

# Southern Senniti-



*Versatile Southbound Swissys*

Southbound GSMD Club - 1st Quarter 2012

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## Southbound Board:

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Val Guthrie, Secretary  
Scott Patton, Treasurer  
Directors: Faye Erickson, Stewart  
Mathis, and Molly Eichhoefer

**On the Cover :** Scooter, owned by Cilla Phillips (top left); Brig, owned by Ron and Pam Capelli (top right) and Keygan, owned by Melissa Jarriel (bottom).

## President's Message

Well, the 2011 Nationals have come and gone. Based on all the wonderful feedback and my own experience, Southbound put on a fabulous show. Pat Saxon, as show chair and overall project manager, worked day and night for many months pulling things together. I can't thank her enough for all she did. She amazed me daily with her attention to detail and tremendous desire to make sure everything went off without a hitch. Kathy Nebel was our ever present mentor and we counted on her as another set of eyes and brains on many occasions. Debbie Echols did a fantastic job selecting, purchasing and coordinating the distribution of the trophies. Mac was there every step of the way helping Debbie get the tables and trophies organized. I especially love the towels and windchimes. Molly, as treasurer, made sure we were notified of the PayPal submissions and assisted Top Twenty Coordinator, Val Guthrie, with the details of that event. Val and her helpers, Molly, Scott, Stacey, and our Junior volunteers and others put on a fabulous formal event. Southbound's own, Cilla Phillips, was one of the Top Twenty judges and made us all proud with her grace and splendid eye for a good dog. And, who knew Danny Yanusz had such a beautiful singing voice? Not only did he MC the Top Twenty Event, he kicked it off with an a cappella national anthem.

The Ways and Means and the raffles brought in much need revenue, making the show possible. Thanks goes to the Naylor's, Amy Allen, Faye Erickson, Robbie Diffey, Jan Clifford, Kim and Gary Floyd, Stacey Gwin and Paula and Spencer Botkin for their help with these and/or other chores that came up during the week.

The working events were a tremendous success and were extremely well attended. I could not have survived the week without major contributions from Southbounders Laura Bullock, Pam and Ron Capelli, Dan and Priscilla Sparks, Linda Yanusz and Faye Erickson. They all worked their backsides off either taking the lead or helping with all the details to make the draft trial, weight pulls, pack hikes, and obedience/rally trials successful. And special thanks to my husband, Brett, who drove up during the week to help with Tuesday's and Thursday's weight pull set up and take down. He also helped keep me grounded during the week.

During Futurity on Thursday, Southbound hosted one of our signature ringside breakfast buffets. Linda Patton made all the arrangements and Scott was there to make sure everything was set up by the caterer and made sure that all went well during the feast. We had many volunteers and contributions from other Swissy clubs as well and we have sent our thanks. I write this knowing I may have failed to acknowledge someone's contributions, so I'll just say "Thank You" Southbounders. Job well done!

Melissa Jarriel  
Southbound President



**Pictures of Southbound Dogs from the Yadkin Valley Jambaroo - the 2011 National Specialty**





# More from the 2011 National Specialty





## More from the 2011 National Specialty





## More from the 2011 National Specialty







## Fireside's Pick Me Out A Winner

*"Hobbs"*

Owner: Melissa Jarriel

Best Puppy in Futurity 2011 National Specialty

# Fireside Swissys

[www.firesidegsmd.weebly.com](http://www.firesidegsmd.weebly.com)

Fireside's A River Runs Through It v Sawmill

*"River"*

Owner: Laura Bullock



First Place, 9-12 mo Class 2011 National Specialty

*Thank you to Judges Kristin Kleeman and Charles Trotter for these big wins!*

# The Versatility Pathway

By Melissa Jarriel

(reprinted from 2006)

The GSMDCA offers two titles to honor Swissys that have proven their merit in multiple arenas. The Versatility Greater Swiss (VGS) title is awarded to dogs who have earned a conformation title (CH), an AKC Companion Dog (CD) title and 2 certifications from a list of specified performance events. The Working Greater Swiss (WGS) title is awarded to dogs that have completed at least an AKC Companion Dog (CD) title and three (3) other titles from a specified list of performance events.

While some may purchase a puppy with the intent of achieving one of the above distinguished awards, I suspect working toward a versatility title doesn't usually cross a Swissy-owner's mind until their dog has earned one or two of the required titles. At least, that was my situation. If I had thought about it from the outset, I might have done things differently; but looking back, the course we took turned out to be a very successful training pathway which I wouldn't hesitate to repeat.

When I was asked to write this article (in 2006), I started detailing my experience training Keygan, who is now 3 and a half years old and working toward a VGSX . [Ed. Note: A VGSX requires a VGS, a Companion Dog Excellent (CDX)

title, and two (2) higher level performance titles, such as Open Agility, Draft Dog, or Working Weight Dog Excellent]. Rather than describe historical events I decided to simply put together a list of recommendations for those who might be interested in pursuing the challenging yet rewarding task of training their dogs for multiple titles simultaneously. Another course would be to train and title in one event at a time, but as shown in Table 1 on the next page, much of the training can apply to more than one activity, allowing you to reinforce training and commands under different circumstances. If your Swissy needs variety to keep motivated, cross-training may be the most enjoyable for you both.



continued on the next page



**Table 1: Cross-Training**

Activity/Command	Conformation	Novice Obedience	Novice Drafting	Agility	Packing
Sit (on command)/Stay		X	X	X	
Sit (automatic)		X			
On Lead Heel/Control	X	X	X		X
Off Lead Heel/Control		X		X	
Down/Stay		X	X	X	
Recall		X	X	X	
Front and Finish		X			
Jumping				X	
Contact Obstacles				X	
Weave Poles				X	
Directions (Right/Left)			X	X	
Stand/Stay	X	X	X		
Harnessing			X		X
Cart Shaft Training			X		
Fast (Trot)	X	X	X		
Slow		X	X	X	
Pull			X		
Wait	X	X	X	X	
Back			X		
Endurance	X		X	X	X
Weight Conditioning	X		X		X

**Recommendation #1: Set some general age targets, but keep them flexible.**

Age matters. Some training should not begin until your dog is physically mature, like jumping and carrying weight, which shouldn't begin until the age of 18 months. On the other hand these tasks may be difficult, if not recommended for older dogs. In addition, successful completion of an obedience trial requires an attention span that may not be developed until the age of two.

This certainly doesn't mean that training can't be started until these ages, just hold off on the physical stuff until the appropriate age. In fact, obedience training should start at 12 weeks and puppies can be introduced to harnesses and light drags at an early age.

**Recommendation #2: Use different collars and leashes to emphasize the different exercises.**

Since we were training for obedience and conformation at the same time, the issue of automatic sits was a concern. Until Keygan was about 16 months old, he wasn't expected to sit at the halt unless he was given a "sit" command. But,



when we started our serious training for his CD, automatic sits were mandatory. To emphasize “no sit” in the conformation ring, Keygan is not allowed to sit when his show collar and lead is on, even outside the ring. He’s allowed to stand or lie down, but not sit. When he wears his obedience collar (choke chain), if he is given a “heel” command, he’s corrected if he doesn’t sit at the halt.

I use a flat buckle collar for agility, a prong collar for pack dog, and the obedience collar for drafting (since drafting is just another form of obedience).

**Recommendation #3: Work on both sides of your dog.**

I actually wish I started this a little earlier. Agility and drafting require the handler to work on either side. Agility courses in particular are set up to create difficulties for those who can only work with the dog on the left.

**Recommendation #4: At home demand perfection, in class expect perfection, in a trial keep your cool when you don’t get perfection.**

Some instructors encourage students to enter trials before they are ready, just for the experience. I would encourage watching trials (all levels); however, I don’t recommend participating in trials unless your dog can consistently perform all exercises accurately without distractions. I think participating in trials before training is complete tempts handlers to train just to the minimal level or what they can get away with. While this might get you the title, you won’t be able to build on your training for other or more advanced events.

On the other hand, I’ve seen handlers lose focus at trials when their dog didn’t perform as well as usual. This can lead to mishandling and actually be the cause of additional mistakes. I’ve been guilty of this in a draft trial, when I thought we disqualified but had not. When I lost focus, so did Keygan, causing us to make a disqualifying error later on the course.

**Recommendation #5: Keep it light! Your dog should be a happy worker.**

Your dog is always going to be happy and relaxed at home, so you can afford to be a little stricter with your training on home turf. But, away from home, especially in new surroundings, you may need to be more upbeat and encouraging to get the happy attitude desired in the conformation and obedience rings.

Agility scoring is objective, but judges will NQ (give a non-qualifying score to) a handler who uses foul language or appears abusive to their dogs. Obedience and drafting rules specifically describe teamwork and willingness as part of the scoring equation. And, the Swissy standard instructs conformation judges to severely penalize dogs who are timid or aggressive.

I do like obedience training and I want Keygan to be a good citizen around other people and dogs; however, I’m careful not to constantly nag him to perform obedience when he’s out in public. Train using a “release” word after commands so your dog will learn when he’s “on command” and “off command”. Think of a 3 year old boy being expected to behave like he’s in church for hours at a time; how much fun would that be?

**Recommendation #6: Seek out mentors, absorb everything, read and understand the rules.**

I was very fortunate to have a Doberman breeder take an interest in Keygan when he was 3 months old. Not only did Hank encourage us to show in conformation, he and his wife, Ginny, have been my mentors throughout Keygan’s show career. In addition, I became an assistant instructor (now instructor) at our local dog club, giving me access to more advanced obedience and agility handlers who take time to help us get ready for trials.

Listen carefully to those who want to give you advice (there are many), but be prepared to take criticism and pick and choose the advice that works for you. There are a number of different training methods, but each dog is different. Swissys can be very soft and may shut down if you use some of the harsher training methods. However, I think it would be very difficult to train a Swissy without corrections. You will be the best judge of what motivates and demotivates your dog. Supplement what you are told with reference books and most importantly, know the rules of your event.

Don’t hesitate to ask questions. In preparing for a GSMD draft trial after only having participated in BMD trials, I found the GSMD rules were vague for some exercises. Fortunately, Steve Likevich, GSMD Draft Committee Chair, tolerated all my questions, like “Does the handler have to go through the low narrows?” and “In Open, do we enter the ring on lead or off lead?”

**Recommendation #7: Keep lessons short, end on a good note, and don’t train when your patience is short.**

Pack dog training requires a tremendous amount of time in comparison to obedience, but can be confined to eight

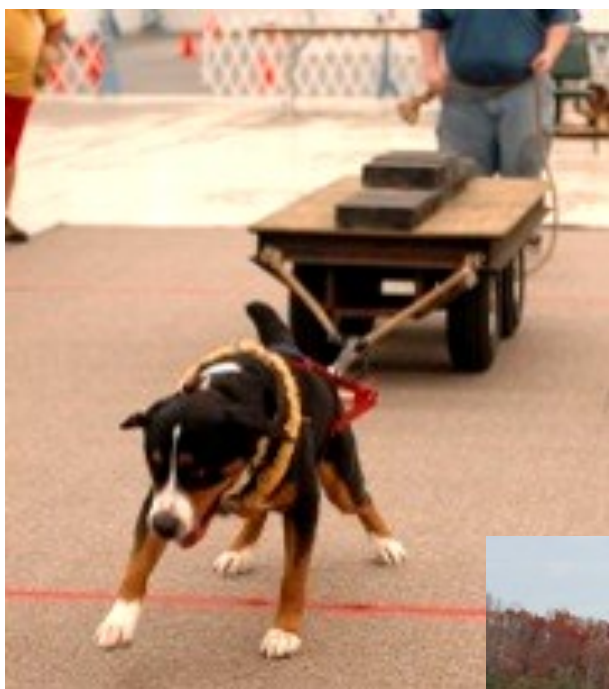


weeks before the event. Obedience, agility, and drafting require persistence and patience. Some of the complex exercises need to be broken down into multiple simple components which are taught over a series of weeks (or months). Ten to fifteen minutes each day is ideal for obedience training, but it may take 6 months to a year or longer to be prepared for a novice obedience or draft trial.

### Summary:

The above recommendations only scratch the surface of the things you will need to know to begin or continue training for the events I've listed. Keep in mind there are a number of other events in which GSMDs can excel, such as tracking, herding, weight pulls and water dog trials.

Just about anyone can train their dog to a versatility title, with a little determination, persistence and a lot of patience. I hope you are encouraged to work your dog, for fun or competition. You can greatly improve your Swissy's (and perhaps your own) mental and physical health by training and competing. The titles are wonderful and help give you a sense of accomplishment, but the real pleasure in versatility training is in developing an intense partnership with your Greater Swiss Mountain Dog.




Update: Keygan earned his VGSX in February 2008 when he completed his CDX. He is now BISS CH Rippling Waters Havelock Key CDX NAP AJP MDD BDD WPDW WWDX VGSX. Keygan is now retired, and Melissa is working with his son, Hobbs, in obedience, weight pull, conformation, and beginning agility. She hopes to complete his VGS and VGSX as well.





# Swissys Can Do It All!


By Cilla Phillips



As co-chair of the 2002 National Specialty, I was charged with drafting a letter soliciting corporate sponsorship. As I sat down to the task, I wondered how I could set us apart from the dozens of other breeds who doubtlessly ask for assistance also. How were we different? Well, we needed our own space for conformation and obedience, but surely most breeds include obedience at their nationals. Agility was available through the Cluster. Hmm, what else? Besides a welcome party and seminar there were all of those working events we were going to plan and pay for. We would need to find and design the first hike in the Southeast, bring in a course for drafting, weight pull equipment ... *SHEEP!* When I realized that in most breeds' exhibitors come, show, attend a seminar and/or clinic, banquet and leave, I began to appreciate what a truly amazing breed the Swissy is. Add to the above tracking, search and rescue, therapy work and guard of home and hearth and one can't help but be awed by the versatility of this wonderful breed.

They do it all. In fact, I can't think of another breed that can earn as many AKC or parent club awards as the Swissy. Make no mistake – most Swissys have their own personal favorite activities and may refuse others. And I've had one Maynard G. Krebb whose motto was "*What, me work?*". Her contribution was strictly limited to conformation ring beauty queen. But most Swissys love, and can excel in, a wide variety of activities. In fact, they want to work. And they prefer to work with their handler as a team. As opposed to so many other breeds that are hard-wired to work independently, Swissys are born to work beside their owners. They especially excel when allowed to work as equals, engaging in problem-solving and decision-making along with their handlers.

Training for these activities - developing and fine-tuning their innate abilities – is an indescribable experience in developing the true nature of your Swissy. Watching your dog appreciate the view from the pinnacle of a mountain he climbed; seeing him gracefully manage a loaded cart that weighs more than he down a steep hill; observing your sweet boy intuitively evaluate the state of a psychiatric patient, then interact with her so appropriately that she speaks for the first time in weeks – all bring a new level of respect and appreciation for this magnificent creature who shares your home and life. Furthermore, the level of cooperation and camaraderie such teamwork develops in your relationship takes your experience in dog-ownership to a level that has to be experienced to believe. Because of this, we, as breeders, owe our puppies and puppy-buyers no less than our best efforts in producing dogs who are healthy in body, heart and mind. And we, as owners, owe it to our dogs to help them live large and enjoy the deeper relationship with us it allows. Anything else is like trying to paint a sunset with no red, you're just not getting the whole experience.





# Featured Versatility Dogs

**"Brig"** - GCH Breezy Ridge Merlot del Ticini CDX MDD BDD WPD VGSX

**"Jura"** - CH Breezy Ridge Cremant du Jura CD MDD BDD WPD VGS

## Owned and handled by Ron and Pam Capelli

It has been interesting training litter mates Brig and Jura. Their training and work towards versatility titles has been so intertwined; for the most part, what applies to one also applies to the other.

We believe a major factor in their success was starting obedience training early, working towards a CD title before they were old enough to train and compete for performance events. Brig earned his CD when he was 18 months old, and Jura earned hers at 23 months old. This laid the foundation to do well in drafting, and to move on for advanced obedience work.

We practiced for drafting a lot, and still do, at least from November through April since the rest of the year is too hot to train outdoors in Texas. Our philosophy, which has served us well, is to "practice hard, test easy." At each practice, we start with an obedience warm-up, and then go through 3 or 4 complete mock test maneuvering courses. The "practice hard" comes into play with the difficulty of the course: 15 foot narrows only a few inches wider than the cart, tight turns with both inside and outside boundaries, and short off-set transitions between course elements that leave little room for adjustment. This makes both dogs and handlers think about how to handle tough situations, and forms a bond of trust and confidence. At a real test, the narrows and turns do not look so daunting, and problem situations can be anticipated and handled more readily: "test easy."

Working for versatility titles takes commitment and patience. It gives our Swissys opportunities to exercise their strong working instinct. It allows us to set goals to spend time and develop an even stronger bond with our dogs.



**"Grainger"** - CH Sawmill River's Grainger McKey CD RE NDD BDD WWDX VGS

## Owned and handled by Laura Bullock



When I got Grainger, I wanted a dog that could do everything Swissys were bred to do. With encouragement from my mentors, I started working toward a VGS with him. While working towards his championship, we also started working on team work through rally, which does not count toward a versatility title but helped lay the groundwork for formal obedience down the road. As a young, intact male, he was easily distracted, so rally was a good start for both of us. He took to weight pull like a duck in water, and quickly achieved his WWD title in his first four pulls on a cart. He finished his championship at just over two years old, and completed his CD the following year. With help from Melissa Jarriel, Grainger completed his NDD and NBDD (with his father) at Swissypalooza while I was waiting for puppies. He's a joy to train, and he loves to work for me, as long as I keep my nerves under control—or he will do whatever he can to make me laugh.



# More Featured Versatility Dogs

***“Lucy”*** - CH Suddanly HalfMoon I Love Lucy RN CD WPD NDD VGS

**Owned and handled by Molly Eichhoefer**

Chaaampion Luuuucy Luuu...Rally Dog! CD Dog! Pack Dog! And now Drafting Dog and Versatility Dog!

From the conformation ring, where she never put a foot down out of place, to the drafting ring; Lucy's accomplishments are a statement of her natural ability and temperament. She caught my eye as a 5 week old puppy, because she was the bravest of the litter. I didn't really want a puppy then, but Lucy made me love her. Her Rally and CD titles were earned quickly with three green ribbons in three appearances respectively. Lucy has packed and pulled a cart pretty much all of her adult life but had to wait to finish her career as a mom to start competition. Lucy's greatest contribution to the breed is passing on her sweet and gentle temperament.

The titles are nice, because they tell everyone what I already know; Lucy is the best Greater Swiss Mountain Dog in the World (named Lucy).



***“Scooter”***

CH Bermuda High's Shelly Bay Park CD DD NWPD ROM VGS



***“Lola”***

CH BermudaHi Shiver Me Timbers CD MDD BDD NWPD ROM VGS

**Both owned and handled by Cilla Phillips**



# More Featured Versatility Dogs

**"Keygan"** - BISS CH Rippling Waters Havelock Key  
CDX NAP AJP MDD BDD WPDW WWDW VGSX

**Owned and handled by Melissa Jarriel**

"Keygan" earned his VGS at the age of 2 and his VGSX at the age of 5. In addition to these designations, he has earned a total of 16 performance titles, his championship and a Best in Specialty Show. When I first started his training, I was not aware of the versatility designations and was simply interested in doing some obedience and carting with him. I was talked into showing him by a Doberman breeder and agility was a past time we both enjoyed as part of our local training club's list of offerings. Keygan was a natural in every endeavor and so very easy to train, but as with most Swissy boys, easily distracted. While training came easy, off lead obedience and drafting was a challenge, so with his son ("Hobbs", another VGS hopeful) distraction training is much more a part of our routine. I can truthfully say that while the titles are a nice goal, the journey and bond with your dog is priceless. Retiring a dog you have built that relationship with is extremely painful, but starting a young dog with all the experience and knowledge you've gained is so much fun. An agility friend once told me, "running your trained dog is like wearing your old comfy sweats, and running your novice dog is like having a wedgy". I'm fortunate that while not able to jump or do hard work, Keygan at 9 1/2 is sound and still able to pull a cart and hike and be a great mentor to his son. He may be retired from competition, but he'll forever be a working dog.



## *Introducing Southbound's Newest Versatility Dog...*

**"Yuri"** - CH Bermuda High's Catch A Wave CD DD BDD NWPD VGS



**Owned and handled by Cilla Phillips**

In Loving  
Memory of

Molly

2005-2012



Whispering Palms Karmel  
Delite CGC

Owned and Loved by Dan and Priscilla Sparks



# Southbound GSMD Club

## *Make Plans Now to Attend!*



Southbound Cotton Classic  
Sunday, April 15th  
Perry, GA - GA International Fairgrounds



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Three All-Breed Shows, Three Obedience Trials, Herding Instinct Testing, Fun Day (Saturday) and the Cotton Classic (Sunday)

.....

Specialty and Junior Showmanship Judge: Dr. William Newman  
Sweepstakes Judge: Mrs. Brenda Naylor

## **Fee Schedule for the Electronic Newsletter**

Full Page: \$30

Half Page: \$20

Memorials: no charge

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