

ALL BARK!

MARCH 2007

VOLUME 3, ISSUE 1

Welcome to 2007!

New Year, New Look!

Our first newsletter of 2007 brings some very exciting news about eye research (page 5 has the full story)! If ever there was a time when we needed to put aside our differences and work together as breed fanciers, this is it! If enough of us can get eye exams done



on our dogs, and submit a copy of the eye exam form, a copy of the dog's pedigree and a blood sample to András Komáromy at the University of Pennsylvania (how to do this is included within), we can play a significant role in researching the troubling eye problem found in our breed (the Vallhund form of Progressive Retinal Atrophy, also known as J175). This is the first concrete step toward developing a DNA test. Please read the information, and please consider contributing your dog's blood sample and information. Samples from any

and all Vallhunds, spayed/neutered or intact, breeding stock or "just pets", normal or abnormal eyes, they can all help!

Now that I'm (temporarily) off my soapbox about THAT topic, in this issue we also have two delicious (if you're a dog) liver cake recipes from Marg Dickinson, a great arti-

cle about why and how you should socialize your puppy from Marion Erp, and a short blurb about Rally Obedience from yours truly.

Amanda Lowery, Editor
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ASVS club officers: President: Pam Abrath; Secretary: Yvonne Slusser; Membership Secretary: Amanda Lowery; Treasurer: Marion Erp; Board Member: Tilli DeBoor; Please visit us online at www.vallhund.net

The ASVS Philosophy

The American Swedish Vallhund Society is dedicated to the preservation of the Swedish Vallhund as it was originally intended, in appearance, temperament and working ability. We support owners and breeders who embrace this philosophy, and encourage selective breeding of healthy stock, genetic research and education of the general public. We promote participation in the many areas where this breed excels.

ASVS: recognized as an official United Kennel Club single breed club September, 2004

For membership information please contact:

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PUPPIES, EYES & TREATS!

- ◆ Puppy Socialization
- ◆ Liver Cake Recipes
- ◆ Important Eye Research Update
- ◆ Rally Obedience

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BRAG CORNER

On a historical note: the very first Swedish Vallhund titled in an AKC agility event was **Rosewood's Shalom** AX AXJ, owned by Sandy Bird and bred by Barbara Dillard. He earned his Novice Agility (NA) title on April 20, 2001, and he was also the next SV to title in agility (after a break when the AKC rescinded their policy of allowing FSS breeds to compete in performance events), earning his Novice Agility Jumpers (NAJ) on January 17, 2004, closely followed by **Osa**

fin n' Promises RN AX MXJ AD SSA SG SJ SR FFX-AG NAC NJC HCT HRD II, who earned her NA and NAJ titles on February 14, 2004. From June 2004-September 2006, there were 5 AKC obedience titles earned, by 4 dogs. Companion Dog (CD) titles were earned by:

Fromar Cassandra CD RA OA NAJ owned by Louise McCombs, **Sunfire's Head of the Class** CDX RN owned by Laura Clayton, **Jonricker**

Moustaffa, CD RE NA NAJ owned by Mary Bennett/Kerstin J T Ottmar and **Meddobe Aurora** CD owned by Barbara Atkinson/Claire Schwartz.

A Companion Dog Excellent (CDX) title was earned by Sunfire's Head of the Class, CDX RN owned by Laura Clayton. (*his historical data courtesy Marion Erp*). The first Vallhund to earn an obedience title in Canada was Ulla Gamberg's then-13 month old Ebba CD in May 1994, handled by Ulla's then-11 year old son.

Mary Carter's Promise (Osa fin Hopes n' Promises RN AX MXJ AD SSA SG SJ SR FFX-AG NAC NJC HCT HRD II) is well on the way to her MACH title, with 7 of the 20 double-qualifiers, and more than half of the 750 points required.



Finn (Fennican Yahoo Finnboy, RE NA NAJ NAP NJP NADAC: OAC, OJC, NGC, TN-E, TG-E). Finn was the first SV to earn a Rally Excellent title.

Marion Erp's Finn

(Fennican Yahoo Finnboy, RE NA NAJ NAP NJP NADAC: OAC, OJC, NGC,

TN-E, TG-E) earned his third leg in Elite Touch n Go and Elite Tunnelers, for those two titles.

CONGRATULATIONS!

AS OF SEPTEMBER 2006, THERE HAVE BEEN FIVE AKC OBEDIENCE TITLES EARNED BY FOUR DOGS

LIVER CAKE RECIPES

by Marg Dickinson

LIVER CAKE MAKES A GREAT TRAINING TREAT OR CONFORMATION RING BAIT

Recipe # 1

Half a pound of liver, half a pound of plain flour, several eggs, enough garlic to make your eyes water when it is being cooked.

Put all ingredients in a food processor and mix well, should end up like a heavy batter, if too stiff add water or milk.

Bake in shallow tins until very firm but not too dry, in a warm oven 120 electric.

Use some and freeze some, I make extra and freeze it.

You can use cheese or sardines, but still add the garlic, plenty of it.

Recipe # 2

6oz liver, 3-4 cloves of garlic, 1 large or 2 small eggs, 1-2 tablespoons of vegetable oil, 8oz self-raising flour.

Liquidize liver in food processor, chop & crush garlic, add to liver with rest of ingredients and mix together. pour mixture into a flat swiss roll tin.

Bake in the oven for approx 15-20 mins. Gas 6/elec 200c/400f.

When cold cut into bite size pieces.

THE EDUCATION OF A PUPPY

by Marion Erp

When I was in 7th grade, our family moved into an apartment complex for a year while my career Army father completed a tour of duty in Korea. The laundry facilities in this complex were in the basement, and it didn't take me long to discover that there was a DOG down there, tied to a corner post, out of the way, complete with a blanket and water bucket. Not just any dog, either, but a gorgeous black and silver purebred German Shepherd – my idea of a dream dog. The whole complex knew he was down there, because of course he cried and barked. I quickly figured out who owned him – a young mother with two toddlers and a baby, up to her ears in motherhood and not wanting anything to do with this rambunctious young dog that was obviously her husband's idea. Shortly before he would come home every evening, she'd go get the dog so that he'd be in the house. Shortly after 8 a.m. every morning, she'd take the dog down there and tie him to his post for the day. That was his life for his first 6 months.

So I volunteered to start walking him. I felt so proud to have this magnificent animal at the end of my leash, and felt so noble that I was giving him at least some fresh air and exercise. The only thing was, he hated every minute of his outings. He slinked, he spooked at cars passing by in this fairly urban environment, he shied from all kinds of objects, he barked and hackled up at passers-by. He got to know me, of course, and in the basement he was wildly enthusiastic in his greetings – until we got outside. I couldn't understand it. I thought he'd be happy to get out, to get some exercise, to explore his world with me. But he hated it.

They eventually moved, I got through high school and college and started reading dog literature. Back then the writings of Scott & Fuller were just coming to light: the research done on critical periods where they isolated litters of puppies for 3 weeks, 4 weeks, 5 weeks, 6 weeks and so on to figure out just when they could still recover and bond once handling by humans was started. The book is now probably out of print and I can no longer find mine. But the concepts were translated into laymen's terms by Clarence Pfaffenberger and other writers, the *AKC Gazette* and *Off-Lead Magazine* were full of these new ideas about puppy training, and Puppy Kindergarten was born, all the rage in the late 60's and early 70's. I bought my first show dog of my very own in 1975, a Rhodesian Ridgeback, carefully researched and chosen for coat and calm temperament, but I knew they might have dominant personalities and knew that I'd need to socialize the socks off of my new puppy.

And so, six dogs later, I still practice what I learned so many years ago, but it seems the newer generation of dog owners are not nearly as aware of the importance as we were back then. Jean Donaldson in *The Culture Clash* says that socializing and exposing the young puppy to a wide variety of experiences during his critical period is the single most important thing you can do in terms of forming a stable, happy adult who takes his environment in stride. I now know what was wrong with that German Shepherd – you may as well have put him into a concrete kennel run and never taken him out, because the net effect was the same as the condition that was later termed “kennelosis” – a dog who is fearful in all but his own familiar environment. A puppy's brain is fully formed at 8 weeks and just waiting for information – those neurons are ready to establish their connections and the more experiences you can throw at him, the more neurons are sitting and waiting for all of his future learning. That period when those connections are formed is 8 to 16 weeks, or two months.

Most puppies go to their new homes at 7 or 8 weeks. Scott & Fuller also conducted the research on behavior that discovered taking puppies away from mom and littermates too early was detrimental to their later ability to “talk dog” and would manifest in a variety of ways, from aggression to insecurity to inability to mate. So ideally we receive our puppies at 8 weeks.

The two-month critical period rules my life when I obtain a new puppy. I drop everything I am doing for those two months – my husband knows to fend for himself for dinner during that time. For starters, I will only buy a puppy that is born in late winter or early spring so that I can take advantage of evening daylight – now that I have moved to Montana, this becomes even more important. Some breeders I know will only breed their bitches so that they produce spring puppies because it makes housebreaking by the new owners easier to deal with – I endorse this idea highly. If I'm working I take half a week off and the rest of the week I work half days.

When the puppy comes home from the airport, he gets one day to get used to the house and backyard -- after that, we are off and running. He gets introduced to a leash and collar and we take small walks in the neighborhood. He learns to ride in a crate in the car. I take him to people's houses and introduce him to their

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THE EDUCATION OF A PUPPY

by Marion Erp

(continued from page 3)

dogs and let him run around in their yards with supervision. If they have children and men in the house, all the better. I take him to our training building and let him run around on the mats. I introduce him to various toys to chase and bring back.

I love children's playgrounds for the equipment – there are often slides and pieces to climb on or sway bridges to climb across following my hand with food. I pick him up and put him on a picnic table or bench of a picnic table and guide him across. If there is agility equipment set up anywhere that I can get to, I introduce him to all the equipment being extremely careful that he doesn't fall off anything. I want him to get used to heights and to moving objects beneath his feet – some breeders will place a ramp or board over a log or brick in the playpen area and those puppies come well-prepared for the agility teeter later in life. I seek out children and men with beards (a bit rare) and everybody I know to provide cookies and tidbits to my puppy, particularly if he is of a breed that has a suspicious nature as my Ridgeback and Malinois were – special attention had to be paid with those two breeds to insure stability around strangers.

We try to go out every evening to a different place even if it's just a short hike in the hills or woods or park, and to two or three places on the weekends. We take advantage of any special events during those early months. Finn went to dog shows and agility trials with my other dog – wonderful socializing opportunities to get used to the chaos of dog shows. I took him to any training sessions or matches or fun events or demos that our club put

on. I took him to our Fairgrounds and walked him on grass fields and dirt roads, on gravel paths, through mud puddles and around hay mounds and horses (on leash). I'd walk him through hardware and feed stores where dogs were allowed. Early on while I could still carry him I walked briefly through our pet stores (Petco had not yet been built), not letting him walk on their floors just yet, even though he had had a set of shots. The vaccination question would come up occasionally but my answer is always that I will risk the small chance of disease over having to live for 15 years with a dog that is a spook and mentally afraid of his world, happiest only in his own backyard. While the wider the variety of his experiences the better off the puppy will be, getting the puppy out of his home and off his own property even a few times a week during those critical two months was sufficient to develop an overall well-balanced dog.

I tell new owners to take the time now to get those puppies out and when the puppies reach 4 months of age, they can relax a little. Training is ongoing, but the exposure those youngsters receive lasts a lifetime. Trying to take a six-month old puppy out for the first time and make a show dog out of him is an uphill if not impossible battle and so unnecessary. You will risk the dog never being comfortable in a noisy building, never being happy away from home, never liking teeters or dark corners of horse arenas, never being as confident as he could have been if the time had been taken during those critical two months. Please don't subject your next puppy to a lifetime of fearfulness because you failed to take advantage of those formative two months.

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RALLY OBEDIENCE by Amanda Lowery

Rally Obedience is a relatively new dog sport., it's currently offered as a title-earning sport in AKC and CKC, and UKC is considering adding it.. Rally is basically intended to be a fun, positive and less formal (but not less challenging) sport than traditional obedience. It's a great way to introduce yourself and your dog to performance competition, and earn titles while you're at it. A Rally class consists of a "course" of various exercises, indicated by numbered signs set around a ring. You are not guided by the judge, other than a signal to start the course, and the course is intended to be conducted as one continuous performance. You can talk to your dog as much as you want, pat your leg, clap your hands, issue commands repeatedly

and praise your dog, but you are not allowed to issue physical corrections or touch the dog. Exercises range from heeling (less formal than traditional obedience), fronts, finishes (both ways) , sits, downs and stands (including out of motion), to advanced exercises like heeling backwards and sideways and honor downs. The emphasis is on fun and active teamwork, and while the Novice title (RN) is fairly easy to obtain, the higher levels (Advanced RA and Excellent RE) are quite challenging. I highly recommend taking a Rally class – Vallhunds were made for it!

You can find exercises, signs and other great information at: www.rallyobedience.com

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EYE RESEARCH UPDATE by Amanda Lowery

We have some exciting news regarding the ongoing eye research being done by Dr Andras Komáromy (whose article on abnormal eye findings in the breed was published in our March 2006 issue). Dr. Komáromy has arranged collaboration with Dr Hannes Lohi (an internationally-known canine genetics researcher), who is a molecular biologist at the University of Helsinki in Finland. Dr Lohi has the funding and the expertise to determine if the progressive retinal atrophy (PRA) found in the breed (known in Finland as J175) is genetic (we have some very strong indications that it is genetic, but this has not been proven scientifically at this point). Should the PRA be shown to be genetic, this is the first step toward developing a DNA test which can be used to make educated breeding decisions which could help us reduce the incidence of this problem in our breed. Since PRA can lead to blindness, and since it often doesn't actually cause symptoms until the dog is well into breeding age, this would be a truly great step forward for our breed's future health.

Work on this project has already started in Finland, with blood samples, eye exam forms and pedigrees being submitted by Swedish Vallhund breeders and owners in that country, but now we can get involved as well, thanks to Dr Komáromy's collaboration with Dr Lohi. Dr Komáromy will collect and process blood samples at his lab at the University of Pennsylvania School of Veterinary Medicine. Please consider helping out! The more samples we collect, the sooner we can determine whether or not this terrible disease is genetic, and (if it is) the sooner a DNA test can be developed. Here are the instructions from Dr Komáromy:

1) Sample Collection:

- Blood can be collected by any veterinarian or licensed veterinary technician.
- Make an appointment to have a blood sample drawn early in the week to avoid shipping over the weekend.
- The blood must be drawn into a lavender (purple) topped blood tube (EDTA anti-coagulant). A volume of 2 – 5 ml or larger is preferred. The blood MUST be unclotted (DO NOT send clotted blood).
- The tubes should be placed in a sealed (ziplock) plastic bag. Both the tube and the plastic bag should be marked with owner's

name, dog's name and date. The name/ID should agree with the information that is listed on the dog's pedigree and eye examination form.

- If blood is being collected from more than one dog, a new needle and syringe must be used for each dog. Each dog's blood sample must be put in its own labeled tube and labeled plastic bag. Be certain that each label corresponds to the correct sample.
- The blood sample is only useful if accompanied by copies of a pedigree and an eye exam form. Ideally, the eye exam form should not be older than 1 year, but any eye exam is better than none. If Dr. Komáromy already is in possession of an eye exam form or pedigree, please indicate this on a note accompanying the blood sample.

2) Sample Submission Information:

If at all possible, the sample should be shipped the same day as it is collected. Normally, it is NOT necessary to ship by an overnight service within the US. US Postal Service 1st Class or Priority Mail is adequate. Other two to three day delivery services are also suitable. However, schedule the shipment so that it will NOT arrive during a weekend or holiday period.

Your veterinarian's office may be able to assist you with the shipping. Packaging materials must be leak proof and meet the general requirements of the US Postal Service and other carriers. Appropriate packaging requires:

- Blood tube inside a sealed plastic bag (or other sealed container).
- Absorbent material inside the plastic bag. One paper towel is sufficient to soak up any potential leakage.
- Cushioning wrap - bubble wrap sheets are best - wrap around the plastic bag loosely.
- Please DO NOT tape or staple to the plastic bag.
- Enclose the pedigree and eye exam form(s) in the container.
- Use a sturdy container, either box or tube, with enough cushioning inside to prevent movement of the contents. If you use the US Postal Service, you can obtain a box marked "Priority Mail" at your post office that is ideal for this purpose.

(continued on back page)

“THE MORE SAMPLES WE COLLECT, THE SOONER WE CAN DETERMINE WHETHER OR NOT THIS TERRIBLE DISEASE IS GENETIC, AND (IF IT IS) THE SOONER A DNA TEST CAN BE DEVELOPED.”



Suggestions, submissions and general comments are always welcome. You can email me at

amandalowery@gmail.com, or contact any of us at the addresses listed on our website: www.vallhund.net.

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EYE RESEARCH UPDATE *(continued)*

(continued from page 5)

Warm weather - if the temperature at your location at the time of shipping is 80 degrees F (26.67 C) or above, follow these additional instructions:

- Obtain 2 freezable ice packs, available in hardware, drug and grocery stores.
- Freeze them overnight. **DO NOT SUBSTITUTE ICE CUBES, FROZEN FOOD PRODUCTS OR DRY ICE.**
- Obtain a styrofoam box that fits into an outer box and is large enough to hold the frozen ice packs and the sample and tueling in a plastic bag and add cushioning material as needed.
- **DO NOT freeze the blood sample** before shipping. It will not freeze when packed as described here.
- Put the pedigree and eye exam form a separate sealed bag to keep them dry.
- Ship the package by overnight delivery service.

If you use a carrier other than the US Postal Service, please contact them for any special requirements they might have for shipping of dog blood.

SHIP TO:

Dr. András M. Komáromy
 Department of Clinical Studies
 School of Veterinary Medicine
 University of Pennsylvania
 3900 Delancey Street, Room 2050
 Philadelphia, PA 19104-6010

If you have any questions please feel free to contact either Dr. Komáromy (215-573-2695; komaromy@vet.upenn.edu) or his Research Specialist Ms. Ann Cooper (215-898-5452; anco@vet.upenn.edu).

Please rest assured that any information about you and your dogs is kept strictly confidential.

Thank you very much for your support!

SWEDISH VALLHUND AKC RALLY TITLES

contributed by Marion Erp

NAME	TITLE	OWNER	NAME	TITLE	OWNER
Caliente Picante RN OA OAJ	RN	Krista Hill/Jeffrey Hill	Jonricker Moustaffa CD RE NA NAJ	RE RA RN	Mary Bennett/Kerstin J T Ottmar
Caval The Never-Ending Story RN	RN	Darlene Sjoberg/Cheryl Albert	Jonricker Nicke Nyfiken RN OA OAJ	RN	Louise McCombs
Caval's Jewel RN NA NAJ	RN	Iva English/Cheryl Albert	Mad-About-You RN	RN	Nita Woulf
Caval's Prairie Smoke RN	RN	Darlene Sjoberg	OsaFin Hopes 'N Prom- ises RN MX MXJ	RN	Mary P Carter/Timothy A Carter
Fennican Yahoo Finnboy RE NA NAJ NAP NJP	RE RA RN	Marion Erp	OsaFin Vaasa Nova RN OA OAJ	RN	Hattie Polhamus
Fromar Cassandra CD RA OA NAJ	RA RN	Louise McCombs	Sunfire Trailblazer RA	RA RN	Lisa Gail Glick
Fromar's Harmonic Lady RN	RN	Louise McCombs	Sunfire's Head Of The Class CDX RN	RN	Laura Clayton
Genesis Rolie Polie Olie RN	RN	Pamela Abrath	Vastgota Tommy RN	RN	Heidi Kadoke
Graadt're's Lakme RN	R	Colleen C Horn	Xsuggage Ursa Minor Jackie RN	RN	Jody Becher