



SHELTIE WISE

The monthly newsletter of the Shetland Sheepdog Club of No. NJ

May 2010

Club website: www.sscnj.org

Pat Marchello, editor --jetsong@comcast.net

Meeting Notice - Friday, June 4th

The next club meeting will be held on Friday, June 4th, 7:30 pm at **The Zion Lutheran Church**, 215 Elm Ave. Rahway NJ.

We hope everyone will join us for at the June meeting. This is our annual awards celebration as well as our last meeting until September.

Culpeper, Virginia
STAR-EXPONENT.com
report InsideNOVA.com

Interest 'Peak'ed in agility training



Connor Peak competes in one of his first shows with his dog Foster.

Club notes



Our Officers for 2009-2010

President: Donna Colletti
Vice President: Lisa Stoddard
Treasurer: Ursula Dudek
Corresponding Secretary: Sylvette Hartroth
Recording Secretary: Connie Deetz
Board members: (1) Cathy Miller
(2) Aneita Frey

Refreshments

June – Nikki
September – Tina
October – Larry Deetz

REMINDER: Fall Specialty Trophy Donations

*Several classes are still need sponsors
Please refer to the email Ursula sent recently.*

Judges

*Cadie Pruss, Sweeps
AM: Ellen Worthington
PM: Diane Hawes*

Amy Wagner, contributing writer
Published: May 3, 2010
Updated: May 3, 2010

Eleven-year-old Connor Peak has been around dogs all his life, but it is his ability to work with Shetland Sheepdogs through agility training that piqued the interest of Animal Planet.

The cable network came to Bealeton in March to tape a segment featuring Peak and his dog, Foster.

The segment, "Dogs 101," taped at Liberty Hill Pet Resort and scheduled to air this fall, highlights Shetland Sheepdogs, commonly known as Shelties.

Shelties are a herding breed known for having a hunger for sports, obedience and agility. The latter is a common ingredient that Peak and his dog, Foster, share.

Peak is Hyperlexic — a high functioning Autistic spectrum which overlaps with Pervasive Developmental Disorder and Asperger's to varying degrees.

He began showing an interest in agility at the age of five, taking a class at Mattaponi Kennel Club, in Woodbridge, where he did well but was working with the family's senior dog.

After taking several years off and acquiring two younger dogs (both Shelties, Foster being one of them) Peak considered returning to the world of dog competitions.

Peak doesn't let his autism deter him from trainings and competitions. He has worked with Foster in agility courses under the tutelage of several different instructors, including his mom, Karen Peak.

"Of all the sites where Connor has worked with Foster, Liberty Hill Pet Resort is the place he feels most comfortable", said Karen.

Mary Ann Robertson, a former student of Karen's, has owned and operated Liberty Hill Pet Resort for the past five years.

Holly Hammerle teaches the agility class at the resort, allowing Robertson to invest more time in the day-to-day operations.

Finding an agility course near Culpeper proves difficult.

There are several in Northern Virginia but closer to Culpeper they are harder to find. Other than Liberty Hill, the closest one is in Amissville.

Agility courses are fast paced and include jumps, climbing obstacles and tunnels where the dogs run the course, by owner commands, off-leash and compete for the fastest time with the fewest faults.

Prior to agility classes at Liberty Hill, Connor had been showing Foster in conformation and junior show for over a year.

"They team well together so, though agility requires concentration and training, it is a different type of mental work than obedience or rally, and was a logical next step. It seemed to fit Connor," Karen said.

Highlighting different breeds of dogs for their "Dogs 101" series, Animal Planet sent out notices looking for Shelties and Karen responded, not knowing initially if the notices were valid.

"They were interested in showing Foster and Connor, being Autism Spectrum," said Karen.

On March 29, Animal Planet filmed Peak with Foster and Robertson working the agility course, spread out on a small section of the 13 acres where Liberty Hill is situated.

Last summer Peak had his second and third agility class there and hopes to participate in more classes this summer.

Peak will be in two advanced programs this fall as he enters middle school but hopes to continue agility courses. If the combination proves too much, his mom says he will have to put agility on hold until summer.

Connor was excited about the opportunity to be on television but was certainly not bragging about it. Through his experience with agility, in light of his Autism, he knows that though some things will come easy to him other things will be difficult.

Amy Wagner covers church news for the Star-Exponent. Have a story idea? E-mail her at recopps2002@comcast.net

BRAGS...

Cathy Laskiewicz's *Starlight's Mystic Ghost of Lacia* ("Casper") earned his Herding Instinct Certified title at 8 months of age. The test was conducted by Gene Sheninger.



Donna Colletti is proud to announce that Pinnacle Bonnie Lass (Bonnie) has earned her CDX and Pinnacle Gift of Hope (Hope) has earned her agility AX and AXJ.

Pinnacle Sir Wolf of Windsor (Windsor) has earned his OAJ. Windsor runs in several organizations and has also earned TN-E, TG-O, WV-N, CL-2,

Sent: Thursday, May 27, 2010 12:15 PM

Fwd: Warning to all show people and people traveling with pets

Warning to all show people and people traveling through the states of Georgia, North Carolina and S Carolina.

The above states will confiscate your dogs if traveling through them and they stop you and you can't show proof of vaccination for rabies.

They stopped people returning from the Perry shows and took their dogs, they called in their lawyer and the dogs were returned but they were fined \$600 for not having paperwork with them.

Also, the state of Georgia can euthanize immediately. Please make all of your friends, families and fellow show people aware of this more then likely PETA based problem

Judi Youngken
Member of American Rottweiler Club
Member of Colonial Rottweiler Club
Member of Lower Bucks Dog Training Club
UKC Ch. Youngkens Derhilda v. Haegele CD, RN
AKC/UKC Ch. Axel Hutsch von Youngken CD, RA, HT, CGC

Investigation of Bladder Cancer in the Shetland Sheepdog

Updated March, 2010

Background: The Ostrander Laboratory at the National Human Genome Research Institute at NIH in collaboration with the Purdue Comparative Oncology Program at Purdue University and the Department of Small Animal Clinical Sciences at Michigan State University have been working since 2006 to discover the genetic causes of transitional cell carcinoma (TCC) of the urinary bladder in dogs. TCC is a devastating disease and Shetland Sheepdogs are four and one half times more likely to be diagnosed with TCC than most other dogs. Our ultimate goal is to identify the genetic variants responsible for this much increased susceptibility to the disease.

We are excited to be able to report the completion of our

first SNP based genome-wide analysis in more than 60 of our best Sheltie cases and controls. The most informative cases have a diagnosis of TCC confirmed by biopsy with histopathology. The best controls have passed the age of eight with no diagnosis of cancer of any kind.

Our researchers looked for locations in the genome that differ between affected and unaffected dogs, and have found genomic region(s) that appear to be important in TCC. We believe that further testing can lead to identification of causative mutations responsible for development and progression of TCC of the urinary bladder in Shetland Sheepdogs, as well as in other dog breeds* that are at high risk of developing the disease.

Our thanks go out to the American Shetland Sheepdog Association and all Shetland Sheepdog owners for their great response to our request for blood samples for our TCC research. Because of your support we have received samples from 57 Shelties with TCC and 68 healthy, control Shelties at least 8 years of age.

In order to complete our goals, we are in need of more samples, especially from the two groups listed above; dogs with complete biopsy confirmed diagnosis of TCC and healthy, aged controls. In addition, we ask that you please keep us updated as to the health of your participating dogs so that we can keep them in the correct study group. If your dog just celebrated his/her eighth birthday in good health, let us know. If your dog has received a diagnosis of cancer since he/she submitted a sample, please fax or mail the veterinarian's report to us at the address below. Updates can be sent to us either by phone, email, or through our online survey at http://research.nhgri.nih.gov/dog_genome/, which can be accessed with the password: Missy07.

If you would like to participate in the TCC study and you need information or a sampling kit, please contact:

Donna Viglietti
Ostrander Lab Samples Manager
Phone: 301-451-9390
Fax: 301-594-0023
Email: dog_genome@mail.nih.gov
National Institutes of Health / NHGRI
50 South Drive, Bldg. 50, Room 5347
Bethesda, MD 20892-8000

Each kit contains a one page consent form, a pair of vials for collecting 5-10 cc of blood at your veterinarian's office, and instructions for handling the blood. The collection kit comes in a small cardboard mailer tube that protects the blood vials. A return address label is included so that the forms and blood can be sent back to the lab conveniently. Blood can be mailed at room temperature without cold packs.

As always, your participation in the study and any information you provide us will remain confidential. Specifically, your participation in the study, your dog's pedigree, health information you provide, and any data we

get from your dog's DNA sample will not be disclosed to any breeders, Club personnel, the AKC, or the AKC Canine Health Foundation.

This has been an exciting year for TCC research and we feel very optimistic about the direction that the research is taking. None of this would have been possible without your dedication to this wonderful breed and its health. We hope our work will determine the genetic cause of TCC so that steps can be taken toward the prevention of this terrible disease. With your continued participation and enthusiasm, we are making great strides in that direction.

*The Scottish Terrier and West Highland White Terrier are at greater risk than Shelties.

To see the original letter on the March go to the ASSA website: <http://www.assa.org/health.html>



Photos from the Sheltie Make-over Day



MAY 24 2010

What I Learned at the Dog Show



I spent this weekend at the Myrtle Beach kennel Club's all-breed dog show in Florence, South Carolina. The club invited me down to talk about the threats its members are facing from the Humane Society of the United States and the rest of the animal rights movement. Since I had never been to a dog show, I said yes. (I grew up thinking that "fancy" was an adjective. Silly me.)

I'm not a big fan of people who pooh-pooh things they've never tried or seen up-close. If one of my children says she "doesn't like" something on the dinner table before taking even a tiny bite—well, let's just say that doesn't wash in my house.

And I've always thought the whole "dog show" community was rather mysterious, a kind of benevolent secret society with its own rules, customs, and vocabulary. Sorta like Deadheads, but with a lot better grooming and a lot *less* fleas.

Truth be told, the dog breeders I met this weekend do have their own peculiar ways of saying and doing things. But they're really just ordinary people with a shared hobby. They're *really* into what they do. And they taught

me a lot in just a Saturday. Here's some of what I learned.

1. When you go to a dog show, bring your own chair. But don't be surprised if someone offers to lend you theirs. (I'm typing this in someone else's customized, embroidered lawn chair.)
2. Dog shows are competitive, but the people involved are remarkably supportive of their human opponents. I heard a steady stream of "congratulations!" offered to blue-ribbon holders from handlers who were trotting away empty-handed.
3. If you're a first-timer who asks "what kind of dog is that?" too loudly, somebody might look at you funny.



4. These people treat their dogs like royalty. It was 90 degrees in the shade on Saturday, and the dogs had shade, electric fans, and cold water—even if their owners didn't.
5. Judging from this weekend, the typical show-dog handler isn't a stuffy Brit wearing Saville Row tweed. She—yes, *she*—is an energetic 40-year-old married mom whose husband packs up the kids and brings them along on the trip.
6. Sometimes the *kids* strut the dogs around the ring. The under-18 handlers even have their own judging category in which *their* skills are being judged, not the qualities of

their dogs.

7. The name of the game is “conformation” (not “confirmation,” as I used to think). Dog show breeders are trying to breed animals that “conform” to a set ideal of how a breed can look, “gait,” and behave if they do everything right. (I read an article in *Wired* this week about how Cheetos in the factory are checked every 30 minutes against a “reference sample” from Frito-Lay headquarters, just to make sure the ideal color, texture, and crispiness is being matched. It’s kinda like that, but it takes years for these folks to make a single Cheeto. And Cheetos don’t pee on you.)
8. Watch where you step in the parking lot.

If this particular dog show is any indication of what’s typical, the “dog fancy” is a lot of fun for a lot of people who contribute a lot of money to the economy—and aren’t hurting anyone. “If we’re not having fun here,” one judge told me, very much off-the-cuff, “we shouldn’t be doing this.”



For the life of me, I can’t figure out why the Humane Society of the United States has such a visceral hatred of everything they stand for.

I think what’s going on is that HSUS, PETA, and other animal rights groups are conflating breeders whose main

goal is to *sell* puppies with those who just happen to really love Pomeranians, Pinschers, or Poodles. This latter clique of people (far larger than the former) shows their favorite animals because they’re proud of them, not because they believe it will make their next litter worth more money.

It’s not hard to understand HSUS’s stated motivation for attacking people who breed dogs. The group wants everyone to believe that rampant pet overpopulation in America is all their fault. But personally, I just don’t see it.

I didn’t meet “puppy millers” this weekend. I met hobbyists, just like if I were at a model railroad convention, an antique fair, or a swim meet. They ask after each others’ kids. They visit each other in the hospital. They have knitting circles where the dogs watch approvingly. They’re 50 percent garden club, 50 percent church pot-luck. Zero percent animal abusers.

I asked one breeder how much money she had spent raising her champion dog, a mammoth Anatolian shepherd. “Who knows?” she answered. “I never really added it up. If you’re pinching pennies you probably aren’t treating the dog right.” In addition to the two purebred dogs she was showing, she had “two rescue mutts at home, and they have the same food, supplements, and everything else my show dogs get.”

And when I asked one of the veteran breeders how many of her peers raise dogs so they can sell the litters commercially, she looked at me like I was from Mars. “We all sell dogs, son,” she told me. “But none of us make a cent doing it. And I know where all my dogs live. If anyone can’t provide for them, we take ‘em back.” And then, almost as an afterthought: “I sure don’t want any of mine going to the pound or a rescue.”

Everyone I asked about this had the same kind of answer. If they found out that any of *their* puppies wound up in a shelter, they’d sure do something about it.



So why all the hostility from the Humane Society of the United States? Why did I hear from North and South Carolinians who had beaten back attempt after attempt from HSUS to have them taxed, registered, regulated, raided, and otherwise priced out of their hobby? What is it about these men, women, and children, so passionate about running up and down a concrete floor with their pets, that demands intervention from activists who think they know better?

Maybe it's that HSUS thinks the only way to shut down "puppy mills" is to paint every dog breeder with the same broad brush. Maybe. I haven't yet really wrapped my mind around *why* HSUS is opposed to everything I saw this weekend. I just know that it is.

As with pretty much every group of ranchers, dairymen, biomedical research scientists, and chicken farmers I've met, the breeders I spoke with this weekend had varying levels of awareness about the looming political threat from HSUS. Some of them can't be bothered to be bothered. Others are fired up at the mere mention of Wayne Pacelle's name.

"Somebody has to take that guy on," one 50-ish man barked when I brought up the name of HSUS's CEO. "That whole movement is nuts. After I showed up to

lobby against HSUS's last North Carolina breeder tax, I started getting calls in the middle of the night, untraceable phone calls, from these people saying they were going to come on my property, take my dogs, and burn my house down. I told 'em my new rifle has an awesome night scope. That pretty much ended it."

I spoke to the crowd after the Best In Show was awarded, in this case to a fluffy pekingese named "Noelle." I told them that their problem is the same as the one faced by pork producers, egg farmers, dairymen, and even cancer researchers. But it was up to them to reach beyond their circle of friends—outside their comfort zone—if their kids and grandkids were going to keep being Junior Handlers and continue to raise the dog breeds they've come to love.

At the end of the day, I have to be skeptical of HSUS's blanket condemnation of pet breeders. I'm confident that there *are* some horrible ones out there, as there are with any group of people (including animal activists...), but any legislative or cultural movement that lumps the people I met this weekend in with the bad actors is just plain wrong-headed.

Because the dogs I met in South Carolina were among the best-cared-for animals I've ever seen. Anyone who's truly interested in animal welfare would want to make sure more dogs—not fewer—are treated this way. So how 'bout it, Wayne? Why aren't you promoting dog shows?

Probably because you've never been to one.