D. Stephanoff (Paul Steen), four grandchildren and three step-grandchildren. She lived every minute, from her longtime association with the Pennsylvania Ballet Academy and the theater—acting and a member of the Plays and Players of Philadelphia, service as a director and financial support of her late husband's Fluid Energy Processing and Equipment Company, her summer home and love of sailing on Nantucket Island, to her membership and support of Skycastle.

She poured our closing meet tea this March at the Peoples' home in Phoenixville. Our delightful and lovely Pat will be sorely missed.

Dog days in Chester County

Beagling, basseting live on as traditions



James Scharnberg is the huntsman with Skycastle French Hounds Kennels in Downingtown.

Staff photos by Jason E. Chow

By LAURA BOOTH
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ONLINE
VIDEO



www.DailyLocal.com

Tramping out with a pack of basset hounds may not be every 19-year-old's idea of an ideal morning, but, even in the sweltering summer heat, it comes pretty close to mine.

I have been hunting with the Skycastle French Hounds, currently kenneled in Downingtown, since I was 10, and I made my first excursion with the Ardrossan Beagles, kenneled at Radnor Hunt Club, for the purposes of this article.

As a kid, basseting with Skycastle became a weekend treasure. My brother and I would traipse behind the hounds, experiencing the rugged beauty of the countryside as it could never be enjoyed on the tame sidewalks of a housing development.

A morning out with Skycastle begins with time-worn rituals – staff members meet the huntsman, James Scharnberg, who pulls the tagalong hound trailer behind his SUV, at a predetermined farm. After describing how he plans to hunt the assorted hedge-grows, briar patches and copses of woods (a plan rarely followed for more than the first five minutes), the hounds are let loose and hastily gathered together behind Scharnberg. Equipped with his horn and voice – an instrument as useful for calling an errant puppy back as for whistling softly in encouragement – Scharnberg will “draw” a covert, pushing the hounds into a thicket in search of their quarry, the cottontail rabbit.

The rest of the hunt will proceed quietly from co-

Please see **BEAGLE** on D4



One of Scharnberg's hounds takes a break from hunting.



Scharnberg leads his pack out for a training hunt.

Beagle

From D1

vert to covert as staff members, called whippers-in, loosely encircle the pack as it works, preventing them from straying on the trail of a tantalizing deer or fox.

When the hounds pick up a scent line, the quiet melts into a chorus of loud voices that rises or fades as the pack works the line. The rare moment in which a rabbit breaks free from the covert, speeding along to some safer place, is one of unspeakable excitement, and anyone who views the creature will shout, "Tallyho!" Much the same procedure occurs with Ardrossan's beagles.

All of this may sound ludicrously old-fashioned to someone who has never been out with a beagling or bassetting pack, and rightly so. Still, I have to laugh at the shortcomings of my modern word processor. It insists that beagling and bassetting are not real words, though both sports existed – and thrived here in Chester County – long before the advent of spellcheck.

Beagling and bassetting originated centuries ago in Europe to control swollen populations of hare. Unlike in foxhunting, those following a basset or beagle pack (known as the "field") did so on foot rather than on horseback, as both beagles and bassetts lack the ground-swallowing speed of foxhounds.

When beagling and bassetting were transplanted to America in the late 19th century, Chester County attracted hunting packs (of all persuasions – foxhunters as well as beaglers and bassetters) because of its rolling hills, which are perfect for conditioning hounds, humans and horses alike.

Since then, following footparks has allowed those without the means to afford the horses, tack and special clothing required of foxhunters to participate in the spectacle of the hunt, which is one of Chester County's cultural and historical institutions.

Today Chester County's beagle and basset packs hunt cottontail rabbit. Beaglers and bassetters no longer focus on achieving a kill. Rather, they provide good sport for the field by chasing the rab-



James Scharnberg, of Skycastle French Hounds Kennels, releases his hounds from their transport to start hunting.

Staff Photo by Jason E. Chow

bit to its hole, where it is said to have gone to ground. A kill, when it happens, is accidental – most sportsmen would rather their prey live on to provide another day's sport.

In fact, the modern goal of both sports is to enable people's enjoyment of the countryside – something that can hardly be achieved without quarry to chase and plenty of space in which to chase it.

Without evidence to support the idea that people hunting with a pack of hounds can be wildlife advocates, it may seem like a ridiculous proposition. But beaglers and bassetters are part of the long-standing Chester County tradition to conserve and protect open space.

L. Stockton Illoyay, master of beagles for Ardrossan, is on the board of the French and Pickering Creeks Conservation Trust. Currently, he heads its land preservation committee.

The French and Pickering Creeks Conservation Trust aims to protect land in northern Chester County. In 2011 alone, it achieved two new conservation easements – one in East Pikeland and one in East Goshen.

Scharnberg was instrumental in beginning an open space publicity event at the annual Ludwig's Corner Horse Show. The Conservation and Hounds tent distributes infor-

mation about hunting, open space and their relationship in Chester County.

Illoyay believes that open space thrives in Chester County because, among the varied groups who support land conservation, the county and its townships have also offered their support. "The county's been very behind open space operations," he said. "A lot of the townships have put in open space funding through a bond issue or through taxing and, up in the northern Chester County area, a lot of the townships will help buy out development rights."

Still, Illoyay rejected the idea that this support exists because of regional hunting interests. "I think it's because a lot of the people out there really like the area the way it is and they don't want to see it all destroyed," he said. "There's a big feeling up in northern Chester County that it's a special place and you want to maintain it, not just so much for hunting."

Beagling and bassetting are certainly not responsible for a communitywide feeling that Chester County – in all of its semi-rural beauty – is worthy of conservation, but a morning out with the hounds does inspire a feeling of protectiveness toward the land. After all, as Illoyay said with a chuckle, "The jungle has to start somewhere."

LITTER ALERT!

Sunday, September 16th Arrival of Trompette's Sextet

Starting at 3:00 am, Sunday September 16th, Skycastle Trompette gave birth to a fine litter of two males and four females. She's a very good brood bitch and it was an easy whelping. The x-ray had shown five puppies, but after the fourth came, it was obvious that she had more than one to go. Sure enough, the last two arrived within minutes of each other shortly after 7:00 am. I checked them over carefully for possible umbilical problems and cleaned everyone up, including the litter box, with Marsha's help, and staggered upstairs to bed. Final count is two males and four females. Mama and pups are doing very well.

