



photo by Sarah Libbey Greenhalgh

## Kiser Scholarship: Remy Winants By Laurel Scott Duncan

She may hail from Pennsylvania, but 15-year-old Remy Winants is an equestrian in the best Maryland tradition, which is why she was named the 2003 Jonathan Kiser Memorial Scholar.

The daughter of rider Woods Winants and trainer Lilith Boucher—now married to jockey Richard Boucher—the Unionville resident was to the saddle born. As might be expected from someone with her pedigree, she grew up foxhunting, showing, and Pony Clubbing—all the activities that add up to a well-rounded horseperson.

But Winants is no ordinary junior rider. From her earliest contests on C.J. (a white Shetland who was like 40 years old!) to junior races with timber prospect Punchino, Winants has seen more action between the flags than most riders her age.

Her relaxed, polished style has attracted the notice of such trainers as Barry Wiseman, for whom she's ridden at the point-to-points, and Jonathan Sheppard, a Hall of Famer for whom

she's worked since she was 10.

**"The experience was an eye-opener," said Remy of her five scholarship days spent with legendary trainer Tom Voss.**

"I started galloping for him a couple of years back," she said. "We didn't really hunt much last season, but I was over there at his barn a lot on weekends

and holidays. I'd go to work for Mr. Sheppard from 7 in the morning til whenever we finished, and then I'd go ride for my mom after that."

Her experience at Sheppards has taught her much about the education of a racehorse. "A lot of the horses I ride are flat horses, but at Mr. Sheppards, even the flat horses school over hurdles," she said.

One of Winant's favorite horses last year was Punchino. Although green, the towering grey son of Two Punch shows plenty of promise. "I rode him as a 3-year-old when I first started working for Mr. Sheppard," she said. "He is such a good jumper for such a young horse. You know how some big horses kind of mince their strides a little bit? Not him, he just flows."

Last spring, Winants hoped to sweep the junior championships in Virginia, Maryland and Pennsylvania. "I wanted to go out with a Bang," she said of one of her last years in the junior ranks. She certainly left her mark, aboard everything from old favorite Ruffle the Road and new large pony Boogie to Punchino and hurdle prospect Ricky.

No one was surprised when she clinched the large pony championship on Pennsylvania's Delaware Valley circuit. One particularly remarkable day occurred at the Cheshire point-to-point near her home town. "It was a bit cold," she admitted. "We were riding in a blinding snowstorm. But I won both of my races, so it was worth getting

my pants frozen to my butt!"

By the end of spring in Virginia, Winants was also tied for second in that circuit's large pony division.

She really sizzled in Maryland, seizing the large pony championship, the overall pony title, and the junior horse championship.

Her performances at the Green Spring Valley Point-to-Point, where she won both the large pony flat, with Boogie, and the pony junior field masters chase, with Ruffle the Road, were especially memorable.

But it was the race that Winants did not win that day—the junior field masters chase for horses—that showed the most about her horsemanship. When the going came up soft, she elected to go easy on her mount Ricky, circling him around where necessary and saving him for another day. "We thought we'd do some NAPPA races with him and then run him over hurdles," she said. "But he was getting a little strong [in the race], and he doesn't have the



Remy & Boogie at Potomac

photo by Sarah Libbey Greenhalgh

greatest legs in the history of horse racing. So I thought that if we are going to go on the bigger things, it wouldn't be a good thing to start off with a bowed tendon."

There was also a measure-

ment controversy in the large pony flat race.

"They gave me such a hard time about what size my pony was!" she said, laughing. "In the condition book it said they will not measure if you have a pony [measurement] card. We had the pony card with us, and they still measured!"

At season's end, Winants was a natural choice for the Kiser Memorial Scholarship. This honor entitled her to five days of training with top Monkton conditioner Tom Voss, who mentored the jockey for whom the award is named.

"The experience was an eye-opener," Winants said. "I went out there in late June, and it was fun! But it was different for someone who's only galloped for her mother and Mr. Sheppard, I rode Coal Dust, Tebs Bend and Maxi Tune. I actually stayed with the Vosses, which was very nice of them. And Mr. Voss helped me out with my pace; he thinks I gallop a little bit too slow."

Winants liked Voss's undulating, all-weather track, but found the indoor school kinda scary!

"The ceiling on one side is really low, and if you're riding a really big horse, you just want to duck," she said. "And it's not like you just hack-canter around there; they open gallop! [Voss] apparently sets jumps up in there, too."

After her banner spring, Winants helped run her parents' horses at Colonial Downs, Va., continued riding for Sheppard, foxhunted and did some eventing.

But racing will always be dear to her heart, and she can't wait for the future to unfold. Perhaps she'll even get a license at the track. "I'll probably gallop for my parents and maybe Mr. Sheppard," she said. "And hopefully they'll start letting me ride in some of the [adult] flat races at the point-to-points." ■

## The Jonathan Kiser Memorial Scholarship

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