

## First Lady Of The Field

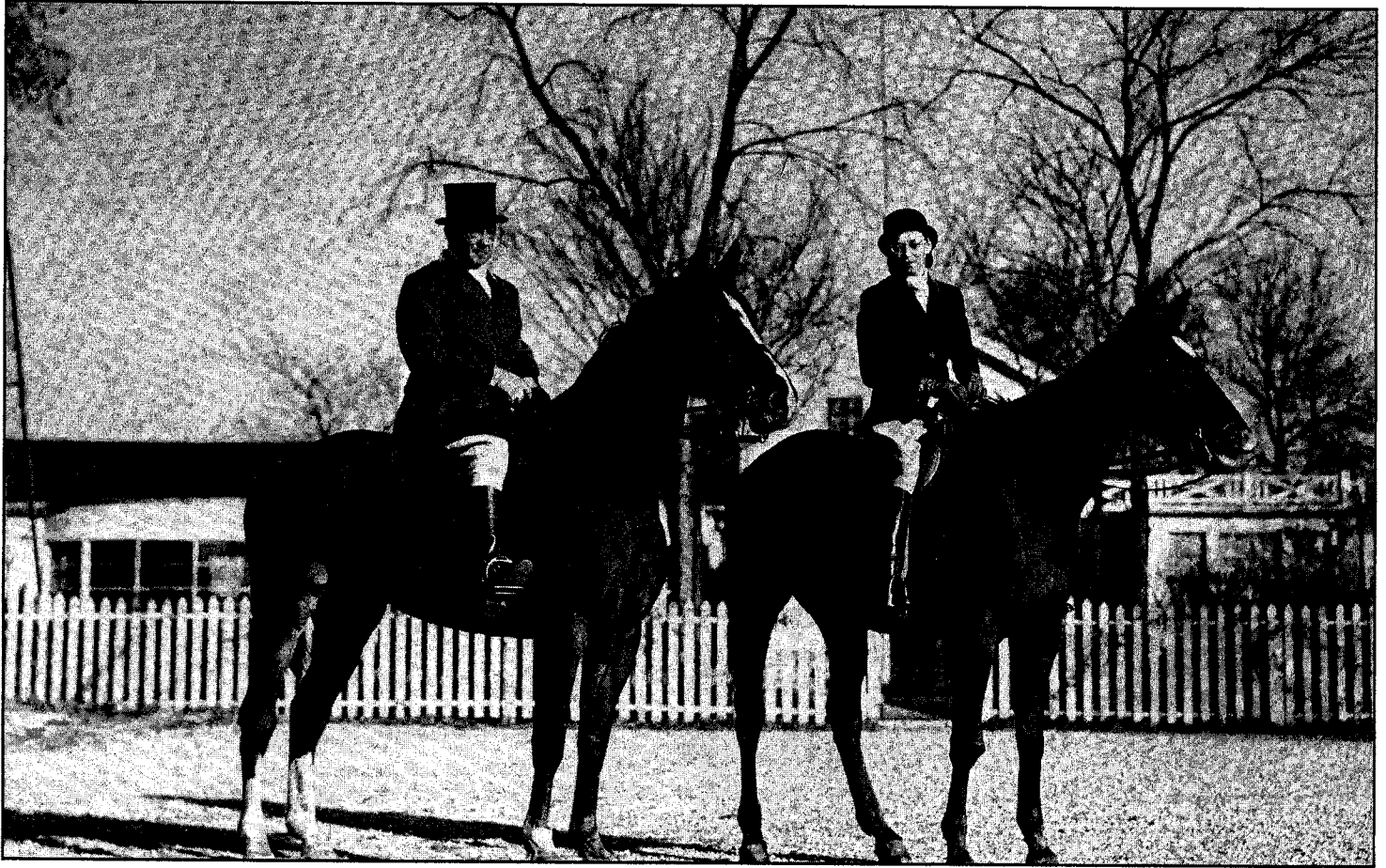


**D**rag hunting or live, there was one woman totally devoted to the sport who took it upon herself to continue the legacy of fox hunting in Barrington. It was in 1960 that Virginia Cardwell Reinhardt was appointed Master of the Fox River Valley Hunt, thus assuming complete responsibility for the sport she so dearly loved.

Because she had been one of the founders 20 years earlier and because she had helped fund it throughout those early years, Gina was prepared to see the Fox River Valley Hunt through the coming decade. Always supportive, her husband S.L. "Spider" Reinhardt was very proud of her when she became Master.

Following their marriage in 1942, Lieutenant Commander Reinhardt was required to serve in the U.S. Navy on the aircraft carrier U.S.S. Bataan in the Pacific fleet. Upon his return, he purchased a farm on Braeburn Road so Gina could enjoy her horses and dogs at her own home. Spider, having lived in Highland Park, then tried fox hunting just to please her, saying, "I liked it so well that I then took lessons and learned to ride." He promptly purchased a hunt horse from Tom White. He also bought a farm in Lexington, Kentucky, in 1954. It adjoined the Iroquois Hunt Club, providing them additional hunting during the winter months, after the Fox River Valley Hunt had closed its season.

In 1959, the Forest Preserve District had completed its purchase of Big Oak Farm and proceeded to issue three-month leases on the buildings and the land the kennels occupied. Dorvillee Farm and the Round Barn were slated for home sites, making 1957 the final year for the lucrative Barrington Horse Show. As a result of this transaction the show had been forced to take up temporary residence — first in 1958 at Sheridan's on Route 62 and Bateman Road, then for the next two years at the Berndtson's on West County Line Road.



*S.L. "Spider" Reinhardt on Hazard, Gina Reinhardt on Kootneau.*

Since the incorporation of Barrington Hills, growth continued at a rapid pace with many of the new residents wanting to own horses. The Riding Club and Hunt realized the need for a community riding facility which would provide a permanent home for the Hunt, a place for residents to board their horses, and a suitable location for the Barrington Horse Show. The horse show had become a premiere event for exhibitors throughout the Midwest, generating substantial income for the Hunt, the Riding Club, and several charitable organizations.

Gina was fully prepared to deal with a plan for the future. Prior to the acquisition of the large block of land known as the Spring Lake Forest Preserve, a representative from the board of directors of the Riding Club met with the president of the Cook County Forest Preserve to discuss the purchase of approximately 15 acres on the edge of the Forest Preserve. This representative was informed that the Forest Preserve District could not sell the land, but the Riding Club could purchase 15 contiguous acres from the large Jackson holdings. The Forest Preserve was not interested in including that parcel in its acquisition.

The Jackson farm was a local landmark. From the very beginning, the Hunt had received permission from Gracie Jackson and her brother Harvey to hunt over their property. Settled by their grandfather George Jackson in 1842, Gracie and Harvey had lived all their lives on this homestead. Their father, also George Jackson, was 6 months old when the family arrived in Barrington Township having traveled by horsedrawn wagon from Onondaga County in New York State. Their land, which stretched from Algonquin Road along what later became Bateman Road and across Donlea almost to County Line Road, cost them about \$1.50 an acre.

Their first home had been a rough-hewn timber structure which was later replaced by a frame farmhouse typical of the area and of the 1860s period. In 1959 Gracie, or "Babe" as she was sometimes called, was still living alone in the old farm house. This house would be demolished by the Cook County Forest Preserve in 1982. But her garden always flourished, and though unattended some 30 years later, still brings enjoyment to those who know where it blooms in today's Forest Preserve.

Gina was given the job of making initial contact with Gracie regarding the sale of some of her land, since it was thought that she would remember Gina more than the other directors of the Riding Club. Gracie, who had by then lived alone for many years with only a niece and a nephew to look after her occasionally, was delighted to have some company and talked nonstop that day, preventing Gina from getting to the point. A second meeting took place with her heirs in Elgin at a later date, and the sale was made. Thus, at the beginning of Gina's tenure as Master of the Fox River Valley Hunt, the Forest Preserve acquired its land and the Riding Club acquired the 15 acres targeted for a riding center. The Jackson heirs were pleased that some of their land was going to neighbors and allowed the Riding Club to purchase it for \$28,000.

In 1960, the Riding Club and the Hunt were thrust into the ambitious program of selling non-interest-bearing bonds for \$500 to purchase the property and build a complete facility for the much-needed community riding center. The Hunt, in addition to aiding in the sale of these bonds, had to purchase the kennels, as well as Al Moore's residence on Donlea Road from the Forest Preserve, and fund the move to the new site. Al Moore had recently moved his business to George Bachner's Twin Win Farm on Algonquin Road, which had formerly been Jack Thompson's barn.

Plans called for Arnold May, a builder from Richmond, to construct the indoor ring and a shell over the aisle for stalls. Volunteers from both the Riding Club and the Hunt would build the stalls when the ring and shell were complete.

While these plans were moving ahead in April of 1962, Spider, returning from a golfing trip, died suddenly of a heart attack. This was devastating to Gina. She was left with two daughters — one a freshman in college, and

the other a 7 year-old with severe asthma. A year later, Aiden Regan resigned after 14 years as huntsman of the Fox River Valley Hunt.

The job of MFH was a considerable one when combined with the sudden loss of a spouse, a rapidly changing community, a major move, and the need to replace a key employee. To aid Gina, Frederick H. Gohl was made Joint Master in 1964. He had been hunting since 1958 with his children, Fritz and Janet, and had occasionally served as a whipper-in. Familiar with the Hunt, he was in a position to be a great help, both to the organization and to Gina in her time of need.

For the 1964 season, Gina and Fred hired Englishman Arnold Towell as huntsman. He had hunted a pack in Maryland and was hired to maintain the kennels and hunt country, hunt the hounds, and to run the Riding Center, which was at that time a complete lesson and boarding facility. His job also included promoting the facility through shows, polo matches, and pony club activities. Any of these jobs would have been major in themselves; put together, they exerted great pressure on the huntsman.

By 1965, the area had changed greatly from Gina's first season as Master. Nat Hamilton, a colorful resident of Spring Creek Road, volunteered to head up the hill-topping group, citing a great need for this due to Towell's fast style of hunting.

Increasing development in the 1960s brought additional pressure on the Masters. While there were few changes in the Hunt's schedule after the move was successfully completed to Bateman Road, hunting had become more difficult as properties were subdivided and traffic increased in the area. The stretch of Donlea Road from Sutton Road to Bateman Road had finally been closed by the Forest Preserve. A substantial increase in through-traffic had occurred with the Meadowdale development, and there had been several serious accidents at the curve of Donlea Road near Big Oak Farm.

Ironically, one of Gina's first problems - or as she would say crises - had a somewhat amusing outcome. During her first season as MFH, hounds were running a fox quite nicely south of the old kennels, where they had



*Diana "Dan Dan" Bate Flint and Zoella "Tucky" Reinhardt.*

been many times before. As will happen, they suddenly lost the line. In this case, the huntsman and followers were quite far behind. Hounds had run through an overgrown brushy area, and the followers couldn't stay up with the pack. Huntsman Regan called the hounds in. Upon their return to the kennels, they found a strange car in the yard and an irate woman yelling at the huntsman's wife in a strong foreign accent. Gina, being of very gentle temperament, one whose only desire was to enjoy her horses and her hounds, viewed this scene while approaching and cringed. "Biting the bullet," as she said, she rode up, dismounted, and asked what the problem was. It turned out that the woman and her family had recently rented a house on Route 62. That very morning, she had placed her homemade Polish sausage on the clothesline to cure when the Fox River Valley pack had come through and eaten it all! That explained the sudden loss while on the line of the fox. As Gina said later, "I was always prepared to pay for damages (to crops), but I never thought that sausage would be one of them."

In the early '60s the unforgettable Dr. Seidler, a German, joined the Hunt. He was deaf and hunted what the membership dubbed the Trojan Horse. This horse was an 18-hand grey, high-headed draft horse, whose previously roached mane was in the process of growing out. In hunting circles, this was not a pretty sight. The horse only had two vices; either would turn a Master's hair grey. One, he did not jump but rather crashed through every fence, reducing it to rubble. Many members would purposely ride behind him into a fence to avoid having to jump. The problem with this was that the staff of the Hunt would have to stop and make repairs, or valuable livestock would get out. His second vice was to freeze or refuse to move when hounds would open on the line of a fox. When this occurred on a narrow trail in the woods, it was almost impossible for those behind to get by him. Once this happened in an open field, as the membership looked over their shoulders at this great, high-headed horse firmly refusing to move, he became the Trojan Horse. Gina, in her quiet, mild-mannered way, tried for two seasons to tell the good doctor that whenever anyone broke a rail or a whole jump, they should donate \$20 to the repair of that fence. She discovered that Dr. Seidler didn't speak much English, and that furthermore, he was deaf so few of her admonishments had any impact whatsoever.

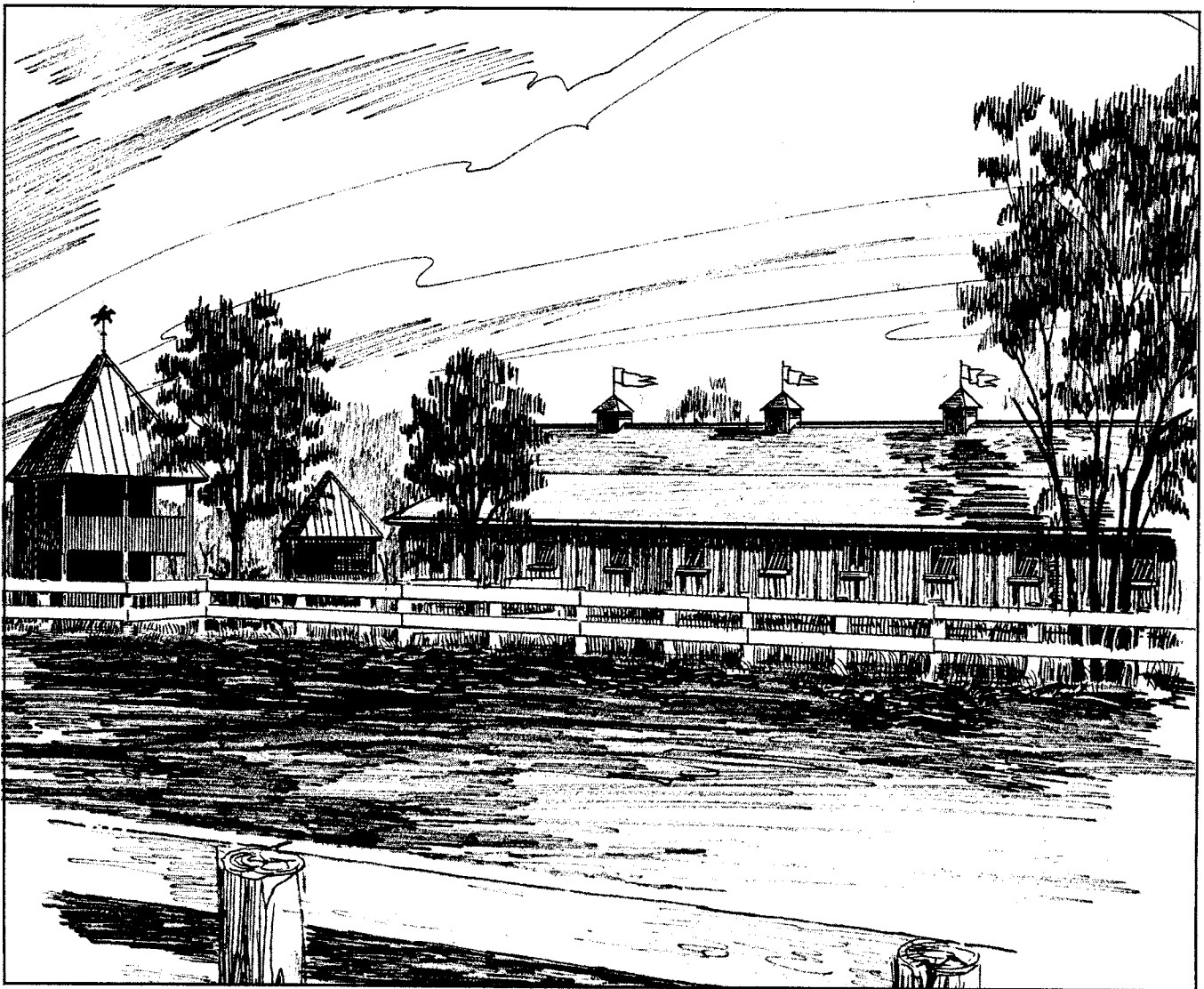
During these years, the membership included many people from Captain Frank's barn in Morton Grove. Art Nelson would arrive at the meet with a fully loaded nine-horse van. This encouraged many new riders, among them was a junior named Barbara Thuerk. The car followers were ably led by her mother who, through the years, learned the routes of various foxes and was always at the scene when the hounds and field arrived.

One of the more impressive traditions of fox hunting, the Blessing of the Hounds ceremony, was established in Barrington during Gina's tenure. The ceremony has its origins in the story of St. Hubert, patron saint of hounds and hunting. He lived in the early part of the Eighth Century in the

Ardennes Forest of France. He was passionately devoted to the chase and reportedly spent day after day, from dawn to dark pursuing the stag with his hounds. One day, near nightfall, he became separated from his companions, and as he approached a clearing in the forest, he saw a glow of light. As he neared the light, he saw a beautiful stag standing in the middle of the clearing. A golden, glowing cross was above his antlers shedding an unearthly light. Hubert was suddenly remorseful and repentant of his neglect of spiritual things and from that moment forward, devoted himself to a life of piety.

In 1965, two years prior to the Fox River Valley Hunt's move to the new center, the hunt committee planned the first blessing. To avoid any criticism from the membership and local churches, they also decided to have a different religious faith conduct the ceremony each year. This became a cumbersome and difficult task through the years, as the ceremony and its traditions had to be explained to a new cleric every season. Now it is traditionally conducted by a minister from St. Mark's Episcopal Church.

The Chicagoland Hunter Trials were held at the Riding Center for the first time in 1967. Hunt member Fran Joswick, founding district commissioner of the newly formed Fox River Valley Pony Club, was chairman that year. This was to be Towell's last year with the Hunt. Not only did the Hunt need a huntsman, but also a manager for the newly built Riding Center.



A role reversal occurred within the organization when, in 1967, Fred Gohl became president, and then president Lee Vance joined Gina as Joint Master. Assisting in the daily administration of the Hunt, Lee felt that he could also be of some help to Gina in her search for a new huntsman.

Here's to the sport, it's foxhunting, sure, of course,  
And here's to the Queen of our hunt, sir.  
Though Reynard with tireless flight should run from dawn to night,  
Ginny will take him in the spinney before we tire, sir.

Here's to Lee Vance, he's joint master not by chance,  
And here's to the line that he'll follow.  
And here's to his pace that puts life into the chase,  
As merrily we hoop and we hallow.

Here's to our Don Kidder, no hunt secretary is more fitter,  
And here's to the prowess of this huntsman.  
Whether you need him up a tree or his presence at the hunt tea,  
He's at your side, at full stride, for the hunt, sir.

Here's to Gohl, Fred, it's to poetry we're led,  
That's why his first name is last, sir.  
But whether first or last, wherever hounds are cast,  
Fred you'll find on the line before the rest, sir.

Here's to Aden Regan, and the music he's been makin',  
Here's to the voice of our huntsman.  
Fast may fly the fox as he moves across the rocks,  
But faster speed the hounds to his horn, sir.

Here's to good fellows, to our lakes and rolling meadows,  
And here's to a pledge in our cups, sir.  
So long as any here can rally, get our creepy bones to sally,  
We'll have a Fox River Hunt in the Valley.

*A Poem written by George Van Hagen which was presented at a hunt breakfast in 1968.*

Gina had generously funded the cost of moving the buildings to the new site, but the mortgage for their purchase continued to be a financial obligation of the Hunt. It is a credit to the local horse enthusiasts that the center came to fruition as easily as it did. Those who were responsible for it were members of both the Hunt and the Riding Club, but there was never a moment of doubt concerning the sharing of responsibilities. However, the country continued to be subdivided, and the Hunt's general expenses were rising faster than ever before.

The new huntsman selected was Captain John Harding, who, like Arnold Towell, was from England. One month into the job he resigned as manager of the Riding Center, and after one season he resigned as huntsman. When he left, he took most of the better foxhounds as well as the furnishings in the house, which had recently been donated by members.

In the late '60s the Masters realized that the Hunt had to seek new territory. Renting an airplane, Gina and Lee flew over McHenry County in search of this new country. They discovered limitless farms and pastures dotted with woodlands along the valley of the Nippersink Creek near Richmond. New possibilities again opened up for the Hunt.

This expedition revealed in particular two large properties which, after negotiation with their owners, were to become some of the Hunt's most exciting country to date. Tamarack Farm - 600 acres of pasture with many wooded covers and rolling land intersected by the Chicago & North Western railroad tracks - also had a half-mile gravel pit that proved to be a haven for generations of foxes. The extensive holdings of the Northern Pump Farms, which lay to the south of Tamarack Farm, became available. This farm was managed by famous cattleman Brad Scott, who had been inducted into the Cattleman's Hall of Fame for his excellence in raising Hereford cattle.

The task of clearing and paneling this extensive territory was taken on by long-standing and loyal hunt member Owen Fairweather. Owen had always been generous to the Hunt with legal counsel in matters of incorporation, liability, and immigration matters of employees. He had a wonderful sense of humor and liked nothing better than leading the troops (Barcroft, Ewing, Engleman, Jones, and Pattishall) while larking.

After John Harding's departure, Aiden Regan returned in 1969, when there were very few hounds left in the kennels. Gina purchased two-and-a-half couple of hounds from the Toronto and North York Hunt in Canada. They were to be instrumental in rebuilding the pack.

By the early 1970s, the Hunt and the Riding Club found the upkeep of the community riding center costly. Taxes, insurance, and general expenses far exceeded anticipated revenues. The great facility that had become part of Barrington's way of life, almost went on the auction block. In 1972, Owen Fairweather stepped in and arranged the transfer of the property to the Barrington Countryside Park District, removing it from the tax rolls forever.

In 1973, Charmian Jackson became huntsman. Her father, raised in the English tradition of her homeland, had been Master of the North Warwickshire Foxhounds, Devon and Somerset Hounds, and the Exmoor Foxhounds. In addition, her godfather Captain Ronnie Wallace held the position of Chairman of the (British) Masters of Foxhounds Association.

The Hunt now began another period of revival. Charmian worked tirelessly developing country and furthering landowner relations. During the ensuing years, the Hunt was also developing Richmond East, a patchwork of smaller farms near the town of Spring Grove. Using Spring Dale Farm as a





*Charmian Jackson and Gunnison.*

meeting place, hounds were able to draw in all directions. The country afforded such good sport that the Hunt held its 1978 Blessing there.

Charmian replaced Lee Vance, who resigned as MFH in 1975. During the next several seasons, the Hunt hosted Point-to-Point Races, the courses of which were built by the newly appointed hunt country Chairman Richard Woodruff. Races for hunt members and pony club members both on the flat and over fences quickly filled. These were held at Spring Dale Farm in Richmond; at Fox Chase Farm, the Riding Center which had been leased by Bruce Duchossois; and William McGinley's Horizon Farm. Formerly, Horizon Farm was called Fernwood, and had been home to the famous Victor Adding Machine Shetland Pony Hitch.

Hunter Trials continued to be hosted by the Fox River Valley Hunt at four-year intervals. Mrs. Otis Hubbard, a hunt member, was chairman in 1974, and Mrs. Peter McHugh in 1978. Both events were held at Fox Chase Farm. Additionally, a Hunter Pace was initiated in May 1977, providing an excellent vehicle for getting the hunt members together in the off-season.

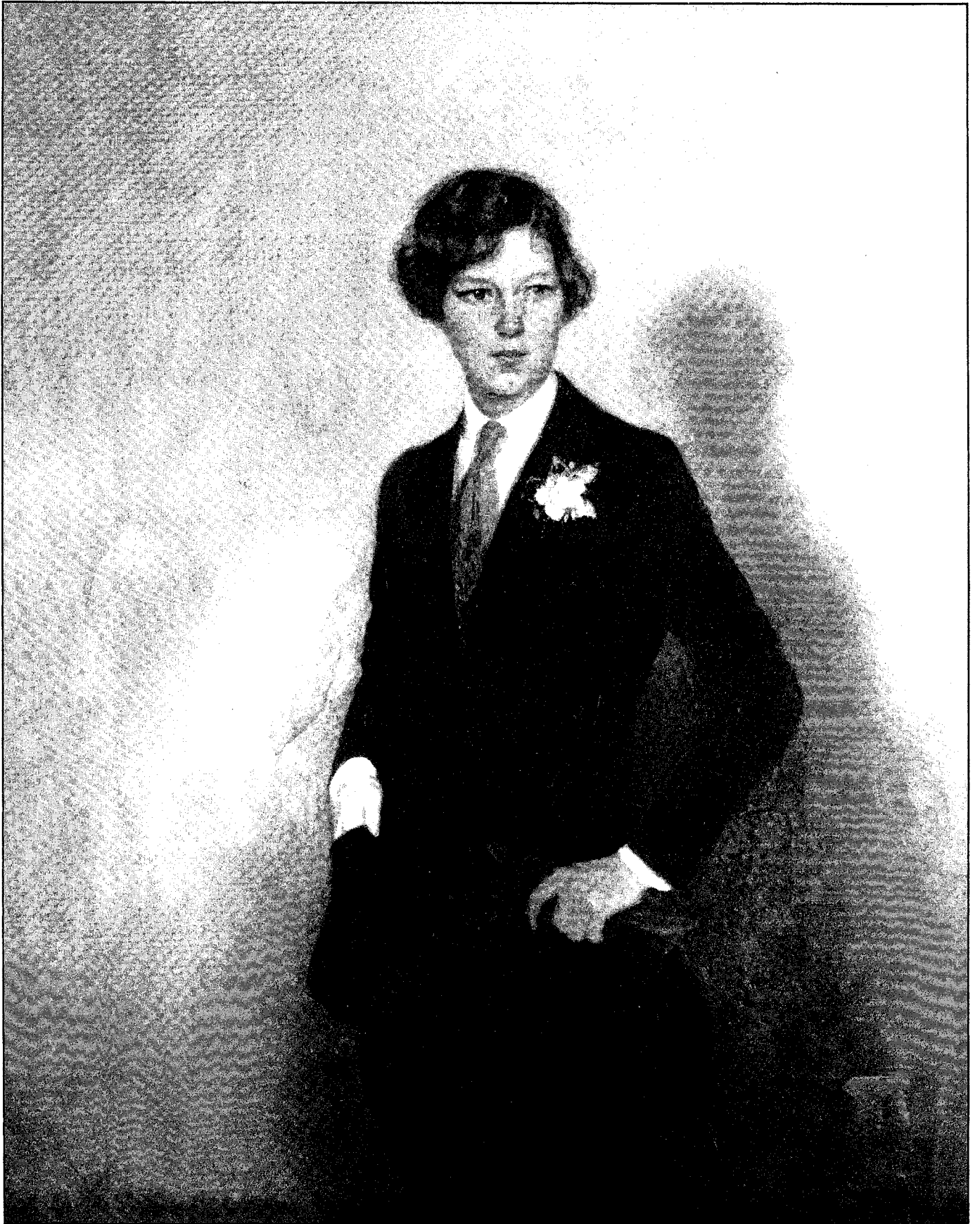
These years were a time when families shared the enjoyment of equestrian activities. This tradition was begun by Tom White in the 1950s with his son Tommy, who served as a whipper-in. Gina's daughter, Vicki, was also a whipper-in as was Beverly Pattishall's son, Wick. Pattishall's wife Dottie loved car following. Fred Gohl's children, Fritz and Janet, received their colors as juniors and the McGinley clan of Bob, Jim, and Maggie accompanied Bill during the formal season. Mrs. Lee Winfield Alberts, hunt treasurer, with her daughter, Anne, were joined by the Woodruffs: Dick, Mickey, and their children. Whipper-in Doug Thompson Sr. was accompanied by his children, Doug and Roy. At one point, three generations of Cardwell/Reinhardtts: Gina, her daughter, Vicki, and her granddaughter, Boo all hunted together. The next generation of fox hunters was assured.

The greatest changes experienced by the Hunt occurred during Gina Reinhardt's 20 years as MFH. The Barrington area countryside had become transformed from an agricultural environment to five-acre home sites. The Hunt had moved to a new, permanent home. Gina had tried three professional huntsmen before finding Charmian Jackson, who worked harmoniously and diligently to further provide sport and enjoyment for those who follow hounds. And lastly, the Hunt had expanded its horizons toward new country in McHenry County. All this had happened under the leadership of a very gentle woman whose greatest enjoyment was to be out with her family, riding her favorite horse behind a well-trained pack of foxhounds.

Without the stability of Gina's leadership during those 20 years, the Fox River Valley Hunt might not have survived the changes that had occurred in the Barrington area and the communities surrounding it. When she retired, her accomplishments were fittingly celebrated on the evening of the 1980 Hunt Ball. Friends and fellow fox hunters paid tribute to her long and successful term as MFH.

In attendance were Harold Byron Smith with his wife Pauline; Richard Bate and his wife; and his sister Dan Dan Flint, and her husband Bob. Also included in the festivities were George Van Hagen and his wife Sara and Tom and Esther White representing 40 years of Fox River Valley Hunt history on a memorable evening.

Among those offering toasts to Gina were Major Peter Wainwright, Master and huntsman of the Trollope Hunt in London, Ontario, who brought best wishes and greetings from hunts throughout Canada and the United Kingdom. Joining him in toasts were George Fredericks, Master of the Cornwall Hounds in Galena; Daniel "Bud" Murphy, huntsman of the Mill Creek Hounds in Wadsworth; Joint Masters Stephen Flint and Frank Kenney Jr. of the Spring Creek Bassets of Barrington; Ross and Susie Lyons, who were former members of the Fox River Valley Hunt and Masters of the Graemont Hounds in Rensselaer, Ind.



*Virginia Cardwell Reinhardt.*