

Summer 2006

The Greater Swiss Mountain Mail

GSMDCR Announces a New Board

Alison Burns

Thanks for stepping up!

Letters to the membership were sent out earlier this year resulting in members volunteering for new board positions and some committing to continuing their current role. Thank you to the below members who have committed to following roles:

President
Carolynn Wamsley

Vice President
Jon Krauss

Corresponding Secretary
Sandi Snyder

Recording Secretary
Harry Austin

Treasurer
Alison Burns

Director A
Don Dickenson
Director B
Amy Moore

A huge thanks goes out to Todd Snyder who has served on the Board over the years and helped to lead the club to hosting the National. Thanks also to Teri Goldberg for serving on

the board over the past couple of years and best of luck to her as she focuses her "spare" time on her family! And thank you and we miss you to Veronica Kern for her time spent on the board. We all wish Veronica, Ken and Avalon best wishes in Texas!



In preparation for the National, there is also a **GREAT BIG THANK YOU** that goes out to Sandi Snyder for everything she has contributed to hosting the GSMDCA National Specialty and Rocky Mountain Regional Specialty. Thousands of hours have gone in to what is sure to be a SPECTACULAR event - we hope to see you all there!

Visit www.gsmdcr.org for all the details!

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What is New with the Members?

Spring / Summer Events and Results

Spring of 2006 started with a series of shows, a fun afternoon at Keri Lusters, and a pack hike in Aspen. In April club members came out for the Terry All Dog show in Brighton - after a couple of months on the couch, the Swissies strutted their stuff and cleaned up real nice!

Saturday:

- Zircon (Cedarcove's Jewel Thief) took Winners Dog and Best of Winners
- Maverick (Snowy Mountain Wild Card) took Reserve
- Inga (Derby's Great Inga) took Reserve
- Kai (BISS CH Cordillera's Future Legend) took Best of Breed

Sunday:

- Maverick (Snowy Mountain Wild Card) took Winners Dog and Best of Winners
- Zircon (Cedarcove's Jewel Thief) took Reserve
- Inga (Derby's Great Inga) took Reserve
- Kai (BISS CH Cordillera's Future Legend) took Best of Breed

In May there was a show in Longmont that brought out a few more dogs for the ring.

Saturday:

- Zircon (Cedarcove's Jewel Thief) took Winners Dog and Best of Winners
- Maverick (Snowy Mountain Wild Card) took Reserve
- Topaz (Cedarcove's Jem Stone) took Winners Bitch and Best of Opposite
- Kai (BISS CH Cordillera's Future Legend) took Best of Breed

Sunday:

- Zircon (Cedarcove's Jewel Thief) took Winners Dog and Best of Winners
- Maverick (Snowy Mountain Wild Card) took Reserve
- Topaz (Cedarcove's Jem Stone) took Winners Bitch and Best of Opposite (**New Champion**)
- Kai (BISS CH Cordillera's Future Legend) took Best of Breed

New Titles / Awards for Members

CH Cedarcove's Jem Stone (Topaz),Carolynn Wamsley

Aspen Pack Hike

Thanks to Harry Austin for coordinating a GSMDCA sanctioned pack hike in July. Novice legs were earned by Harry's Zelda (CH Alki's Bit Of Paradise CD) and Carolyn's Baron (CH Cedarcove's Classic Red Baron) as well as a Bernese Mountain Dog friend Steiger. Sandi and Jackson were there for moral support and picture taking as well ☺



Puppies

CH Cordillera's Lil Bombardier (Lillabit) owned and loved by Alison Burns & John Woods, welcomed her first litter into the world on May 23rd. Lillabit whelped (in the dining room) four beautiful boys through the course of the day. All the boys are enjoying their new families and getting big!



Upcoming Events

Buckhorn Valley Kennel Club

Ft. Collins, CO

Saturday August 12th - Sunday August 13th
Conformation and Obedience Trials

Greeley Kennel Club

Greeley, CO

Saturday August 19th - Sunday August 20th
Conformation and Obedience Trials

GSMDCA National and Regional Specialties

Snowmass, CO

Tuesday August 22nd - Sunday August 27th
Conformation, Rally, Obedience Trials

Weight Pull, Herding, Pack Hike, Draft Trials

FUN, FUN, FUN

Cheyenne Kennel Club

Cheyenne, WY

Saturday September 2nd - Sunday September 3rd
Conformation and Obedience Trials

Evergreen Colorado Kennel Club

Greeley, CO

Saturday September 9th - Sunday September 10th
Conformation and Obedience Trials

Grand Valley Kennel Club

Grand Junction, CO

Saturday September 23 - Sunday September 24th
Conformation and Obedience Trials

Pack Hike

Watch the Web Site for Details
Applying to GSMDCA for early November

Splenic Torsion

Article By: Teri Goldberg

Those of us who own a Swissy, or a large breed dog, are aware of the dangers of bloat or that Gastric Dilatation/Volvulus (GDV) that can occur. So we take measures to prevent it by breaking meals up during the day, not exercising right after eating, etc. Another concern for Swissys is an enlarged spleen. According to the 2000/2001 GSMDCA Health Survey, several gastrointestinal conditions are quite prevalent among Swissys: licking episodes (17.3%), pica (9.1%), bloat (5.3%), irritable/inflammatory bowel syndrome (5.1%), and splenic torsion (4.4%). It looks as if the incidence of spleen issues is competing with bloat/GDV in our breed. Spleen problems are not as rare as we think they are and seem to be becoming more frequent.

The spleen acts as a filter for red blood cells. Old and damaged red blood cells are broken down and removed from circulation in the spleen. The spleen also mediates immune response by producing lymphocytes, which in turn produce antibodies. Many humans and dogs can live without their spleen as other organs can compensate for the loss. One human example that many Colorado Avalanche fans may recall is Peter Forsberg. His spleen was removed after a playoff game a few years ago and he is still playing hockey at the top level (unfortunately not for the Avs).

My Swissy, Sebastian, had an emergency splenectomy this past January. His symptoms mimicked his usual gastroenteritis bouts: vomiting, diarrhea, no appetite, and lethargy. I thought that this was another case of Sebastian enjoying some elk or deer poop and paying the consequences. After a week of these symptoms coming and going, I finally brought him into work (I work as a veterinary assistant). I had my boss give him the once over. There could have also been a chance that he ingested part of his dog bed, because he and our other Swissy enjoy tearing their beds apart by playing tug-o-war with them. My vet felt him over and suspected that his spleen seemed a bit large, but wasn't quite convinced. The next day I dropped Sebastian off at work for the day to be observed and examined, as I attended an appointment about an hour away. I got a call from my vet later in the day to tell me that after more vomiting she decided to do blood work and x-rays. Sebastian wasn't so cooperative for the x-rays because he's not a fan of people holding and pulling his paws, so my vet decided an ultrasound would be the way to go to see if there was a foreign body or enlargement of the spleen. Sure enough the next day the ultrasound showed an enlarged spleen and lack of blood flow to it. No question, my vet said, the spleen needs to be removed that day.

Sebastian was operated on and made it out of recovery successful. After seeing Sebastian and knowing he was fine, I went in with the vet to see what was removed. I couldn't believe how big the spleen was when she took it out! It weighed about five pounds and had folded over compromising the blood flow causing the spleen to enlarge and start dying. Fortunately the spleen had not twisted; otherwise Sebastian could've been worse off. My vet had to make the incision larger in order to get the spleen out due to the size. Fortunately, Sebastian has recovered quite well and is back to his ornery self. He wasn't quite happy after surgery due to the fact that not only did we take his spleen out, but his family jewels were removed as well ☺ He lost about ten pounds between the three of them ☺

The signs and symptoms Sebastian presented with are common to a lot of different problems. Next time he presents us with these symptoms I will be quicker to bring him to the vet, because time is precious in these cases. I waited for a week due to the fact that Sebastian has had many sensitive stomach bouts and I thought this was just another episode of an upset tummy. I'm lucky that the spleen didn't twist right away and just folded, otherwise we may not have Sebastian today. It's important to know what your dog's normal behavior is so when something seems off and there are other symptoms like vomiting, diarrhea, lack of appetite, etc. you can get them to a vet ASAP! Some important things to check yourself would be their gums, they should be a nice pink color and when you push on them with your finger they will turn white and return to pink within seconds. If this doesn't happen and the gums look pale you should get them to your vet quickly because this is a sign of poor blood circulation. Normal breathing rate should be around 10-30 breathes per minute, heart rate between 60-100 beats per minute, and temperature between 101.2-102.8 F. To check for good hydration, lift their skin on the back of their neck and it should spring back within seconds.

After talking to my vet there seems to be no specific cause of splenic torsion. The likelihood is greater in large breed dogs just the same as bloat. An enlarged spleen was not something I thought was a concern for Swissys when we got Sebastian. I knew the potential of bloat and am extremely careful to prevent it. But since splenic torsion is getting up there in incidence with bloat I feel we owners of Swissys (and large breed dogs) need to be more aware of it. The bottom line is that you know your dog the best and even if there is something that just doesn't seem right and there are no full-blown symptoms yet, get them to a vet right away. Better to catch it sooner than later. With all the diagnostic testing they have these days it can save your dog's life!

Don't Tread On Me

Reacting to a Rattle Snake Bite

Article By:Carolynn Wamsley

You may hear a lot more about rattlesnakes in Colorado this year. The dry weather is serving as a great incentive to migrate. As it happened to me, I came home from work an hour early a few weeks back. As I gathered up my pack to go in the house I noted Topaz's nose and throat were swollen. And her head was hanging low. A rattlesnake had struck her on the muzzle.

- Fang Marks (one or more)
- Pain, swelling and discoloration in the bitten area
- Tingling around the mouth
- Nausea and vomiting
- Weakness and dizziness

These are common symptoms of rattlesnake envenomation. Snakebites are always an emergency. Although many first aid measures have been thought to be helpful, none have proven to lessen mortality. In particular cold pack or ice, tourniquets, incision and suction, electroshock, alcohol, and constriction bands are to be avoided. Especially because a significant amount of time is wasted trying to employ questionable first aid, this time is better spent transporting your dog to the vet hospital. If you can, get a description of the snake. Call your vet's office to let them know you are coming in with an emergency, and give them an estimated time of arrival. Keep your dog calm, and stay calm while driving. Even non-venomous snakes may cause serious infection, and treatment may be needed.

Dogs can be vaccinated against rattlesnakes, but the effectiveness is debated. Red Rocks Biologics developed the rattlesnake vaccine - Crotalus Atrox Toxoid - and made it available in 2003 (www.redrockbiologics.com). The vaccine works by creating immunity in dogs that makes the venom's painful effects less severe and the chances of the dog needing costly treatment less likely, according to the information provided by the company. I read their brochure prior to Topaz's incident and decided against the protocol.

Tim Hackett, an associate professor of emergency and critical care at CSU Veterinary Medicine and Biomedical Sciences, said the university's vet hospital doesn't provide the vaccine and doesn't recommend dogs get it. "It hasn't been shown to be effective", he said. The vaccinated dogs the staff has seen have not had less-severe symptoms. And the vaccine was not developed to work against the Prairie Rattlesnake, the only species of rattlers that exists in this part of Colorado. Each vaccine costs \$25 - two are recommended the first year, spaced one month apart (three for dogs over 100 pounds). Because the best protection is within the first six months following vaccination, the schedule for booster doses depends upon the length of rattlesnake season annually.

A vial of antivenin can cost about \$625, but your dog may not even need that. In Topaz's case, graded as mild, Morphine was given for the pain, Benedryl for the swelling, and about twenty-four hours of IV fluids to push the venom through. After about four days she was back in action. Antivenin therapy is the only treatment that will save patients with fatal envenomations. My vet bill was around \$900, but this protocol has to be followed even with the use of the antivenin. The antivenin, as it was explained to me, attaches itself to the venom to help move it through the system faster.

All snakebites are not created equal. The quality of venom depends not only on the type of snake, but on the season, the geographical region, age of the snake, and how recently it has released venom previously. Diagnosis of snakebite in animals is largely presumptive. The history is often highly suggestive, increased speed of the onset of signs suggests increased severity of the bite. Severe bites will have local and systemic signs within 30-60 minutes; less severe bites may take 6-8 hours for visible symptoms. Systemic signs can have a slow and insidious onset many hours after the initial signs. Topaz continued to swell through the night even while on IV fluid and anti-inflammatory. This is the reason any animal suspected of being bitten should remain under close observation for up to 8 hours following the incident.

Approximately 20% of rattlesnake bites are 'dry bites'; the snake does not inject any venom. But, your dog should be closely observed for 8-10 hours with visible snakebite wounds or witnessed being bitten but show no clinical signs.

This rattlesnake had slithered into my dog kennel while I was away. I have since found a way to snake proof the area. Online research showed the best remedy was using 1/4 inch hardware cloth, buried 4-6 inches in the ground (snakes

do not burrow), standing about 2 1/2 feet above ground (a snake can stand at about half of it's body length). I also placed flashing across the top... So, it would have to be a fairly *athletic snake* to get into my dog kennels these days. But, this is not protection on hikes or when they are running around the yard.

Keep safety measures in mind when taking your dog outdoors.

- Stay on marked trails
- Keep dogs on a leash so they can't wander off the trail, or to have the control to pull pets away from a snake.
- Keep brush and shrubs in your yards trimmed, any overgrowth should be cleared.
- Don't let your pet around areas that have been stockpiled with firewood or other areas where snakes may seek shelter, like piles of rocks.

Common sense is the best defense. Cultivate an attitude of alertness. The more you know about snakes and how they live, the more aware you will be of where you would expect to encounter them.



Topaz - side and front after bite - and the pretty showgirl before the bite below



Wrap Up

Dog-ercises!

You've seen those fitness ads on TV promising amazing results from all sorts of contraptions. Well, there's no need to invest in fancy equipment. If you have (or can borrow) a dog, you have everything you need to get in shape now. The following exercise can be done anywhere, anytime...

- Inner Thighs: Place the dog's favorite toy between your thighs. Press tighter than the dog can pull. Do not attempt this bare legged - dogs who favor shortcuts to success will just dig the toy out. You could be damaged.
- Upper Body Strength: Lift the dog off the couch, off the bed, out of the flowerbed. Repeat, repeat, and repeat. As the dog ages, this exercise is reversed - on to the couch, on to the bed, into the car and so on.
- Balance and Coordination:
 - 1 - Remove your puppy from unsuitable tight places. If they're too small for him they're certainly too small for you.
 - 2 - Practice not falling when your dog bounds across the full length of the room, sails through the air, and slams into the back of your knees.
 - 3 - (for use with multiple dogs) Jump up and run to the phone, try to answer before it stops ringing.
 - 4 - (alternate) For older dogs, attempt to cross a room without tripping over the dog. Get off your couch without stepping on any part of a sleeping elderly dog.
- Upper Arms: Throw the ball. Throw the squeaky toy. Throw the Frisbee. Repeat until nauseous or you run out of things to throw, because you know your Swissy isn't bringing it back.
- (alternate) Tug the rope. Tug the pull toy. Tug the sock. Repeat until your shoulder is dislocated or the dog gives up (we all know which comes first)
- Hand Coordination: Remove foreign object from dogs locked jaw. This exercise is especially popular with puppy owners. Repeat, repeat, and repeat. Remember this is a timed exercise.
- Calves: After the dog is worn out the rest of your body, place a circular toy on your ankle and let the dog tug while you tug back.
- (alternate) Run after dog - pick any reason, there are plenty. Dogs of any size can be used for this exercise.
- Neck Muscles: Attempt to out-manuever the canine tongue headed for your ear, mouth, or eyeball. This is a lifelong fitness program. A dog is never too old or too feeble to 'kiss' you when you least expect it!

Thanks to Carolyn Wamsley for the above - we can all relate!