



# The Shepherd's Whistle

Volume 9, Issue 1  
Spring 2005

Heaven goes by favor. If it went by merit, you would stay out and your dog would go in.  
--Mark Twain

From Robin..



Excitement abounds in our little area of the herding world. Early 2005 found several club members whelping litters and seeing to the proper placement of the exciting little darlings. Some of the pups went to club members & we will watch them grow up into the next generation of herding dogs!

Our handler families are growing too! Sandra & Nels Holmberg are close to having a new grandbaby. Mark & Lisa Fowler will bring in the summer with a new arrival. The doctors say, "It's a boy!" Ron & Ann Zytziak will have a new granddaughter in early Fall.

March was a blur of trials! Many members participated in the three herding trials held at Nestlé Purina Farms. One or more of these trials were "First Trial" experiences for several club members. Congratulations to the handlers & dogs! Our club was well represented, both in handler/dog teams and volunteers assisting the trials to run smoothly.

I would like to "welcome" the new members of the past few months. I don't always get a chance to talk with each of you at the meetings, so here it is. We are excited to have you join the club and look forward to your participation in times to come! & we do have "times"... usually associated with food.. The important moments when the events of the day are discussed, the learning & the application of that learning is taken to minute detail, usually in combination with breakfast, lunch, dinner or any other excuse to eat. ☺

The club has a full schedule of trials, clinics & practices coming up. There are dogs to work, stock to herd, lessons to learn & soo little time!

*Robin Reasoner..*  
SLHC President

## Wetting your whistle.....Online Newsletter

Spring is a time of renewal. New pastures, new lambs, new life emerging all around us. So it's only fitting that our newsletter should also undergo some changes.

The first change is taking The Shepherd's Whistle online. In addition to saving money on printing and mailing, we hope that it will allow the newsletter to be more accessible and flexible. (Hard copies of the newsletter can still be sent out to those that prefer that format.)

The second major change is editorial: Robin Reasoner has finally realized she has taken on far too many tasks and, rather than face burn-out, is relinquishing a few of her chores. It takes two mere mortals to do even one of Robin's former projects, so Kristen Reker and Carla Alley are now handling the newsletter. They need your suggestions and submissions to further the club's goal of exciting and informing people about all aspects of herding. Brags, stories, information on coming events, or even the "stupid" questions you've never had the nerve to ask are all welcome; they may not be about herding, but a related area such as hand spinning, country fairs or livestock management. If you find an item interesting or funny, others in the club may, too!

**Please send your submissions and comments to: Carla [alley@yhti.net](mailto:alley@yhti.net) or Kristen [bcnewe2@hotmail.com](mailto:bcnewe2@hotmail.com) They look forward to hearing from you.**

## [Read all about the March AKC trials at Purina on our Website](#)

### HOW TO USE A SHEPHERD'S WHISTLE

**I am a firm believer** in putting the cart before the horse. I name puppies before they're conceived. I train dogs to release on command before the dog has anything to be released from. And I'm learning to use a shepherd's whistle before I step into the arena with my dog.

I'm well acquainted with handling dogs with whistles. With hunting dogs, we use good old Acme Thunderer whistles. They're loud enough to scare away innocent bystanders for miles. You can't vary the tone much with the Thunderers, so it's all in the whistle pattern. For example, with my Brittany a short, sharp "PWEET!" means "get going." A quick "PWEET-PWEET!" means "Look back at me--I want you to cast in a different direction." A long, steady "PWEEEEEEET!" means "Come back, we're packing it in. Don't you ignore me! I KNOW you're not deaf--come back here!! HEY!"

But with a shepherd whistle, tone is everything. For example, "puh-WHEEE" means "Away." "Toot, toot," means "walk up." "Schlurrrgh" means "My whistle is full of spit."

For my fellow beginners, here's how to use a shepherd's whistle:

- 1) Place whistle in mouth and clench it between your teeth. Blow.
- 2) Take out the whistle and look at it really, really hard. Repeat step (1).
- 3) Pick whistle off ground. Place lanyard around neck and repeat step (1).
- 4) Rinse off whistle. Repeat step (1)
- 5) Get in car and drive far away from angry family.
- 6) Repeat step (1)
- 7) Wipe spit off steering wheel. Repeat step (1)
- 8) Look around triumphantly when you produce an ear-piercing "screeeeeeet"
- 9) Shout (in a fake Scottish accent), "Lie doon! Lie doon, dammya!"

**Congratulations!** You are now ready to compete in money trials at the Novice level.

**By Judy Menown**

**You can say any foolish thing to a dog, and the dog will give you a look that says, 'My God, you're right! I never would've thought of that!'**

**--Dave Barry**



**We need submissions for the Shepherds Whistle. Please submit pictures, short stories, jokes, etc.**

Send to  
Carla Alley at:  
[calley@yhti.net](mailto:calley@yhti.net)

or:  
Kristen Reker at:  
[Bcnewe2@hotmail.com](mailto:Bcnewe2@hotmail.com)

# Memories of Working Dog

*Mary Lou Tingley*

*from the Dewclaw (newsletter of the Briard Club of America)*

til recently it was difficult, if not impossible, to find Briards herding sheep anywhere in the United States. AKC sheep herding trials were concepts as yet undreamed of. In 1973 I had a wonderful opportunity to spend three weeks in France during which time I visited M. Paul Lhermingy--shepherd, Briard breeder, and owner of "Quidam," the top sheep-herding dog of France at that time. M. Lhermingy was good enough to take me and my companions out with the dogs and the sheep one morning. What a treat after owning the breed for almost fifteen years to finally see them do what they were bred for.

As we left Lhermingy's house, he reached for a wide leather belt that hung over the fence where the dogs were confined. The dogs went wild! They knew he was going out with the sheep and they all wanted to go. Lhermingy buckled the belt around his waist, selected Quidam and two bitches and set off for the barns.

The farm had three large sheep barns arranged in a horseshoe that opened onto a cobblestone courtyard.

Adjacent to the barns was a small pond where Quidam lay in the water while the girls brought out the sheep.

When all were assembled, Quidam and the girls led the sheep about a mile down the road to a large pasture bordered on one side by a field of beets and the other by an apple orchard. The task of the dogs now was to keep the sheep feeding on pasture grass... not beets or apples. While the sheep grazed quietly in the proper area, the dogs lay in the field watching.

Sometimes they played games. At a command from Lhermingy, the three dogs raced into the beetfield and pointed, and three blurred forms raced in the direction indicated by his outstretched arm. Of course there was no rabbit and a whistle brought the three dogs back to his side. It was interesting to note that while the dogs seemed intent on the game, should a sheep decide to stray toward the beet field or snatch a taste of fallen apple, the games were put on hold while the nearest dog charged down the boundary and the errant sheep returned to his companions post haste.

Lhermingy explained that the dogs worked on voice command, hand signals or purely on instinct. He could lie down for a nap after lunch knowing the dogs would take care of everything. If he were ill, he had merely to get to the barns and open the doors...the dogs would take over the job and he could go back to bed.

At the end of the day the three dogs gathered the sheep and took them back to the barn. Quidam went back to the pond for one last dip, and the girls put the sheep away. The walk back to the house was quiet, almost somber... a startling contrast to the enthusiasm of the morning.

I've watched movies of dogs herding sheep in the vast ranges of the American West and the mountains of New Zealand. The drama of the lift and fetch was exciting, but it all paled in comparison to watching my own breed keep those 200 sheep within the confines of the French pasture, drive them down that country road, and put them safely in the barns. The remarkable control shown by the dogs, their awesome sense of responsibility, and the boundless joy they showed for their work are memories that will stay with me forever.



## **More Information on Briards Briard Club of America**

Bravery, loyalty and intelligence form the basic character of the Briard. Herding instincts and well-balanced temperament make him an ideal family dog and guardian of the home and is especially devoted to the children in his family. He has even been known to protect "his" children from parental spankings. Bred for centuries as a guard and herding dog, the Briard is naturally aloof with strangers. The Briard is one of the few dogs that lives life with an air of independence and is apt to look on you more as a companion than a master. Intelligent and obedient, the Briard learns quickly, has an excellent memory and an ardent desire to please those he loves. He can understand an enormous range of commands (a 200-word vocabulary is not unusual) as well as tonal qualities and body language. An excellent watchdog without being vicious, nothing gets by him unnoticed. The instinct to protect in time of danger comes naturally. Friends of the Briard call him "a heart wrapped in fur." His picturesque coat is coarse and strong, a true "goat's coat." Dirt and water do not readily cling to it, and if well groomed it sheds very little. As a sheep-herding dog, the Briard demonstrates an uncanny ability to keep his flock within the unfenced boundaries of his master's property. If you have time and love to give, the Briard puppy will grow up reflecting every minute of kindness you have given and will return it to you many times over.

## Dear Mom,

Submitted by GraceSaalsea



Dear Mom,

Since you tend, at times, to pay far too much attention to this keyboard and this illuminated screen attached to it, I thought this would be the BEST place and the BEST way to:

### GET YOUR ATTENTION.

We need to have a human-to-dog chat here. I wish to remind you of something very important - something that I think you may have forgotten. There is an aspect of life that I, as your faithful and loving Border Collie, understand far better than you. This happens because I don't pay taxes and my life is, unfortunately for you, shorter. Because this is so, I learn things at an rate, cut out the stuff that doesn't matter in the long run, and can focus on what really matters in life. Here it is in a Kong, mom. The real reason for living, breathing, for going to work, for getting my toenails trimmed and such: accelerated

It is all about ME!

Without ME, you would be twenty pounds heavier than you are.  
Without ME, you would not have noticed all the beauty out there surrounding you.

Without ME, you would not have learned all those things you've learned about cancer, anal glands, Apple Cider Vinegar, etc.

Without ME, you would not have taken up running.  
Without ME, you would not have met so many great dog people.

Without ME, the vets wouldn't know who they were talking to when you call them and say "this is Grace."  
Without ME, you wouldn't have taken up writing again.  
Without ME, you wouldn't see as deeply, hear as well, feel so much or understand the scope of humankind.

It is all about ME, mom. Now that I have your attention, let's go outside and play. Let's be like puppies again. Let's keep our dreams, roll on something and forget how others feel about that. Let's follow the squirrels and keep our eyes on the loft places. Let's bark and chase our tails with glee. Let's eat peanut butter and pounce on leaves. Just because we can.

Follow ME, mom. I'll show you how to do it again. There are a lot of things in life that bog you down, and if you don't keep your nose on the scent, you'll get distracted - and you'll miss Life.

If you get distracted like a puppy, mom, just look at me. I'll show you what it's all about - because really, mom.

It's all about ME.

Signed, the love of your life, Pallie

Grace Saalsaa is with Mid America Border Collie Rescue <http://www.midamericabcrescue.com/>

She also has a book out (proceeds benefit BC rescue) "A Good Dog" by Grace Saalsaa, can be purchased at <http://books.lulu.com/content/83497>

## The Art of Good Sportsmanship

Nannette L. Newbury  
AKC Gazette  
Part one



In the words of Heywood Hale Broun, "Sports do not build character the reveal it" This is true in our sport and any other.

AKC judge Dr. Harry Smith Jr. was once asked, what things tend to irritate you when you're judging? He responded, "It takes a lot to get me irritated in the ring when I am judging. When I do, usually it is because one of the exhibitors has been a poor sport.

None of us are infallible. We do our best to render excellent judgments. When, in the eye of an exhibitor, we do not do what they think is correct, they must be a good sport and go far away from the ring before they explode! Good sportsmanship is the strongest parts of our dog show sport.

The primary principles of sportsmanship are integrity, fairness and respect-values we generally learn as youths involved in athletic programs. One reason that sports are so encouraged for youngsters is the lifetime lessons and the maturity that is developed through competition. Baseball great Mark McGwire once remarked, "If we do not teach our children the art of good sportsmanship, then how do they effectively learn to manage disappointments in their lives?"

The outward sign of good sportsmanship is showing respect for yourself, your competitors, officials and judges. Good sportsmanship takes courage and maturity, It's not easy to admit someone else has worked as hard as you or has more skills or a

better dog than you. Clinical psychologist Dr. John H. Murray says, "There are several factors that cause people to display a lack of grace and poor sportsmanship, immaturity, an obsession with winning, and faulty expectations on the part of the competitor may all contribute to this bad behavior."

Continued in the next issue of The Shepherds Whistle

**A Very Special Thank You  
Judy Menown for your willingness  
and ability to help with  
The Shepherds Whistle.**



## **~~FAST NEWS~~**

- The premiums for our Spring AHBA & AKC trials have been mailed & are available on our site, SLHC.ORG.
- Please note: HTD Ducks have been added to the AHBA trials!
- The next club meeting will be May 1st, immediately following the AHBA trials & cleanup at Nestle Purina Farms, Gray Summit MO.
- Tuesday night herding will begin in May. For those who have not participated in the past, the club works with Purina to offer two Tuesday evenings per summer month of herding practice. The time slots of practice are broken down into 20-minute intervals & reserved on request. I publish the schedule through email the Sunday night prior to each practice.
- Request: Due to Robin's new job, She will not be able to assist in the round pen this summer. We are in need of volunteer/s to help members in the round pen. This will be a topic on the agenda of the May 1st meeting. Last year there were approximately 3-5 members working in the round pen in an evening. Please contact me if you would like to volunteer.



## **Event Calendar**

### **May 1 Club Meeting**

immediately following cleanup of AHBA trial  
Nestlé Purina Farms, Gray Summit MO

Mar 31-Apr 3 - Bob Vest clinic at  
Nestlé Purina Farms, Gray Summit MO  
Clinic chair, Joyce Norris

Apr 30-May 1 - AHBA trials at  
Nestlé Purina Farms, Gray Summit MO  
Trial chair, Robin Reasoner  
Trial secretary, Kate Schallert

May 28-30 - AKC trials at  
Away2Me Farm, Puxico MO  
Trial chair, Joyce Norris  
Trial secretary, Kate Schallert

Oct 8-9 - AKC trials at  
Whiskey Creek Sheep Farm,  
Washington MO  
Trial chair, Terrasita Cuffie  
Trial secretary, Kate Schallert

Fall AHBA trial, details TBD