

Women enjoy hunting, pass love of

By Veronica Monier

The Norton Telegram
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Friends and family are a big reason why women who have never been hunting before take up the sport.

Tara Esslinger, Norton, said she started hunting in grade school.

"I grew up with an older brother," she said. "It's what he did all the time. I was kind of a tom-boy and found it interesting."

Mrs. Esslinger said she's always enjoyed hunting and has passed on that enjoyment to her daughter Ashley, who loves to hunt 'coons and has been doing so since she was 9 or 10.

Two or three years ago, Mrs. Esslinger said, she and her daughter, now a sophomore in high school, started deer hunting together.

"We go out by ourselves and usually get a nice-sized buck," she said.

She said she likes to hunt deer, dove and raccoons. Her husband just got her started carp shooting, she said, and she is liking that. It was the first time she shot a bow and now that's getting addictive, she said. She also goes rabbit and coyote hunting every once in a while.

Even though the biggest thing she hunts now is deer, she said they are planning a trip for next year to hunt boar or elk. Eventually, she said, she wants to work her way up to hunting a bear.

Mrs. Esslinger said she started small. The first thing she ever hunted was a sparrow.

"I started out hunting sparrow with a BB gun," she said. "Eventually, I went to rabbit and squirrel and then on up from there. As I got older, I got bigger guns to hunt with."

Now, she said, her 6-year-old son is starting small, hunting sparrow with a BB gun.

Mrs. Esslinger said she enjoys hunting because she finds it a challenge.

"It's hunting," she said. "It's a sport. It's not just going out and shooting something. Anyone can go out and shoot something, but when your hunting, you have to go out and look around and see what your hunting. You have to have the right circumstances for the right animal."

"I have a lot of respect for the animals I hunt. We cook up and eat everything we kill. I love hunting. It's hard to put into words, but it's been in my blood since I was a kid. I've always been an outdoorsy person, and it lets me be active outdoors. I have a lot of respect for nature."

She said she and Ashley go out a 6 a.m. when it's freezing and sit there for four hours. You have animals come within five feet of you, she said.

"There is a lot of fun in it," she said, "a lot of enjoyment. Like I said, it's not just killing something. It can be cold and miserable, but there's always something you get out of it. Once a fawn came up to Ashley. I told her not to move and it stood about three feet from her. She said it was the best experience."

Mrs. Esslinger said when she goes deer hunt-



Tara Esslinger and her daughter Ashley held up racks from buck deer that they have hunted over the years. They have been hunting deer together for about four years. Mrs. Esslinger said she started hunting when she was in grade school and has passed her love of the sport on to her children.

ing, everything else gets put on hold. She'll take her gun to work with her and if she sees something on the way, she'll start the hunt. Once, she said, it took her about a week to track a deer she

saw on her way to work.

"I guess I get 'buck fever' at times," she said. She said hunting is a lot of work and is very involved. Sometimes you walk for hours or sit



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