

# THE HOWLER



Volume 3, Issue 10 AKC Licensed Club #4135 December 2004

Member of Tuolumne County Chamber of Commerce and  
Tuolumne County Humane Society

[www.stkc.org](http://www.stkc.org)

## NOTES FROM THE PRESIDENT ---

Happy New Year ~~

We had a wonderful Holiday Party and a great gift exchange. The "Peppery Feast" was as good as usual and the gifts were awesome.

Obedience classes – puppy, basic and rally will be starting up this month (January). This is normally our largest class possibly due to the new puppies and dogs that were received as holiday presents.

Next month will be General Elections and if your dues have not been paid by the 1<sup>st</sup>, you are delinquent and cannot vote. Members renewing after January 1<sup>st</sup> will be charged an additional \$5 delinquency fee.

We may have some Committee vacancies coming up to due non-renewals and changes in assignments. Think about filling a position when your new President, Fred Helmbold asks for volunteers. Our Club is based on volunteerism and without the members we cannot exist.

Take care and have a wonderful New Year!

*Linda*



## "Puppy Size"

"Danielle keeps repeating it over and over again. We've been back to this animal shelter at least five times. It has been weeks now since we started all of this," the mother told the volunteer.

"What is it she keeps asking for?" the volunteer asked.

"Puppy size!" replied the mother.

"Well, we have plenty of puppies, if that's what she's looking for." "I know...we have seen most of them," the mom said in frustration...

Just then Danielle came walking into the office. "Well, did you find one?" asked her mom.

"No, not this time," Danielle said with sadness in her voice. "Can we come back on the weekend?"

The two women looked at each other, shook their heads and laughed. "You never know when we will get more dogs. Unfortunately, there's always a supply," the volunteer said.

Danielle took her mother by the hand and headed to the door. "Don't worry, I'll find one this weekend," she said.

Over the next few days both mom and dad had long conversations with her. They both felt she was being too particular.

"It's this weekend or we're not looking any more," Dad finally said in frustration.

"We don't want to hear anything more about puppy size either," Mom added.

Sure enough, they were the first ones in the shelter on Saturday morning.

By now Danielle knew her way around, so she ran right for the section that housed the smaller dogs. Tired of the routine, mom sat in the small waiting room at the end of the first row of cages.

There was an observation window so you could see the animals during times when visitors weren't permitted. Danielle walked slowly from cage to cage, kneeling periodically to take a closer look. One by one the = dogs were brought out and she held each one. One by one she said, "Sorry, you're not the one."

It was the last cage on this last day in search of the perfect pup. The volunteer opened the cage door and the child carefully picked up the dog and held it closely. This time she took a little longer.

"Mom, that's it! I found the right puppy! He's the one! I know it!" she screamed with joy. "It's the puppy size!"

"But it's the same size as all the other puppies you held over the last few weeks," Mom said.

"No not size ---- the SIGHS. When I held him in my arms, he sighed," she said. "Don't you remember? When I asked you one day what love is, you told me love depends on the sighs of your heart. The more you love, the bigger the sigh!"

The two women looked at each other for a moment. Mom didn't know whether to laugh or cry. As she stooped down to hug the child, she did a little of both.

"Mom, every time you hold me, I sigh. When you and Daddy come home from work and hug each other, you both sigh. I knew I would find the right puppy if it sighed when I held it in my arms," she said.

Then holding the puppy up close to her face she said, "Mom, he loves me. I heard the sighs of his heart!"

Close your eyes for a moment and think about the love that makes you sigh. I not only find it in the arms of my loved ones, but in the caress = of a sunset, the kiss of the moonlight and the gentle brush of cool air on a hot day.

"Life is not measured by the breaths we take, but by the moments that take our breath away."

May all your days be filled with Sighs!

> >> *Thanks to Linda Grant for sharing this article!*



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**General Membership Meeting  
Sierra-Tuolumne Kennel Club**

Monday, December 20, 2004  
Holiday Party – Peppery Gar & Brill  
Start time: 6:15 PM

**Members Attending** – Linda, Bruce, Cherie, Fred and Pat, Patti and Ed, Ann, Carol and Jim, Sydney, Al and Mary, Pat and Gene, Jo-Ann and Jerry, Jennifer, Louis and Rebekah, Bonnie, Laurie Norton, Leslie, and Deborah and George Hart, and Jan and Rocky Costa.

**President's Report – Linda**

Need hosts for 2005, still need February, March, Jennifer volunteers, and November, Costa's volunteer. Picture binders from our Big Show 2002 and 2003 were passed around.

**Vice President's Report - Bruce**

Pursuing the copier rental, will have more to report in January.

**Secretary's Report – Cherie**

Nothing

**Treasurer's Report – Fred:**

Figures are unchanged from last month's report.

**Class Reports:**

Classes start on January 12th. Rally will be at 4:45, with Basic and Puppy at 6:00, and Conformation at 7:15. We could use help on the first night with registration, directing "traffic," etc.

**Howler Editor – Bonnie**

Would appreciate any material that could be sent her way.

**Membership – Pat H.**

Dues will be delinquent on January 1<sup>st</sup>. You must be a member to vote.

**Publicity – Sydney:**

Info about the Classes has been sent to radio stations, Twain Harte Times, Modesto Bee, and the Union Democrat. Louis has a contact at KMYL for ads.

**Sunshine – Mary:**

Good news, no need for Sunshine this last month.

**Historian/Librarian – Cherie:**

Nothing

**Website – Linda:**

The information is up, so direct people there.

**AKC Conformation Show – Carrie**

No report, Carrie was home delivering puppies.

**AKC Agility Trial – Carol**

There is trouble finding dates that fit into both AKC's schedule and site schedules during the months of September and October.

**NADAC/ASCA Agility Trial – Linda/Cherie**

It will be the first weekend in June, 2005. We have a contract with Summerville High for the baseball field. Ric Pitman is our judge. It will be a two ring, one judge setup. We will have Combo, Jumpers, and Touch N Go on Saturday and Combo, Jumpers, and Tunnelers on Sunday. We also have a judge spoken for to judge in 2006, Susan Perry. It will be the second week of June because of the High School Graduation schedule.

**Old Business:**

Humane Society – Fred/Bonnie – There is not enough room on the field at the Humane Society, so it needs to be rethought. It is being worked on. This will be discussed at our next Board Meeting, January 5<sup>th</sup>, 2005, at Linda's house at 6:00 PM. STKC business cards for the Obedience Classes were passed around.

**New Business:**

None

**Brag:**

Saved until the January meeting.

**Meeting adjourned:**

6:35 Linda/Pat H/Passed

**Next Month's meeting at:**

Jim and Carol Frazier's on January 17, 2005  
15624 Curtis Circle, Sonora (209-533-3476)  
Directions traveling East from Sonora on Hwy 108 –  
Right on Tuolumne Rd., left on Black Oak Rd., left onto Barron Ranch Rd., left onto Curtis Circle (veering to left fork) – about ½ mile up on left side. STKC banner will be out. (Note: Long driveway, cannot see house from road.)

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**My hairdresser is on vacation!**

**General Membership Meetings -- 2005**

(3<sup>rd</sup> Monday – 6:00 p.m.)

*January – Carol & Jim Frazier*

*February –*

*March – Jennifer Slater*

*April – Rebekah & Lewis Mastro*

*May – Carol & Jim Frazier*

*June – Bonnie & Warren Belisle*

*July – Cherie Gessford*

*August – Pat & Gene Barnes*

*September – Jo-Ann & Jerry Gritz*

*October – Pat & Fred Helmbold*

*November – Rocky & Jan Costa*

*December – Restaurant*

Let Linda know if you would like to host a meeting for February

**Board Meetings – 2005**

January 5<sup>th</sup> – 6:00 pm @ Linda Grant's

“If a dog will not come to you after he has looked you in the face, you ought to go home and examine your conscience.” -- Woodrow Wilson



**Sunshine Chair > Mary Kennedy**

Good News! Everyone's healthy, but please let Mary know there's someone who needs a card!!



(Yes, it's Kiah!)

## **DOGS AND SNOW : MADE FOR EACH OTHER?**

If you think you have to leave your dog indoors while you and your family enjoy the snow, think again. Dogs can be a great source of joy and adventure in cold climates. The great variety in the canine species means that many dogs can enjoy winter activities. You, your family, and your dog can share many kinds of cold-weather fun.

### **SNOW PROOF YOUR DOG**

In northern climates throughout the world, dogs live and play outdoors quite comfortably in extreme temperatures. In many parts of the United States, however, dogs are used to living in climate-controlled homes. These dogs lack conditioning to cold weather, and need to be protected and acclimated to the lower temperatures. A good rule of thumb, then, is to be safe: slowly introduce your dog to the cold weather. Then, enjoy!

We humans put on warm clothes to venture into the snow, but most dogs can dispense with added layers. Large breeds and heavily coated dogs usually do just fine in the cold. It is extremely unlikely that these dogs will suffer frostbite or hypothermia on an outdoor jaunt, even in the coldest of weather, especially if you make sure to keep them moving. However, if your pet is a small, fragile breed with little body fat (such as Chihuahuas, Italian greyhounds, whippets, miniature pinschers, and so on), or just a small house dog that shivers in cold weather, I suggest that you purchase a warm winter coat or sweater made just for dogs.

### **LIVING OUTDOORS:**

If you intend to house your dog in an outdoor enclosure in a cold winter area, take some common-sense precautions. If your dog will live outdoors for a period of time, make sure he has access to a shelter that is wind-free and dry. Use wood chips or straw for insulation in the enclosure. They'll keep your dog much warmer and dryer than rugs or mats.

**FROSTBITE:** Some people worry that their dogs will get frostbite from running around in bare feet in the snow. Fortunately, dogs have remarkable collateral circulation in their legs and toes, which makes frostbite of these body parts rare. However, dogs can suffer from frostbite elsewhere,

especially in the genital areas. If these areas are reddened, thickened, and not pliable to the touch, this is an emergency. Call a veterinarian immediately.

**HYPOTHERMIA:** Most dogs are quite resistant to hypothermia except under extreme cold conditions seen in the very northern United States, and in Canada and Alaska. Certain breeds of dogs, however, have coat textures that tend to cause snow to stick to their coat. These "snow balls" can melt next to their skin and significantly lower their body temperature. Inspect your dog's coat from time to time to make sure this isn't a problem.

**SALT:** Many people wonder if the salt dumped on urban streets to melt snow is a problem for dogs. In theory, high salt concentrations can cause irritation between a dog's toes, and licking and swallowing a lot of salt can promote some gastrointestinal distress. Washing your dog's feet after a walk should take care of most of the problem. If you have a lot of salt in your area, you may want to consider purchasing "booties." However, it has been my observation that the salt is far more damaging to the vegetation than to the dogs!

### **HAVING FUN IN THE SNOW**

Dogs do much to accentuate our relationship with nature. It is a joy to follow behind a dog who is showing interest in every snow-covered burrow, noting the animal scents along the trail, and observing the animal tracks and the odors of creatures you would never notice. You can enjoy this relationship with your dog when hiking, skiing, or snow-shoeing.

By the way, if you're planning on taking your dog to the mountains, you may be wondering if the altitude will affect him. Relax! I have never witnessed nor heard of altitude sickness in dogs. Many years ago, in fact, competitive sled-dog mushers Joe Reddington and Susan Butcher mushed two dog teams to the top of Denali in Alaska—over 20,000 feet—with no altitude sickness in the dogs. Similarly, the French veterinary nutritionist Dominique Gran-Jeans worked with a group of search and rescue dogs in South America in mountains well above 20,000 feet, and reported no altitude sickness.

**SKIJORING:** If you're athletic and a reasonably good skier, consider skijoring. This sport has gained considerable popularity in European snow country and is gaining enthusiasts in North America. In skijoring, you wear cross-country skis and a well-trained dog, attached to your waist by a special harness, pulls you along the trail. It is amazing how efficiently one medium-sized dog can pull a person over the trail!

**MUSHING:** The sport of mushing—driving sled dogs—has grown exponentially in the last decade. I have spent a major part of the last ten winters officiating at long-distance sled dog races, including the Iditarod, the Yukon Quest, and the Beargrease in Minnesota. These sled dogs are the true dogs of winter and the world's greatest mammalian athletes. Indeed,

these dogs are bred and conditioned to humanely cover over 100 miles per day for 10 to 12 days. A racing team of 10 to 16 dogs, each weighing about 50 pounds, typically pulls 300 to 500 pounds. Larger "freighting" sled dogs pull considerably more weight at a much slower speed. As more people develop an interest in mushing, many cold weather communities have small recreational dog teams. In my opinion, there is no better way to enjoy winter than behind a team of dogs on a wilderness trail.

**SNOW SHOENING:** Both mushing and skijoring have been considered for entry as demonstration sports in the Winter Olympics, but you do not need to be an Olympian athlete to enjoy winters with your dog. Just last winter, my wife and I drove to Lake Tahoe and were startled to find crowds of people. To escape the hordes, I took my backpack, my wife, two dogs, and snowshoes on a 30-minute hike into Desolation Valley. We sat in our tent and enjoyed two days of magnificent scenery with coyotes howling and snow falling.

**SLEDDING:** Last but not least, you can go sledding with your dog. Many families with small children have their dogs pull them on their sleds. Just be certain your dog has a proper sled harness.

**START SLOWLY, BE SAFE, AND HAVE FUN!**  
Clearly, cold weather and snow do not mean that you and your canine companion have to stay indoors by the fire. Make sure that you and your dog are prepared for the weather, then let the fun begin! Start slowly, be safe. Your dog will have fun, and so will you. Playing with dogs in the snow gets people over cabin fever better than almost anything I know.

*Written by Charlie J. Berger, DVM*

### **STKC SHOW SCHEDULE – 2005**

June 4 & 5 – NADAC/ASCA Agility Trial  
Summerville High Baseball Field  
Judge: Ric Pitmann  
Volunteers: TBD

### **STKC SHOW SCHEDULE – 2006**

June 10 & 11 – NADAC/ASCA Agility Trial  
Summerville High Baseball Field

Contact Linda to sign up for a spot on the  
Volunteer Roster – THX!!

## **Dog's Will to Live Gives Hope to Rescuer -- An injured sheltie provides a homeless woman with the 'miracle' she needed . . . (By Dorothy Korber – Bee Staff Writer – Published Sat., Dec. 25, 2004)**

(Contributed by Cherie Gessford)

This is the story of Sweep the sheltie, a 12-pound dog with more lives than a cat, ears that would dwarf a Great Dane, and a heart even bigger than his ears.

Sweep's heart, in fact, was strong enough to rescue him from the brink - and save a human heart at the same time.

The young sheltie spent his early life as a stray, shy and matted, scavenging an existence around an apartment complex in Sacramento's College Glen neighborhood near the state university. That's where Karen Porter, whose house is nearby, first spotted him last July.

She asked around and discovered that the abandoned dog had been there for six months. No one had a clue about his origins.

"I tried luring him with a bone, but he was too wild and scared," Porter recalled. "So Animal Control came out and darted him. He scooted away, but we found him. He was petrified. Shaking."

The tranquilized dog's mad dash from his captors inspired Porter's 9-year-old son, Andrew, to suggest a name. "He just swept through the leaves," Andrew said. So Sweep it was.

The lonesome little dog found a warm and lively home with the Porters.

Porter is a home day-care giver, so several chatty toddlers and their toys are usually corralled in her big living room. Out back, the family's other three dogs romp and yip playfully: another sheltie, an Australian shepherd and a border collie.

The Porters and their dogs are active participants in agility competitions, which test the animals' physical skills and their obedience to their masters. "I like doing it," Karen Porter said, "because the dog's looks don't matter - a mutt can do it - but what's important is the teamwork between the dog and his trainer."

Once he was clean and brushed, Sweep looked like a miniature Lassie - or perhaps a collie that Mother Nature left in the dryer too long. He basked in the kindness he was shown and began to trust people.

In October, after three months in the Porters' foster care, he was ready to join his new owner, a man who owned shelties as a kid and wanted to adopt the plucky stray.

But Sweep had other ideas.

After two days at the new place in east Sacramento, he slipped out of the back yard and disappeared. The Porters were frantic at the news. "We figured he was trying to find his way home to us," Karen Porter said.

Sweep escaped on a Sunday evening. On Monday, the Porters plastered the neighborhood with posters and searched fruitlessly for the lost dog. On Tuesday afternoon, the terrible phone call came.

A sobbing woman told Karen Porter that she had found Sweep on the railroad tracks near Elvas Avenue. She got the Porters' phone number from Sweep's collar tag. "He's hurt real bad," she said.

The distraught caller was Louise Wright, who knows something about being a stray herself.

Wright, 35, was walking along the tracks, observing the racing clouds on this stormy day and thinking about how tough her life was and wondering if it was worth it. She'd been homeless off and on for two years and lost custody of her children.

"I was having a really hard time," she said. "I'm battling a lot of personal things right now. It was a bad, bad day."

Then she saw something between the rails.

She took a closer look.

"At first, I thought it was a plastic bag, then maybe a dead possum," she said. "Then I realized: Oh my God, it's a little dog. I started to cry. And he lifted his head."

Sweep's body was in a small depression, his head resting higher. There was no blood, but his whiskers were sheered off and he couldn't move. Judging by his condition, doctors said later, he'd probably been lying there paralyzed for two days, with the trains rumbling over him and the rain pelting down.

Tenderly, Wright picked him up, cradling him in her sweater. She headed for the nearest house to find a phone.

After getting her call, Karen Porter scooped up the kids and raced over to Elvas Avenue. Still holding Sweep, Wright climbed into the Porters' van and they headed for the nearest veterinary hospital.

Sometime later that evening, when it was clear that the dog was in good hands, Louise Wright slipped away.

Though Sweep could not walk and his left legs were twisted under him, X-rays showed no broken bones. He had suffered a serious head injury, however. He was in the hospital nearly a week.

Karen Porter stayed with him every day, encouraging him to eat and walk. Gradually, the gleam came back into his brown eyes. It started to look like he would make it.

When his rescuer called to see how Sweep was doing, Porter eagerly took the telephone. "How can I thank you?" she told Wright. "You saved my dog's life."

"Your dog saved my life," Wright responded quietly.

"What?" asked Porter, perplexed.

Wright explained that Sweep's courage and spirit inspired her to take control of her own life - to rejoin the human race.

"I needed faith, a little bit of a miracle," she said last week. "I had lost hope. Little by little, I was becoming invisible. I was giving up. But Sweep didn't give up. And now neither will I. I think we were brought together for a purpose."

Her first goal is to get her own place - and maybe her own dog.

Today, Sweep is still missing those whiskers, but otherwise he's doing fine. He trots around the Porters' house, springs from sofa to ottoman like a diminutive gazelle, bats a toy with a graceful paw. He's home to stay.

"I guess we've got ourselves four dogs now," Karen said, fondling Sweep's big ears. Andrew corrected her: "More like 3 1/2."

Sweep's story spread throughout the dog-agility community nationwide via the Internet. Friends and strangers chipped in the money to cover his medical bills. And now agility folks are working together to help Wright and her family, an effort coordinated by Porter.

Wright says she's overwhelmed by the affectionate support. And ready to accept it.

"I'm taking action, I'm fighting for my life," she said. "Sweep is the reason. He's one of God's little guideposts."



**Note from the Editor:**

Please feel free to email me any articles or digital photos of your dog(s) for upcoming newsletters.

Bonnie Belisle [mtnbonnie@hotmail.com](mailto:mtnbonnie@hotmail.com)

# 2005 Membership Dues WERE due January 1, 2005

***But it is still not too late to RENEW!!***

Single Membership - \$15.00 per year (+ \$5 late fee)

Family Membership - \$20.00 per year (+\$5 late fee)

Send your check and the form below to:

STKC  
PO Box 1256  
Soulsbyville, CA 95372



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