

Southern SENNtiments



2009 Cotton Classic Winner: "Spot"
Owned by Debbie Echols and Mac McFadden
Handled by Wendi Cowell

**The 2009 Cotton Classic Is in
the Books...**

SouthBound GSMD Club - March/April 2009

What's Inside...

President's Message	2
Membership Renewal Form	3
Cotton Classic Winners	4
Pictures from Perry	5
Focus on Health	6-11
Old Dogs and Watermelon Wine	14
Welcome New Members	19
Need a Quick Correction?	20



The Southbound Board

Back Row (L to R): Cilla Phillips, Secretary; Molly Eichhoefer, President; Glenda Parks, Director; Leigh Poole, Director; Faye Erickson, Director

Front Row (L to R): Val Guthrie, Vice President; Scott Patton, Treasurer

President's Message

Thank you! Thank you! Thank you! The Southbound Cotton Classic Specialty was an overwhelming success. On top of three days of all breed shows and the Cotton Classic on Sunday, there was the annual pack dog hike at the Ocmulgee National Monument in Macon, Georgia and Fun Day at the Georgia National Fairgrounds and Agricenter in Perry.

Special congrats to two very special Southbound veterans! Veterans always have a place in our hearts. Having two Southbound veterans stealing the show is unbelievable.

Trout Creek's Grail Damsel WPDx, commonly known as Flurry. Flurry is the second bitch and only the eleventh Greater Swiss to earn the Working Pack Dog Excellent title. At 8 years 11 months, Flurry lives what we all wish for our dogs: healthy and happy into old age. Flurry's pack dog career started at the Macon hike and it was completed at the Macon hike this year. Congrats to Scott and Linda Patton!

BIS BISS CH Red Fern's Beau Derby CD RE WPDx NDD VGS or "Spot." Spot made Cotton Classic history by winning the specialty show on Sunday for the third time. His first win was as an 18-month-old puppy. Three years later, he won again and finally he became the first veteran to take the top honor. Congrats to Debbie Echols and Mac McFadden on Spot's very special win.

Now on to the future...the Board has revamped the structure of the Cotton Classic committee. For the last six or so years, the Cotton Classic Show Chair was responsible for all the activities at Perry.

At Perry, we separated the Show responsibilities from those of the Fun Day. Faye Erickson will continue as the Show Chair for one more year. If you're interested in learning the finer points of being a show chair, please volunteer to serve as Faye's Vice Chair this year. Leigh Poole was appointed to chair the Fun Day committee. If you have ideas or just want to help with our annual gathering, please contact Leigh.

Most exciting and most immediate was the approval of the first annual Southbound Swissypalooza. Cilla Phillips, Linda Yanusz and Melissa Jarriel are organizing five days of working events (including pack hikes, weight pulls, drafting trials, and several clinics) and plenty of Southbound hospitality. This is an incredible investment in time and we need all Southbounders to support the Swissypalooza, which will be in Pickens, SC from November 5-9, 2009.

Stay tuned, we got a lot more coming your way....

—Molly E.



SOUTHBOUND

GREATER SWISS MOUNTAIN DOG CLUB, INC.

APPLICATION FOR RENEWAL 2009

NAME(S) _____

ADDRESS _____

TELEPHONE _____ E-MAIL ADDRESS _____

LIST ANY NEW DOGS YOU HAVE GOTTEN IN THE LAST YEAR:

LIST REGISTERED NAME, CALL NAME, REGISTRATION #, BREEDER NAME AND DOB OF YOUR GSMDs (use back of page if necessary) .

I (We) agree to abide by the Constitution and Bylaws of this Club and the rules of the American Kennel Club.

Signature and Date

Signature and Date

Yearly Membership Fees are \$30 for Family Membership, \$20 per Individual Member, and \$15 for a Junior Membership (under 18; children no charge with Family Membership).

****Those who wish to learn more about the GSMD or are on a waiting list for a puppy may join as an Associate Member at a cost of \$20. Associate Members are NOT able to vote or hold office in the Southbound GSMD Club.****

Please send a check payable to the Southbound GSMD Club, Inc. along with this application to the Membership Chairman, Glenda Parks, 3613 Sessions Drive, Baton Rouge, LA 70816.

Please let us know what events and support you would like Southbound to provide to you and your Swissy(s). Also, add any additional information you'd like to share about yourself and/or your dogs. Remember, this is YOUR club--let us know what you'd like to do to help it be a great club!

_____ **I would like to help with the GSMD NATIONAL DOG SHOW (2011)**

_____ **I would like information about SWISSYPALOOZA in Nov 2009**

- _____ RUN FOR BOARD MEMBER OR OFFICER (ELECTIONS 2011)
- _____ PERRY COTTON CLASSIC (APRIL) FUN DAY (2010)
- _____ NEWSLETTER
- _____ DRAFTING SEMINAR/TRIALS
- _____ HERDING SEMINAR/TRIALS
- _____ RALLY OR OBEDIENCE SEMINAR/TRIALS
- _____ ANNUAL STATE AREA FUN DAY PICNICS

Write in your suggestions for activities you would be willing to work on, coordinate, or make a suggestion.

Congratulations to the Winners of the 2009 Southbound Cotton Classic!

Sweepstakes:

Best in Sweeps: Painted Mtn Seneca's Overboard; Janelle Kaiser and Lisa Simonsen

Best Opposite Sex in Sweeps: Matterhorn's Hyperion; Heidi and Mike Bontatibus

Best Veteran in Sweeps: CH Blue Mist Mad Love; Judy Grindstaff

Regular Classes:

Winners Dog: Matterhorn's Cronus Heart Oglenamaddy; Kevin and Kerrigan and Laurie Carmody

Reserve Winners Dog: Matterhorn's Hyperion; Heidi and Mike Bontatibus

Winners Bitch/Best of Winners: Shadetree's Eve of Twin Shadows; Lorie and Melvin Shrock and Catherine Cooper

Reserve Winners Bitch: Derby's Xotic Daisy O'Spot; Alan McFadden and Debra Echols. Agent: Wendi Cowell

Best of Breed: CH Red Fern's Beau Derby; Alan McFadden and Debra Echols. Agent: Wendi Cowell

Best of Opposite Sex: CH Brendamine's Piper V Red Fern; Eddie Keith and Brenda Naylor. Agent: Rhanda Glenn

Award of Merit: CH Alpenglow Remember the Riot; Kristin Krumpe, Kathy Spencer, and Lori Price

Award of Merit: Korona Rossii Yaroslav; Laurie Carmody

Other Classes:

Stud Dog: CH Suma Shadetree Your Hired; MaryBeth Usery, Catherine Cooper, Tiffany Gonzales

Brood Bitch: Shadetree's Geveden Gold Medal; Molly, Lacey, and Kelsey McNally

Brace Dog: Matterhorn's Mnemosyne and CH Whispering Palm's Heaven Can Wait; Laurie Carmody

Another Great Year in Perry...



Many thanks to Darlene Ward for most of the pictures in this issue. She is quickly becoming the Southbound photographer...whether she likes it or not! —Ed.

Focus n Health

Before getting my first Swissy, like many owners, I did a great deal of research on the breed and found out about health concerns that could impact our beautiful, bold, vigilant family members. To an inexperienced dog person, the list of potential health issues may seem extensive and may even deter some potential puppy buyers. While we do have some health issues that are common with large breeds, such as hip dysplasia and bloat, there are only a few health concerns that are specific for our Swissys.

The following articles were written by Southbound members who have had experiences with their own dogs with a few specific health issues. These are their own experiences and should not replace, but rather supplement, any discussions with your vet and/or breeder about these issues.

I sincerely hope that you never have to refer to these articles for your own dogs. Thank you to all the writers for sharing their stories and experiences.

—Laura Bullock, Newsletter Editor

Revisiting that Darn Spleen

By Kathy Nebel

In 2004, after experiencing both enlarged spleens and splenic torsion in my Swissys I wrote an article to help raise awareness of this somewhat common Swissy ailment. Five years down the road it is still a problem, and I was asked to provide an update.

All Swissy owners need to be aware of the potential for splenic torsion. Talk with your vet now before your dog has a problem. If your dog does present with a spleen issue, your vet may not think, “It’s the spleen!” as it isn’t a problem vets typical see. The GSMDCA has a great new webpage that can add validity to your discussion. Go to gsmdca.org and follow the link to Breed Information and then Health. The site also lists contact information for a vet who is willing to talk with other vets about splenic torsion.

There are not classic symptoms for splenic torsion; the signs are varied. The dog may exhibit pale gums, vomiting, tenderness on the left side, drooling, going into shock, or may just present ADR (Ain’t Doing Right) and you know by the look in his eyes that something is really wrong.

We’ve had two experiences with splenic torsion. In both instances I had to convince the vet that it was the spleen. In the first, Jeff took Yankee to the emergency clinic when he presented ADR on a Sunday evening. The vet on duty was somewhat new to practice and decided it best to stabilize the dog until the surgeon arrived in the morning. The surgeon wanted to test for cancer and other potential causes for Yankee’s distress until I convinced him to open the dog up. He found five twists in the spleen. (We had already experienced a liver torsion with Yankee, so I was insistent that the vet just open the dog up.)

In the second case, Fergie collapsed one morning in shock. She elicited pain when I pressed her lower left abdomen, and I just knew it was her spleen. We took her to our regular vet as soon as the doors opened. X-rays didn’t indicate a spleen problem and my vet – even though she was familiar with Swissy spleens and their pitfalls – thought, based on tests, that she was dealing with a uterine infection. When she opened Fergie up, however, she found a twisted spleen. In retrospect, Fergie had shown intermittent signs of spleen problems. About every six months she would vomit undigested food. It would happen a couple times after meals and then stop just before I was considering a trip to the vet. She has not vomited one time since her spleen has been removed. We suspect now that the vomiting was caused by the spleen folding and was “cured” when the spleen unfolded.

Enlarged spleens are also a problem. During a routine annual exam our vet found that Toby’s spleen was enlarged. I had actually thought the then 8-year old dog was losing some muscle tone in his abdomen causing his stomach to droop a little. But our vet pointed out how you could see and feel Toby’s spleen bulging on the left side of the abdomen (low behind the rib cage where you would look for the stomach) and trace it under his belly. The tail of the spleen was on the right side of the abdomen. Rather than wait for it to twist, I scheduled Toby for a splenectomy. I’ve since discovered that others have noticed a “pot belly” look to their Swissys prior to a splenic torsion, so I’m glad I made the decision to operate while Toby was healthy and showing no signs of distress.

When Lizzie was spayed, her spleen was enlarged, so we had it

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removed. Lizzie had gotten quieter and, we thought, more mature after having a litter. Once the enlarged spleen was removed she was her silly, goofy self again. Others have reported this same energy renewal after a splenectomy. When we neutered Victor we also had him tacked since he was prone to bloat and his spleen was larger than the vet would have expected in a dog his size, so we had it removed, too.

One thing our vet has noticed, other than the unusual spleen size, is that the spleens are not connected to the stomach in the normal fashion. Instead of blood vessels attached all along the curvature of the stomach, the spleen is connected at a central point, allowing it to swing free. You can see her full comments on the splenic torsion page at gsmdca.org by clicking on the AKC Gazette article by Cathy Cooper.

Of eight Swissys we have owned over 13 years, we've had two splenic torsions and three enlarged spleens. Only three of these dogs are closely related. I had Quinn's spleen removed when she was spayed, so that leaves just Andy and Harpo with spleens. All the dogs recovered from the splenectomies without issues and none suffered any problems from living without spleens. The two that have crossed the bridge lived until 11 and my "old spleenless girls" will be nine and 10 this year.

Spleens ARE a problem. In addition to our own problems with spleens, I know many, many other Swissy owners who have experienced spleen issues. Tell your vet about the potential for splenic torsion in Swissys. Direct your vet to the GSMDCA website. Ask your vet to become familiar, through feel, with your dog's spleen so that she can routinely check if the spleen is enlarged. Having an awareness of splenic torsion can save your dog's life.

GSMDCA page:

<http://www.gsmdca.org/BreedInformation/Health/SplenicTorsion.html>

Turmeric and Mast Cell Cancer

By Glenda Parks

When the Fabulous Bonnie Doon was diagnosed with mast cell cancer eight years ago, it was a terrifying ordeal. Just three years earlier I had lost Pepsi to mast cell cancer that had spread throughout her body so quickly. We tried radiation on Pepsi in combination with some chemo drugs, but it was already in her bone marrow and numerous organs. Bonnie's mast cell cancer was localized in one lump. The vet excised the lump and took a large margin of tissue, pulling the skin together forming a cute pleat. Even after four years you can still feel the pleated skin ripple.

Our breeder, Peggy Roderick sent me a correspondence from a French Bulldog owner talking about giving turmeric to her dog after she was diagnosed with mast cell tumors. Research turned up some very interesting information. I decided to start Bonnie Doon on a daily dose of turmeric. After eight years, Bonnie Doon is mast cell free, and I am holding my breath that her annual check up next week will say the same, as Pepsi's mast cell returned after only four months and spread rapidly.

Mast cells are part of the immunologic defense system in the body that fight parasites as opposed to viral or bacterial invaders. They account for about 205 of the cells in a dog's skin. Mast cells are part of the allergic response because they release histamines. Treatment often includes anti-histamines such the csorticosteriod Prednisone. Since humans do not get mast cell tumors, there has been limited medical studies done.

When mast cells form a tumor it appears on the skin as a lump just under the surface. But it can also look like a hot spot. Aspirating the lump with a needle biopsy and examining it under a

microscope is the next step. When the tumor is excised, a lab grades it in the same way other cancers are graded. Grade I is the lowest level and easiest to treat because it is contained within the tumor only. Grade II tumors can be unpredictable. It is felt that 80% of Grade II tumors can be treated with radiation therapy. Grade III is the worst type. Grade III tumors account for 25% of mast cell tumors and behave aggressively. Survival is limited at this point. However there have been some studies showing that aggressive radiation has increased survival in a significant number of dogs.

Human prostate cancer is similar in scope to Canine Mast Cell Cancer. In recent years there have been studies done showing that curcumin, a substance in turmeric, has slowed the growth of prostate cancer cells (Molecular Vision 2003; 9:223-230). It is believed by many that turmeric is a tumor-suppressing agent where the tumor is hormone producing. In addition, turmeric is not toxic to the body as chemodrugs are. There has also been research showing that curcumin is a tumor suppressing agent in human breast cancer studies (Anticancer Drugs. 1997 Jun;8 (5):470-81).

Turmeric is a member of the ginger family found growing wild in the Himalayas and Southern Asia. Most well known as an Asian spice with a peppery flavor (although not hot tasting) turmeric is used in curries and teas. Turmeric is also used as a dye since it is bright yellow orange (it stains white dog hair nicely!). Ayurvedic doctors have long used turmeric as a medicine to treat stomach disorders, sore throats, skin irritations, (<http://psa-rising.com/eatingwell/turmeric.htm>), an anti-inflammatory for joint inflammation and as an antiseptic for cuts and burns.

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(<http://news.bbc.co.uk/2/hi/health/6090460.stm>) Turmeric contains antibacterial agents. The US National Institutes of Health has four trials underway to study curcumin for pancreatic cancer, Alzheimer's and colorectal cancers. Yale University has completed a study and shown that curcumin has anti-tumoral effects against melanoma cells.

Any lumps or ulcerative areas on the dog's skin should be aspirated and checked for mast cells. Early diagnosis is the best way to deal with the problem. Mast cell tumors are typically fast growing, so anything that changes in size should be aspirated immediately. Surgery is the first option, followed by radiation, and then chemotherapy. Although chemodrugs are not as effective against mast cell as radiation, it is still an option to discuss with your vet.

Bonnie Doon gets two 450 mg capsules of Turmeric daily in her night food. She sometimes breaks the capsules open and spits them out, so I add some cut green beans in her food to confuse her. So far it has worked. Turmeric does stain the white parts of a dog as well as white tennis socks. And nothing will get it out of your socks or shirts, so be careful not to get it on your clothes. I have also had orange fingers from opening up capsules. Now I just toss the capsules in her food with a couple of the green beans.

For eight years now we have been mast cell cancer free. But with each needle aspiration, my heart is in my throat. I remember the pain of losing Pepsi. Bonnie has her annual check up next week, and we have some lumps to look at once again. I will continue to hold my breath...and my dog.

Anyone wishing to contact The Fabulous Bonnie Doon and me about our experiences with mast cell cancer or turmeric just email us at obed101@cox.net.



Above: Dutch, another one of Glenda's Swissys, had a mast cell tumor taken off his ear. This picture was taken after the surgery.

Dash's Story: Exocrine Pancreatic Insufficiency (EPI)

By Linda Yanusz

When Dash was almost 14 months old in mid-August of 2007, he started producing stools that were the color of darkish yellow mustard, the consistency of mashed potatoes, and the volume of everything he ate in his previous meal. It looked like everything that went in, came out. Having gone through occasional bouts of diarrhea with Kaiser and Kasey, I tried "fixing" this myself. I made him rice with cut-up chicken breast mixed in for a few days, I gave him an over-the-counter diarrhea medication, I gave him some leftover prescription diarrhea medication (Kasey's), I made him more chicken and rice. I also noticed that even though he was still eating normally, he was losing weight and was lethargic, but attributed that to his diarrhea and just not feeling well. After about a week and a half of doing this and not seeing any improvement, I finally took him to our vet. He strongly suspected what it was, but he needed to do a specific fasting blood test (TLI) that was sent to Texas A&M University for testing. While waiting several days for the results, Dash got thinner and more lethargic.

Right after Labor Day weekend, in early September, we got the results. The vet's suspicions were correct – he had Exocrine Pancreatic Insufficiency. (This is not pancreatitis, which is an inflammation of the pancreas.) His TLI score was less than 1, and in healthy dogs it is between 5 and 35. He told me the symptoms I had described were classic for this condition, and he had treated German Shepherds with it that were skin and bones by the time they came to see him. We were lucky to have caught it this early and I felt lucky to have a vet that had some experience with it. He explained that the pancreas basically has two functions – one is to produce insulin and hormones, and the other is to produce digestive enzymes so nutrition can be obtained from food. Dash's pancreas wasn't producing the digestive enzymes, so since he wasn't getting the nutrition from the food, he was literally starving. That's why it appeared that "everything that went in, came out." The stomach churned up the food and it passed through the intestines just as it went in. Nothing was being absorbed into his body for him to survive. Dash also started eating his stools at this point, which is also a symptom.

There was medicine for this, however, my vet told me. It's called Pancrezyme, and it's powdered enzymes made from pig pancreas that you just sprinkle on his food (we didn't need to change his food, he said, what we were feeding was fine). He explained that they do the job of the enzymes he is lacking. I was so happy to hear there was medicine and everything was going to be OK. Or so I naively thought.

He said he did not have this medicine in stock, but could have it the next day. I picked it up and followed the instructions on the bottle, which were to sprinkle about a teaspoon on a cup of moistened kibble, mix well, and let it sit for 15-20 minutes. I gave it

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to Dash, knowing now that this would save his life. This would make everything better! He smelled it but would not eat it. I went to the store and got some canned food, and next time mixed in some of that with the moistened kibble, putting enzymes on all for 20 minutes. He still would not eat. At this point he was very thin – he had gone from 110 lbs. down to 88 lbs. in a matter of a few weeks. I sat on the kitchen floor, he came and sat next to me, and I started to cry and pray. Dash started kissing me, and I told him that he needed to eat this food or he would die. About 15 minutes later, I gave him the food again, and he started eating. I know it sounds really corny and dramatic, but that's exactly what happened.

Now it was time to do my homework and find out more about this disease. I learned that EPI:

- Can also be found in humans with cystic fibrosis.
- Can cause structural changes in the tissue lining the small intestine that also impairs the absorption of nutrients and this is called Small Intestinal Bacterial Overgrowth, or SIBO.
- Is now suspected to be caused by genetic or environmental factors. It is common in German Shepherds, but is now showing up in many other breeds. It was originally thought to be caused by an autosomal recessive gene, but that thinking has changed, after research.
- Has no cure but is manageable with enzymes and proper diet.
- Texas A&M and Clemson University are working on identifying the genetic markers.
- Dogs affected should eat a low-fiber (less than 4%), grain-free, low-fat (less than 12%) food. A pet vitamin should be added. Three meals a day are preferable.
- Can be treated with raw pig pancreas (I could not find any, and called pork processing plants and butchers, both commercial and regular, all over NC), but learned it's a lot of trouble to process, you have to make sure it's free of diseases, etc., and it smells really bad, so it's not used by many EPI owners, even though it's cheaper.
- Folate (B-12 levels) should be checked frequently if dog has no energy.
- Dogs, since they do not feel well, may display lethargy/shyness/fear/timidness/nervousness since they are in "survival" mode.
- Can cause intermittent watery diarrhea, vomiting, and dry, dandruffy coat.
- Dogs may develop diabetes in the future.
- Dogs can live a happy and relatively normal life if diet and enzymes are fine-tuned.
- Enzymes are available in tablets, but the powder works better.
- Causes the pancreas to become shriveled and useless.
- Can develop at any age but usually shows up before age 4.

There were still some issues after he started eating his food with the enzymes. He started bleeding from his mouth. (I called the vet and asked if it could be from the enzymes and he said no.) Another issue was the cost of the enzymes – 12 oz, which lasted

about 21 days, was \$125 (from my vet). Another was finding the proper food that was affordable. I had many more questions (too many to go into here), and no one to ask.

I did know that this disease was prevalent in German Shepherds, so I emailed an acquaintance that had a GSD and asked her for help. She put it out on her Shepherd Yahoo Group List and immediately got a lifeline for me. There was an EPI Global Yahoo Group – YAY!! - and I couldn't join it fast enough! This condition was in dogs all over the world! I found out from them that yes, the enzymes DO cause mouth bleeding if they are not sitting long enough. I needed to increase the time to 25-30 minutes and wipe his mouth after he ate or squirt it with a water bottle if he didn't drink water right away. They put me in touch with the Yahoo Group for enzymes, where I could order a kilo (2.2 lbs) for \$128, which lasts me about 70 days.

I did my homework on finding the right food for him, after finding out what those with EPI experience were feeding. Also, they told me that grinding the kibble in a food processor helped since he can only get nutrition from the food if the enzymes are on it. Grinding distributes the enzymes more evenly and he absorbs more nutrients. Hot water will kill the enzymes, so use warm for mixing. If he gets SIBO, a common occurrence for EPI dogs, a 30-day treatment of Flagyl (metronidazole) is needed – the usual 10 days will not work. Training using treats as motivation is difficult since anything he eats without the enzymes gives him diarrhea, so I try to train right after meals while he still has enzymes in his system. I am constantly watching him poop, and even sometimes follow him at night with a flashlight if I suspect he's not feeling well, since it is very important to catch any issues as soon as possible.

We seemed to have everything under control for the last year and a half. He now LOVES his food with the enzymes and always eats. He quickly gained all his weight back and is now maintaining between 112 and 117 lbs. He was playful and happy and seemed to be getting over his fears. After being diagnosed, he got his Novice Working Pack Dog title and his Working Pack Dog title. We travel with him and put his measured ground food in sandwich bags with the enzymes already in, dump it in his food bowl, then just add water, mix it well, and let it sit for 25 minutes. If we were on the road, room-temperature water was fine. We'd get his food ready, go eat, and then feed him when we got back to the car.

However, a few weeks ago, Dash seemed to have his first bout of SIBO. He had watery diarrhea, started vomiting, wouldn't eat, was lethargic, and fearful again. We initially thought he had a blockage since he had been working on a pig skin chewy bone the night before and I saw part of it "come out," but not all. He had x-rays and a barium test done, but he wound up having, according to my vet, "large loopy intestines" – but no blockage. He is on Flagyl (Metro) and my vet gave me 120 pills (after I explained that EPI dogs needed a 30-day supply) so I could have some on hand for next time. As of today (early May), he is still having symptoms, but it's only been about 15 days – we have 15 more to go before I get concerned.

I contacted the GSMDCA health committee several months

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ago and asked if any other Swissys reported having this disease. They said no, just pancreatitis was reported. They asked if I would write an article about it for the SENN, to help others, but after considering it, I said no. I just wasn't ready to talk about it publicly yet, although those that attended the 2007 NC Swissy Picnic knew since I had Dash with me and I told them what happened during our "health discussion." And just last week I was made aware of another Swissy that has this condition, told his owner about the two support groups that she needed to join, and told her I was there for her if she needed me and had any questions. We've exchanged phone numbers and I hope to talk with her this weekend. I decided then it was time for me to at least write something for Southbound.

I wanted Dash, a blue Swissy, from the first day I saw him. He was promised to someone else, but that buyer fell through. I'm so glad it did. I believe things happen for a reason, and I just keep thinking that the original buyer, who just wasn't sure he wanted a blue Swissy, may have let him starve to death. In the past, before they came up with the enzymes for the food, there was no treatment and dogs just wound up dying. Also, not every vet has treated EPI, recognizes the symptoms, or realizes that breeds other than German Shepherds can have it. It could take several months for a dog to be diagnosed, or it may be diagnosed incorrectly and then wind up dying a painful death from starvation. Finally, many dogs are surrendered or euthanized because their own-

ers are too frustrated dealing with all their issues or the expense of the enzymes.

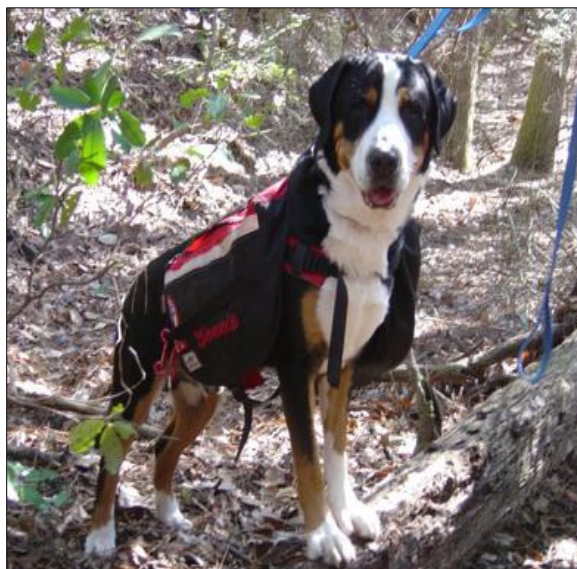
I feel very blessed to have such a special boy – he is worth all the "extra attention" he needs, and I hope to have him for many, many years, doing all the activities that other Swissys do.



Rippling Waters Bonnie Doon,
CGC, HIT, NWPD
Celebrates her 10th year and is still going strong!



CH Timberline Double Dutch,
CGC, NWPD
Just turned Veteran and still has what it takes!



Owned and Loved by: Glenda Parks, Baton Rouge, LA

Personal Health Records Go to the Dogs

By Melissa H. Jarriel, RHIA, CHP, CTR

While dog ownership, training and competing have become a passion of mine in recent years, my profession as a health information manager (HIM) consumes most of my time and, of course, funds my dog-related activities. In 1982, I graduated from the Medical College of Georgia (MCG) with a BS in Medical Record Administration and after a stint as Assistant Director of Medical Records at two hospitals in the Atlanta Area, moved to Opelika, AL and began the pathway to e-health record expertise in my HIM Director's role there. Our two daughters were born in Opelika and that is where Brett, Katie, Beth, and I expanded our animal family from one Lab to two and added a horse and a cat.

In 1994, we moved back to our hometown of Aiken, SC for my current position at MCG. Since then we lost our two labs to complications of old age, brought our Swissy, Keygan, into the family and added another cat and horse to our menagerie. I should mention that my first career choice was to be a veterinarian, but marrying my high school sweetheart became a higher priority at the time so I switched from Pre-Vet to a 4 year degree to hasten our getting hitched. I've always wondered how things would be if I had stayed on my original career tract, but I have no regrets and am fortunate to be able to be involved with animals in a different way.

My increasing understanding of health issues and breeding practices in Swissys along with the national trend toward electronic personal health records (e-PHR) has inspired me to expand my role as a Community PHR Educator for the American Health Information Management Association (AHIMA) into the dog world. The AHIMA provides free templates for personal health records and encourages individuals to utilize them and become partners in their own healthcare. I've altered the template to be canine specific and included sections on dog and breeder identification, canine-specific immunizations and history, breeding records and health clearances in hopes it will be useful to you in maintaining detailed accurate records on your pets and reinforce your partnership with your veterinarian. I encourage you to download* the WORD template and maintain it on a flash drive hooked to your keychain for portability. You may want to determine whether your veterinarian can retrieve e-mailed or flash drive stored WORD files and be sure to make these available as needed to assist your dog's vet.

Since this is a first attempt to create a comprehensive e-PHR for dogs, I am certain there are additional fields that would make it more complete and format changes that might make it easier to use. I would appreciate feedback and suggestions for improvement.

Happy e-charting....



Melissa, pictured with "Keygan." Melissa is the Director of Health Information Management Services at the Medical College of Georgia Health System

***The most current template is available in the files section of the Southbound Yahoo site under the name of Canine Health Record Template.doc.**



Congratulations to New Champion and AOM Winner!

"Bubba"

Bred, owned, and loved by Judy and Steve Fletcher



CH Sawmill's River Key Bubba

*Your adoring fans,
Papa Keygan and Brother Grainger*

Versatility Greater Swiss!



Congratulations Kaiser!

CH Bermuda High's Bottle of Rum

CGC, CD, WPDx, NDD

VGS

Owned & loved by Danny & Linda Yanusz

Old Dogs and Watermelon Wine

By Glenda Parks (over 50) and Bonnie Doon (over 10)
Baton Rouge, LA

“Old Dogs and Watermelon Wine”...

That was a song by Tom T. Hall I used to listen to. I never really gave it a thought that I would have an old dog. Or be old myself for that matter. With creaky joints, bulging waistlines and forgetful moments, Bonnie Doon and I both feel old.

In Japan, dogs outnumber children under 10. In 2008 there are 13.1 million dogs in the country and they are getting older. In order to make the Japanese dogs feel young again, there are over 20 canine oxygen bars in Tokyo alone. Owners say it offers a pick me up for the canine oldster.

While I haven't noticed that trend here yet, I have noticed the proliferation of supplements, beds and accessories for older dogs on the internet resulting in megabucks being spent on our canine friends as they age.

In *Neurobiology of Aging*, a study was set up looking at the effects of diet and environment on aging using 48 beagles, aged 7-11, divided into 4 groups. Beagles have all the fun. One group was fed a regular diet with standard care; the second group received standard care but was fed a food rich in antioxidants and nutrients; the third group was fed a regular diet, but the dog's environment was enriched (i.e., regular exercise, socialization with other dogs and access to exciting toys); and the fourth group received both a food rich in antioxidants and nutrients and the enriched environment. Take a guess at the results. Yep, Group 4 excelled on cognitive tests as their mental functioning was higher than all the other groups.

Doggy Alzheimer, called Canine Cognitive Dysfunction, affects some dogs as they age just as it does humans. There are four main categories of presenting signs for this condition: disorientation, changes in social and environmental interaction, changes in sleep/wake cycle and breakdown in housetraining. Any of these symptoms can indicate other diseases and dysfunctions so an owner needs

to consult their vet if they suspect their dog may be having this problem. Providing a diet as in the Beagle Study, rich in antioxidants and a stimulating environment and play in addition to medication helps the geriatric dog maintain his youthful brain power.



Above: Veteran Lizzy (owned by Kathy Nebel) is happy to experience Fun Day from her spot in the car.

Feeding the right amount of food makes a big difference in the ability of the older dog to maintain movement necessary to good brain health. A 1991 Purina study found that dogs 8 to 10 years of age require daily energy intakes of about 80 percent of 1-year-old dogs. In the words of Dr. Avi Deshmukh, a food regulator at Ralston Purina “Feed the dog, not the bowl.” As compassionate owners we may offer table food or give additional food as “comfort” bites (really) for ourselves. Our dogs are more than happy to gulp those extra bits down. But....don't over feed your dog, fat dogs live shorter, less healthy lives.

Continued on the next page

Susan Thorpe-Vargas, Ph.D. and John C. Cargill, M.A., M.B.A., M.S feel that the healthy geriatric dog requires about 50 percent more protein than the young adult, in general, protein should make up 20 percent to 30 percent of the total calories ingested. Protein restriction can result in impaired wound healing, diminished immune function and lowered enzyme activities and cellular turnover. More and more studies show increased protein does not result in renal failure in healthy dogs. For cognitive function, supplementing with ginkgo biloba may be useful because it increases the blood circulation to the brain. (I take ginkgo myself, didn't know it was good for the doglets too!)

How old is old? According to Dogstar.com most people think that dogs age 7 years for each calendar year. But that is not really true. Dogs age more rapidly during their first 2 years. After the first 2 years the ratio settles down to 5 to 1 for small and medium breeds. For large breeds the rate is 6 to 1, and for giant breeds the rate is 7 to 1. Thus, at 10 years of age a Great Dane would be 80 years old while a pug would only be 64. Try this dog age calculator, and see how old you are in dog years. That makes me 7.14 years old.....nope, doesn't feel any different:

<http://www.pedigree.com/02All%20Things%20Dog/Dog%20Age%20Calculator/Default.aspx>

Bottom line, the same things that make us feel better as we age makes our best friends feel better too. Proper food and nutrition, not too much food, food that is high in antioxidants and good protein, exciting and stimulating play, lots of toys, good friends, and a trip to Perry every year keeps us in shape and ready to calculate our age in double digits! And pass some of that watermelon wine this way.....

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Wow, two years and twenty pack dog legs later my big goofy boy earns his WPDX title. Only the 10th Greater Swiss to earn Pack Dog's highest. Special thanks to all the founding and honorary members of the Lane Ladies Hiking Society: Amy Allen, Debbie Echols, Mac McFadden, Scott and Linda Patton. Thanks to Val Guthrie, Pat Saxon and Kathy Nebel for their support. Davy thanks Lucy, Raven, Spot, Flurry and Dylan for the good company.

Davy

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Need a Quick Correction?

By Glenda Parks

Here are a couple of easy ways to correct a dog in an instant:

1. Water gun. - the perfect way to get attention! Plain water can go a fair distance and get the startle effect that allows you to take control and give a command.

If you really really really want an impact, like when you are walking and another dog is attacking your dog, put vinegar in the water. Stinks like heck, but doesn't hurt anything. Outsider will eventually get the idea that it hurts to be close to you or your dog!

2. Bean bags - I used to keep a couple of small bean bags in my pockets. They are good because you can usually hit a target (grin), and they have that "HUH?????What hit me???" effect. I totally stopped Bonnie Doon's annoying barking out the front window with about 2 months of well tossed bean bags. My aim improved in about a week. And she never associated the "hit" with me. I always looked innocent when she looked around.

Bean bags are good to use to proof distance stays and downs. Any movement from a long sit/down should be corrected if you want the perfect stay. But you can't always get there fast enough and you have lost the Window of Perfect Correction Time. So you toss a bean bag and voice a verbal correction. A dog who thinks the heavens will fall on him if he moves is a good solid dog.

This works perfectly on Dutch, my Duh! dog. He totally respects things falling from the heaven's and hitting him. He thinks the fan is out to get him. But Bonnie Doon strongly suspects they come from me. She will watch me, and when I turn around, she moves about 6 inches and then stops. So when I look back she has appeared to stay, but she knows she has moved.

Like I said, Bonnie Doon is my thinking dog.

Glenda Parks
Obedience 101 Dog Training
Home of the Greater Swiss Mountain Dogs



Have an article or event photos you'd like included in the next newsletter? Please send everything to Laura Bullock (lauracbullock@earthlink.net). Please provide high resolution pictures and any text you'd like included.