

The Sheditie Spin
Newsletter of Northern Virginia Sheltie Rescue ${ }^{\circ}$ Giving Shelties a New Leash on Life ${ }^{\circ}$

## Summer 2012

## Puppies to . . . Teenagers

Remember the three pups NVSR received back in January? They're growing up now, and you will enjoy these photos of them from babies to handsome young fellows.

Knock (the Sheltie formerly known as Alvin) now lives with two young boys and another Sheltie, Guinness. His family is very Irish, so his new name comes from the Irish tradition. Knock is very athletic, looking forward to learning agility as soon as he's old enough. Knock has a letter on the NVSR website on the "Happy Tails" page.


Teddy (he uses "Theodore" for formal occasions) is one of the two sable merles. He has one blue and one brown eye - very distinctive. He fetches, he plays with squeaky toys, he "herds" the ball, and he is a fantastic cuddler. His family thinks he is just perfect.


Simon is also a sable merle and lives a great life in cosmopolitan Washington DC and seaside Lewes, Delaware. He has the company of five other Shelties, large and small, so there's plenty to do around his house. He was a wonderful young addition to a committed "dog family."


## What's for Dinner?

If you love your Sheltie, and we're sure you do, you're concerned about keeping him or her healthy as long as possible. Good nutrition is essential for humans to live a healthy, long life - and it is for our dogs, too. Here are some guidelines to help you choose a healthful diet for your Sheltie. At the end of the article are links for more information Kibble
Dry dog food (kibble) is the basis of most dogs' diets, so most of this space is devoted to it. Kibble can be made from a huge variety of ingredients, some of which can actually harm your dog. There are a multitude of kibbles available, and marketing departments have gone bananas thinking up how to sell them to humans. Small breed? Senior? Overweight? Grain-free? High-protein? Some are even intended for certain breeds!
The best high quality dog food brands are sold through independent pet supply stores. Find one that sells a good variety and look around - not just at the pretty pictures on the bags. Petco and PetsMart sell some brands of high quality kibble, so look there if you don't have an independent store near you. You can also purchase dog food online and have it delivered on a schedule. High quality dog food is usually not sold in grocery or big box stores!
The key to finding a good kibble for your dog is to ... guess what ... READ THE LABELS! Get out your reading glasses and read the entire list of ingredients. This list is required by law and must include everything in the dog food. The first few ingredients are, by weight, most of what's in the kibble, so they are the most important. However, there may be chemicals, dyes, and harmful trace elements in the latter ingredients.
First, if the kibble ingredients list starts out with corn or has corn anywhere in the list, don't waste your time - walk away from that brand. Corn is a filler, used to bulk up the dog food. The dog must consume more food to get the same nutritional result, and corn is only minimally digestible. However, it is a good food for chickens.
Second, the first ingredients of your kibble should be named protein sources like chicken, lamb, salmon, etc., and they should come from sources in the US. It's okay for it to be "lamb meal" or "chicken meal," since those are named sources. Fresh meat contains a lot of moisture, and it is rendered to "meal" to provide a higher percentage of protein for the weight. "Meat" is an example of a low-quality protein source of dubious origin. You don't want to see "meat meal" or "bone meal" on the list, both of which are made of unnamed, leftover parts of the animal source and can include any kind of "meat" imaginable, including euthanized animals from shelters. (Yes, it's true.)
Grains are good in kibble, provided that your dog isn't allergic to one or more of them. There are grain-free kibbles available. Grain should not be the first ingredient, but may be the third or fourth. Look for barley, oatmeal, brown rice, wheat germ, etc. There may also be vegetables (preferably unprocessed) in your kibble. You can also add your own vegetables to your dog's dish. More on that later. Don't purchase dog food with artificial colors, flavors, or preservatives (i.e., BHA, BHT, ethoxyquin) in it. Your dog doesn't care about the color of the food - artificial color is put in there to make it look good to humans. Look for natural preservatives like tocopherols, vitamin C, and rosemary extract.
As to the fat added to kibble, don't buy dog food with a generic fat source like "animal fat." This can be from any animal source, including restaurant grease or even roadkill. (Yes, that's true, too.)


Look for a named source of fat, like "poultry fat," or even better, "chicken fat."
A recent NVSR intake arrived with a big bag of Pedigree dog food. Sounds like good food, right? After all, Pedigree sponsors the Westminster Dog Show, so breeders must use the food for their valuable dogs. Well, here are the first two ingredients in Pedigree: ground corn; meat and bone meal. Marketing geniuses sell poor quality dog food by appealing to humans. That cute little dog bouncing around in the Beneful ads is endorsing one of the worst foods on the market.
Next, after plowing through the ingredients list, read the "Guaranteed Analysis" section on the bag. It indicates, roughly, the amount of protein, fat, fiber, and moisture in the food. The amounts for protein and fat are minimum values. (Whole Dog Journal has found that in many "premium" foods, these levels are much higher than stated.) The levels for fiber and moisture are maximum values, and these are usually accurate.
Think about what your own dog needs for protein and fat. Active dogs (long walks or hikes, lots of play, agility and other sports, long runs) need higher protein and fat content in their food. If your dog is overweight, look for a food with a higher protein content (but NOT high in fat), in order to replace carbs with protein. (Some foods do list caloric content.) If your dog is itchy, look for a limited ingredient food that contains none of the ingredients in his current food. If your dog is too thin, look for a higher fat content. If your dog is losing condition as she ages, look for food with more protein and higher-quality protein sources. For digestive problems, try foods with less fat, a different protein source, or no grains. For those couch potatoes, no high-fat foods! If your dog acts hungry all the time, try a food with a higher fat content.
Look for the "Best By ..." date on the bag. If it's at least six or more months in the future, it means the kibble was made fairly recently. Purchase your dog food at a store that turns over its inventory frequently.
For more information about the dog food, the contact information for the company should be easy to find on the bag. Call and ask your questions. Visit their website.
Why bother with high quality, expensive kibble? Among the benefits of feeding a high quality kibble are better nutrition and smaller, more compact stool. Yes, you'll pay more, but you'll feed less volume, and your Sheltie will be healthier with a shinier coat, more energy, and a longer life.
Take the Kibble Rating Challenge in the box and see how your kibble stacks up.

## Canned food

Canned food for dogs is mostly moisture. So, if you feed this exclusively, you will need to feed more of it to get the same nutrition benefit as you would get from kibble. Read the label (getting tired of hearing that?), shake the can, and don't buy the varieties that slosh. Get something that sounds solid and has a named meat source. Purchase your canned food in a store that sells a good variety of high quality brands.

Additions to the basic kibble and/or canned food
Dogs need a balanced diet, just like humans do. A high quality kibble will provide a balanced diet by itself, but you can also add some things your dog will appreciate. Don't feed your dog the leftovers from your dinner. Think about what you're adding. Make the major
part of her food high quality kibble and/or canned food. You can add various vegetables: pure canned pumpkin (NOT pie filling), no-salt green beans, peas, carrots, squash, etc., but not onions or garlic. Fruits are also good: tomatoes, apples, blueberries, but not grapes or raisins. If your dog is overweight, and Shelties are prone to that, more vegetables and fruits will fill her up at the same time you reduce the amount of the kibble. And, get out there for more walks - good for her and good for you!
Yogurt is a cultured milk product, and a dab of plain (low- or no-fat) yogurt is usually welcome in a food bowl. Cottage cheese is another dairy product they like. Some soft-boiled or scrambled egg is also very much appreciated!


Dehydrated dog food
Some Sheltie owners are switching to dehydrated dog food, like The Honest Kitchen. These are expensive but very good choices, and dogs LOVE them. They can be added to kibble (reduce the amount of kibble appropriately) or feed exclusively. There also are very good dehydrated treats, like turkey and liver, that can be used for training treats. Ask your dog food supplier if they have any samples.

## Raw and home-made diets

There are raw diets on the market, again sold in independent pet supply stores and available either fresh or frozen. Read about these before you invest.
If you want to make your own dog food, PLEASE read about how to do it before you embark on this project. You can seriously harm your dog if you don't make your dog food properly. Purchase a guide from a source like Whole Dog Journal before you get started. Also highly recommended is Wendy Volhard's book, Holistic Guide for a Healthy Dog, containing complete instructions for making your own dog food. Be careful to purchase good ingredients from reliable sources.

## Recalls

Many kibbles and some canned food have been recalled recently, due to salmonella found in the factories where the food is made. Follow these recalls at this link: www.dogfoodadvisor.com/dog-food-recalls. There is so much more to learn about feeding our dogs a healthful diet. This article is just a start. We hope that you'll take the time to learn about this important topic. Here are some links to good information about dog food and nutrition:

- Whole Dog Journal: www.whole-dog-journal.com (you really should subscribe):
- Dog food reviews: www.dogfoodadvisor.com

They bundled their 2012 dog food reviews into one package for purchase.

- Information on safe dog food: www.truthaboutpetfood.com
- Wendy Volhard's webpage: www.volharddognutrition.com
- Dr. Becker's site on dog health: www.healthypets.mercola.com


## Kibble Rating System (How to grade your dog's food.) Start with a grade of $\mathbf{1 0 0}$ :

1) For every listing of "by-product", subtract 10 points
2) For every non-specific animal source ("meat" or "poultry", meat, meal, or fat) reference, subtract 10 points 3) If the food contains BHA, BHT, or ethoxyquin, subtract 10 points
3) For every grain "mill run" or non-specific grain source, subtract 5 points
4) If the same grain ingredient is used 2 or more times in the first five ingredients (i.e., "ground brown rice", "brewers rice", "rice flour" are all the same grain), subtract 5 points
5) If the protein sources are not meat meal and there are fewer than 2 meats in the top 3 ingredients, subtract 3 points
6) If it contains any artificial colorants, subtract 3 points

8 ) If it contains corn in any form, subtract 3 points
9) If corn is listed in the top 5 ingredients, subtract 2 more points
10) If the food contains any animal fat other than fish oil, subtract 2 points
11) If lamb is the only animal protein source (unless your dog is allergic to other protein sources), subtract 2 points
12) If it contains soy or soybeans, subtract 2 points
13) If it contains wheat (unless you know that your dog is not allergic to wheat), subtract 2 points
14) If it contains beef (unless you know that your dog is not allergic to beef), subtract 1 point
15) If it contains salt, subtract 1 point

Extra Credit:

1) If any of the meat sources are organic, add 5 points
2) If the food is endorsed by any major breed group or nutritionist, add 5 points
3) If the food is baked not extruded, add 5 points
4) If the food contains probiotics, add 3 points
5) If the food contains fruit, add 3 points
6) If the food contains vegetables (NOT corn or other grains), add 3 points
7) If the animal sources are hormone-free and antibioticfree, add 2 points
8) If the food contains barley, add 2 points
9) If the food contains flax seed oil (not just the seeds), add 2 points
10) If the food contains oats or oatmeal, add 1 point
11) If the food contains sunflower oil, add 1 point
12) For every different specific animal protein source (other than the first one; count "chicken" and "chicken meal" as only one protein source, but "chicken" and " xx " as 2 different sources), add 1 point
13) If it contains glucosamine and chondroitin, add 1 point
14) If the vegetables are pesticide-free, add 1 point

## Score:

$$
\begin{array}{cc}
94-100+=\mathrm{A} & 86-93=\mathrm{B} \quad 78-85=\mathrm{C} \\
70-77=\mathrm{D} & 69 \text { and below }=\mathrm{F}
\end{array}
$$



Mark your calendar now and plan to come to the picnic!
This year's picnic will be bigger and better than ever with more demos, more Shelties, more volunteers, great food, lots of fun, and a big tent and pavilion to protect us from the weather. You'll be able to try agility, have your Sheltie's photo taken, bid on great items in the silent auction, shop for Sheltie things in the Sheltie Shop, meet all the foster dogs, play games, and see several interesting demos. We look forward to seeing you there. All friendly dogs are welcome!

When: Saturday, September 22
Where: Curtis Memorial Park, Hartwood VA
(see our website for directions) Time: noon to 4:00 pm


Summer Sheltie Garb ...
We have lots of colorful polo shirts and sweatshirts (including hoodies) with Shelties embroidered on them. Let us know the color shirt and the color of the dog you want, along with size. Write to shop@ nvsr.org. We'll have them at the picnic, too!

## Try Treibball with Your Sheltie

A new dog sport that any dog of any breed can play and compete in has arrived! This new sport, called Treibball, (pronounced TRY-ball), arrived from Germany five years ago and has quickly amassed a large and enthusiastic following. It is perfect for highly-intelligent, driven, and energetic dogs like Shelties. Little equipment is required, and it can be practiced almost anywhere from your yard to your living room.

Treibball, a German word literally meaning "driving" or "drifting" a ball, is uniquely suited to the herding breeds. The goal of the sport is canine-human communication and teamwork to herd or "drive" a large, light ball (like a yoga ball) toward a goal, much like soccer. It uses targeting skills in order to select a ball, commands such as "left" and "right," as well as skill in sending the dog away from you. The dog may use shoulders, head, or nose to move the
 ball toward the goal.

A typical game begins with the dog and handler in the goal. The dog is sent to fetch a ball from the field and herd it into the goal. Since there may be many balls on the field, the dog is sent out again and again to herd each into the goal. At the beginner level, there may be only two or three balls to fetch. At the top levels, there may be as many as eight balls to fetch. The event is timed and the best times are the winners. The rules as to what is permitted vary somewhat from instructor to instructor, so it is good to discuss this with an instructor.

As you may imagine, herding dogs like Shelties are quite good at this game, and it does not take long for them to get the idea! Herding balls is much like herding sheep.

Want to see it in action? Visit the American Treibball Association YouTube channel at www.youtube.com/user/ AmericanTreibball. There is also web page for the sport at www. americantreibballassociation.org. The Dog Scouts of America support it as well, as does Living With Dogs.

The Spring edition of NOVADog magazine at www. novadogmagazine.com/ mydogrules has a wonderful article by Lisa Tudor of Kissable Canine that has a short list of area contact organizations, websites, and businesses that support Treibball. Dogwise (www. dogwise.com) sells a terrific
 DVD, featuring the creator of Treibball, Jan Nijboer, with his proven method for training your dog to enjoy this fun sport.



Louise with her foster dog Heidi at an adoption event

## Volunteer Spotlight: Louise Cortright

Offering an invaluable, loving foster home for our senior and ill dogs, Louise Cortright cheerfully welcomes each foster dog with open arms. She loves caring for these dogs that can be difficult with special medical needs, or just nearing the end of life. She enjoys the challenges that each dog brings, and her record of success improving the lives of her foster dogs confirms her dedication. They have many more months and even years of better health under her care.

Louise has a great deal of experience with Shelties. In New Jersey, where she lived for many years before retiring and moving to the mountains of Virginia, Louise bred Shelties and showed in conformation and obedience classes. Her dogs won many titles, including CD and CDX. She was a very careful breeder, selecting sires and dams carefully in order to produce a champion - which she did! She also started an obedience club in New Jersey which is still going strong.

NVSR lured Louise into volunteer work in 2006, and she hasn't tired of it yet. Along with her "old dogs," she recently fostered three puppies, bringing them up to be house- and leash-trained, and selecting the perfect home for each one. (See our page on the puppy progress.) She had a great time getting photos of them. "Every time I thought I had a good picture, all I saw was a puppy butt leaving the frame." The pups, though very photogenic, had other things to do, and getting all three of them to sit still at the same time was nearly impossible.

Louise's background includes many years as a Registered Medical Technologist, working in several different lab sections. She was Chief Technologist at a hospital in New Jersey and was teaching supervisor for medical technologist students. This background enables her to talk to a veterinarian about the details of a dog's condition and the medications needed to help.

In addition to Shelties, Louise enjoys the outdoors, walking in the woods, cross-country skiing in Vermont, observing birds and nature. She designed and oversaw the building of her house in Afton. A "green" house with one-foot thick walls, superior thermal windows, and wise use of sunlight, it features a geo-thermal heating and cooling system.

Louise said about NVSR: "I am so pleased to volunteer with an organization that values the health and welfare of Shelties and has the support and resources to help them be as healthy and happy as possible." We are grateful for the foster help that Louise has provided to our senior and ill Shelties.


32 ounces low-fat or non-fat yogurt
2 mashed bananas
1/2 cup natural peanut butter
2 tablespoons honey
Combine all ingredients in a bowl. Blend well. Fill small paper cups (like 3 ounce bathroom size Dixie cups) with the mixture. Freeze at least two hours. To serve, let thaw slightly and pop popsicles out of the cup into a bowl by pressing on the bottom of the cup. Makes approximately 10 popsicles in 3 oz. cups

## Tips for Thunderstorm Anxiety

 unusual weather, especially thunderstorms. You may see pacing, panting, barking, trembling, hiding, and general anxiety in one Sheltie while another one is completely undisturbed. Here are some suggestions for helping your "thunderstruck" Sheltie.

- Pay attention to weather reports and be ready for the storm before it hits. Start your anti-anxiety strategy early.
- Provide a safe place for your anxious pet: a crate (door open) in a room with the curtains closed and a radio or TV playing to help drown out the noise. Acclimate your dog to this space before you need to use it. Use special treats.
- Try a Thundershirt that applies gentle, constant pressure to your dog's torso.
- You can try counter-conditioning your Sheltie to thunderstorms using tapes or CDs of thunder played very softly while you feed very special treats and give petting. Increase the volume over time. This should help the dog associate the thunder noise with good things.
- Pheromone collars and sprays are relatively inexpensive and can help.
- Natural supplements such as L-theanine (an amino acid found in tea leaves) and melatonin (a naturally occurring hormone) may decrease anxiety in response to thunder.
- Medications prescribed by your vet may be helpful. Be sure to try this before the thunderstorm to be sure that your dog does not react negatively to it. Avoid Acepromazine, a commonly prescribed tranquilizer for dogs, because it causes sedation but does not significantly reduce anxiety.
- Do your best to relax and behave as if everything is completely normal during the storm. Anxiety on your part will be contagious to that mind-reading four-legged Sheltie of yours.

Consult with your veterinarian and a reputable trainer or behaviorist as part of your dog's thunder desensitization program. The techniques above can be utilized for most any noise phobias (fireworks, shotgun blasts, etc.).


Dulcie hiding in the smallest space she can find

## Come see our Shelties at one (or more) of these events ...

Saturday, Aug. 18
Pet Appreciation Week (P.A.W.) event at Tractor Supply Co.
9:00 am - 1:00 pm
Location: 541 W Reservoir Rd., Woodstock VA 22664
Tractor Supply Company (TSC) stores in Virginia are hosting rescue groups to raise awareness about pet care. We will have a table INDOORS.
Right off I-81 (exit 283). Store: 540-459-7127.
Saturday \& Sunday, Sept. 1-2 Virginia Scottish Games Great Meadow, The Plains VA vascottishgames.org
Piping \& drumming, highland dancing, and fiddling competitions along with sheep-herding demonstrations, an antique car show, a variety of vendors and crafters, clan and society exhibits, a living history encampment, children's activities, live entertainment, and plenty of Scottish food and drink. PLUS the Scottish dog clans, including NVSR's Shelties.

Saturday, Sept. 22

## NVSR's Annual Picnic at Curtis Memorial Park Hartwood VA

See announcement in separate box.
Saturday, Oct, 6
Fredericksburg's Gone to the Dogs -
"A Downtown Dog Fair"
Sophia Street Riverfront Park, Old Town Fredericksburg VA - all day

Sunday, Oct. 21
Caring Hands Vet Clinic 10th Annual Open House 2955 C South Glebe Road, Arlington VA
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This event is to raise money for local animal welfare groups and increase community awareness of the organizations. Raffles and pet games, a Halloween costume contest, and great food. And, Shelties!!

Saturday, Nov. 3<br>Reston Home 4 the Holidays<br>Reston Town Center

## Saturday, Dec 1 Scottish Walk Old Town Alexandria

## Should I Adopt A Male or a Female Sheltie?

This is a question those of us in Sheltie rescue are asked quite often. So, we polled some of our more experienced volunteers about any gender-specific Sheltie traits and also consulted the published work of dog behaviorists and dog trainers. Everyone answered our questions a little differently, but there were some areas of agreement and others that were more controversial.
Here are the statements that were accepted by nearly all respondents and researchers:

1. Dr. Patricia McConnell, widely published animal behaviorist, argues that the personality and background of any individual dog are much more important than gender. Particularly critical is the early socialization of a dog that should ideally take place between 4-16 weeks of age.
2. The differences in temperament between male and female Shelties are much less pronounced than is the case for many other breeds.
3. Several Sheltie breeders noted that male Shelties are apt to carry heavier and longer coats than females, therefore requiring a bit more grooming. Females are likely to have closer, more fitted coats that are a little easier to care for.
4. Female dogs mark just as male dogs do. A spayed female may continue to mark her entire life regardless of when she is spayed while most males will cease marking behaviors shortly after they are neutered and the testosterone levels subside. Indoor marking is relatively rare in Shelties of either gender, however, and proper training can resolve the problem if it occurs.
More controversial were the lists of traits more likely to apply to each gender. All writers and respondents who mentioned these traits were careful to preface their answers with "in general," readily admitting that there were many exceptions.
The following were thought more likely to apply to female Shelties:
5. Independent - Females show affection in a more cat-like manner. They may come to their owner when seeking affection but will often move away when they have had enough.
6. Stubborn - In many packs, a female is typically the "alpha" dog. Females crave more control of situations and are quick to respond to perceived challenges with more fierceness.
7. Good with Children - Some believe female dogs are better choices for small children because they may be more naturally nurturing and protective of young ones, even those from another


Sadie species. Male dogs, on the other hand, may see children only as playmates, and they may tend to be a little too rambunctious at times.
4. Reserved - Females are often more reserved with strangers than males.
5. Moody - Females tend to exhibit more changes in mood and behavior than males, especially as they age.
The following were thought more likely to apply to male Shelties:

1. Affectionate - Males are typically more affectionate than females. They tend to crave attention from their owners more than females and display more affectionate behaviors.
2. Exuberant - A male is also more likely to be fun-loving and outgoing throughout his lifetime than a female. While a female tends to become more reserved and cranky as she ages,
a male dog maintains a more puppy-like exuberance throughout his lifetime.
3. Food-Motivated - Males are often very motivated by food. This food motivation can make training extremely easy as treats can be used to encourage desired behaviors.
4. Attentive - While females tend to be


Tyler more independent, males tend to be more focused on their human companions. They want to be close to their humans and are very eager to please.
What if you already have a dog and are thinking of adding another? Does gender matter then? Here's what our writers and Sheltie rescue volunteers had to say:
If you already have a female Sheltie, she is likely to be more
 accepting of a male. A new male is more likely to be submissive to the resident female and less likely to challenge her. Adding a female to the pack, however, may result in some conflict. Two females are more likely to squabble than a male and female or two males. Many owners, however, have seen two or more females live together quite companionably as long as there is an established leader and the others respect her role.
If you already have a male Sheltie, the gender of the second dog is less important. Males are often more adaptable and accepting of other male dogs as well as cats or other pets. If your male has a more dominant personality, he is more likely to welcome a female. But two males often become best buddies and live very happily together. Remember that we're speaking of general tendencies here. While a male or female dog may be more likely to possess a certain characteristic or behavioral trait, this does not mean these generalities apply in every case. All dog breeders and trainers agree that the personality differences between individual dogs of a given gender are
 much greater than those that exist between genders. Bo, our advice is to base your choice of a dog to adopt on the connection you feel with an individual dog and don't worry too much about the gender.

Here are a couple of interesting links on this topic:
www.thebark.com/content/gender-gap
www.dog-answers.com/Choosing-Male-vs-Female-Dog.html


GAM Printers of Sterling, Virginia, where Cady, Tigger and Spirit's family work, is pleased to support Northern Virginia Sheltie Rescue by designing, printing $\mathcal{E}$ mailing their newsletter.


## Northern Virginia Sheltie Rescue Directors and Coordinators

Northern Virginia Sheltie Rescue
977 Seminole Trail, PMB 314
Charlottesville VA 22901


NVSR Mission Statement
NVSR will take in any Sheltie in need regardless of age, except those with histories of repeated, unprovoked biting. Dogs accepted into rescue will be evaluated in foster homes, receive veterinary care and necessary resocialization, and ultimately be placed in homes where they will be loved, protected, and well cared for. We support efforts to reduce pet overpopulation; all of our Shelties will be spayed or neutered prior to adoption or, if not yet at a safe age to be neutered, placed on a spay/neuter contract at the time of adoption. NVSR is a 501 (c)(3) organization.

