



THE FIRST AGILITY ISSUE!

Volume 1, Issue 3

December, 2005

- “Agility in Finland” by Outi Huuskonen
- “Raising the Agility Puppy” by Marion Erp
- Part 2 of “Canine Vaccines” by Bonnie Conner

THE AMERICAN SWEDISH VALLHUND SOCIETY NEWSLETTER

All Bark!

Welcome to Issue Three

(it's our biggest issue yet, we had to add three extra pages to hold it all!)



Leap into our agility issue!

Hi everyone, and welcome to our very first special issue! We have some great contributions from some very knowledgeable people (including Outi from Finland, making this a genuinely international issue!). As you already know, the Swedish Vallhund is an extremely versatile dog, and one of the areas in which it excels is agility. Agility is a sport which was invented in England in the late 1970s as a

canine version of equestrian showjumping. An agility course can contain a variety of obstacles like jumps, tunnels, weave poles, the dog walk (a ramp up to a narrow, raised horizontal board, then a ramp down again), the A-frame (two steep ramps up and down), a table (where the dog must sit or down for a timed duration), the teeter-totter (or see-saw), the tire jump, and all kinds of others. It's evolved from there to a very competitive international sport, as well as something dogs and their people can do just for fun and exercise. There are a variety of different agility organizations, each with their own rules and titles. UKC agility, for example, includes unusual obstacles like the sway bridge (a suspended bridge). I recently started agility classes (at PAWS here in Texas) with

my Vallhund Rakki, and it's just so much fun, we both come home from class smiling. I really encourage you to find a fun agility class in your area and give it a try. Even if you don't want to compete (although my agility instructor says that everyone says they don't want to compete...at first), it's a great way to have fun with your dog, and Vallhunds seem to be made for it!

Amanda Lowery, Editor
amandalowery@charter.net

ASVS club officers: President: Pam Abrath; Vice-President: Darlene Sjöberg; Secretary: Yvonne Slusser; Membership Secretary: Amanda Lowery;

Treasurer: Marion Erp; Board Members : Lori Schaunaman, Tilli DeBoor; Web Site Manager: Outi Huuskonen. 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 pro-

mote 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

Amanda Lowery at:
amandalowery@charter.net

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BRAG Corner!

Earned a new title
with your Vallhund?
Achieved a goal?
Let us know and
we'll publish it
here!

🏆 Lori Schauanaman's Nikita (UKC & IABCA CH Bodatorp Nikita) and Lori Schauanaman and Yvonne Slusser's Flip (UKC CH Lovsjokarrs Filip) both passed their CGC test on 11/19 at the BOTC in Bloomington, MN.

🏆 UKC GR CH Genesis Rolie Polie Olie CGC RN got his first leg in AKC Novice A in Ixonia WI on 11/27

🏆 UKC GR CH Westorps Alexan-

der the Great got a Group 1, Group 2 and a Reserve BIS at the ARBA Windy City Classic on 10/8

🏆 UKC CH PaVon Anastasia got 2 Group 1s and a Group 3 plus a Best in Show at the ARBA Windy City Classic.

🏆 Nicole Abrath and Al went Best Junior Handler at the WI Boston Terrier Assoc UKC show on 11/12

🏆 Darlene Sjoberg's Jannie (Caval's Prairie Smoke RN), earned his Rally Novice title 11/5 in Bloomington, MN

🏆 Marion Erp's Finn (Fennican Yahoo Finnboy RN, NA, NAP, NAJ, NJP, NAC, NJC, NGC, TN-N, TG-N) earned his Novice Agility Certificate 12/3-4

CONGRATULATIONS!!!



Agility in Finland by Outi Huuskonen

Hi! My name is Outi Huuskonen and I am one of the overseas members of ASVS. I am from Finland, the home country of 4 Vall Agility Champions: the world's **FIRST** Vall **INT AgCH** (International Agility Champion) Fennican Lady Leilanie (Leila, who was on the Finnish Agility Team at the World Championship competitions in 2004 and 2005 and was 13th in this year's World Championships in Spain!), the **FIRST AgCH** (Agility Champion) Vall in the world: Jaxonville Aragorn (Juri), the first **triple Ch** Vall AgCH ObCH (Obedience Champion) INT CH (International Conformation Champion) Jaxonville Eloisa Elisa (Milla) and AgCH ObCH INT CH Fennican Ässä Tässä (Ässä). One thing to be noted is that Leila, Milla and Ässä are ALL owned and trained by the same person: Päivi Männistö. She is the shining star in agility in here and probably in the world of Valls. In Sweden there is also one Vall that has got a Ch title in agility: N AgCH Tridents Imma.

I have two Valls, a 5 ½ year old male Jonni (INT NORD FIN S N EST Ch Nordic W-01 Fennican Jonathan Jovial) and a two-year-old Swedish import bitch Bella (Heds Bellis De Lux). Jonni is my first Vall and I have done pretty much everything with him. We have done obedience, been to shows, tried herding and tracking. But our main hobby is agility. We

compete now in Class III (MINI) and we have had several clear round already. Agility as a sport is different in different countries and I would like to tell you something about agility here in Finland.

First of all, our competitions are ALL held under our Kennel Club's rules (like your AKC), so in here we don't have different titles or rules. Our classes are divided into 3 size categories: MINI (dogs under 35 cm), MIDI or MEDIUM (dogs 35 cm – 43 cm) and MAXI (LARGE) (dogs over 43 cm) and 3 levels: Class I, Class II and Class III. We have both agility courses (with contact obstacles) and jumping courses in all levels. And in here we don't differentiate between agility and jumping classes. In Sweden they can move up a level in the agility class but stay a level lower in the jumping or vice versa, but not in Finland. We don't have a Champion title for jumping like they have in Sweden.

The age when you can start to compete with your dog is 18 months. Before the first competition a judge measures your dog and decides in which size category it belongs. If the dog is at the limit (say close to 35 cm) then the judge puts the dog into one category for now and then the dog has

to be measured by a total of 3 judges until the final size is decided. After the last measurement the size is determined by the majority rule.

In the competitions we have penalty points, ideal time and time faults. We get 5 penalty points for dropping a jump pole, not touching the contact point, or a refusal. In the weave poles you get penalized only once if the dog makes a mistake in the middle and you have to correct it. But for 3 refusals (they don't have to happen in the same obstacle) you are disqualified. And you also get disqualified if your dog goes past a fence and jumps the next one or



Outi and Jonni doing agility

"Agility as a sport
is different in
different countries
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Finland."

Canine Vaccines Part II by Bonnie Conner (continued on page 6)

(Part I of "Canine Vaccines" appeared in our last issue)



Paige jumping

Because of all the reactions in dogs (and cats), the American Animal Hospital Assoc. (AAHA) Canine Task Force has put out new recommendations and information on vaccinations. The recommendations are "based on limited scientific evidence but are supported by consensus and expert opinion as well as clinical experience". We all must remember individual dogs have different base needs and the dog's environment is to be taken into consideration.

VACCINE SELECTION: The core vaccines recommend by AAHA are as follows: (Core de-

finied as "administered to all puppies (dogs less than six months of age) or dogs with an unknown vaccination history). Included is canine-distemper virus (CDV), CPV, canine adenovirus-2 (CAV-2) and rabies virus.

Non-core vaccines it is believed "should be considered only in special circumstances because their use is more dependent on the exposure risk of the individual animal." This group would include distemper-measles virus (D-MV), canine parainfluenza virus (CPIV), *Leptospira* spp., *Bordetella bronchiseptica* and *Borrelia burgdorferi*. Vaccines not recommended are *Giardia*, canine coronavirus

(CCV) and canine adenovirus – 1 (CAV-1).

FREQUENCY: Duration depends on an individual animal, the particular vaccine, type of vaccine (killed, live or modified live), and antigen content.

Canine Distemper (CDV MLV): This disease causes high **morbidity** in non-vaccinated animals and causes a high rate of death from gastrointestinal, neurological, and respiratory abnormalities. All puppies should be vaccinated against this disease with boosters.

AAHA recommends one dose at 6-8 wks, 9-11 wks, and 12-14 wks of age. The manufacturers recommend annual boosters. AAHA

Agility in Finland by Outi Huuskonen (continued from page 2)

jumps a fence in the wrong direction or the dog takes the wrong obstacle.

Our obstacles are similar to yours: tunnel, flat tunnel, table, seesaw, A-frame, dog walk, weave poles, long jump, tyre, wall and the oxer (double jump). We have also a combination obstacle that usually consists of 2 -3 jumps, parts A, B and possibly C. But the triple combination is mostly in the upper classes.

In order to move up a level you have meet certain criteria. From Class I to Class II you only need 3 clear rounds from 2 different judges. Only one of the results can be from the jumping course. So if you get 3 clear rounds from a jumping course you still need two from an agility course in order to move up. When you get your last qualifying result the dog is awarded an agility CAC.

From Class II to Class III you need to have 3 clear rounds but also you have to be placed among the top 3 in your class. And also here only one of the results can be from the jumping course. A clear round is a course executed without faults and the time can go over the

ideal time no more than 0.99 seconds. So 1.01 overtime is not a clear round. Here you also get an agility CAC when the dog moves up to Class III.

Class III is the "Elite" Class! All the major competitions (Championships, International Classes where they award the winning dog the CACIAG) are for dogs competing in this class. If and when your dog has reached this level all there is left (so to speak) is the Agility Champion title. And that you will get if your dog wins 3 times with a clear round and under two different judges and there is at least 1 year and 1 day between the first and the last win. BUT the dog also has to get a result in a dog show: prize 2 or GOOD in the quality judging when the dog is 15 months or older.

And then we have also our Finnish Championships competitions. In order to qualify you have to get 7 clear rounds in the time frame of a year: the date when the last year's competitions were held and the last entry date to the next year's competitions. The same applies to the World Championships Quali-

ers.

So, these are the rules under which me and Jonni compete. I have been fortunate that Jonni is such an honest and obedient dog that we have been able to reach Class III and even do well in it. Jonni has also had one clear round victory towards our ultimate goal: the Ag CH title. I am hoping he will get it. What comes to Valls as agility dogs I think they are well suited for it. They are quite fast but most of all they can make fast turns! And that saves a lot of time during the course. And they love agility!!! So they have a drive to do it and do it well. Valls love to do things with their owners and agility is the closest they have to herding. So if you own a Vall then do think about starting agility. It is fun even if you never plan to compete. And the look on your dog's face when he races through the course is worth a million!

Greetings from Finland

Outi Huuskonen and the Valls:
Jonni and Bella

Kennel Vilavallarens <http://vilavallarens.50megs.com/vilavallarens.htm>

"In order to qualify you have to get 7 clear rounds in the time frame of a year"

Raising the Agility Puppy by Marion Erp



Finn weaving

I am often asked what I did with Finn as a young puppy to prepare him for agility competition, so I will offer a few suggestions here.

First is the general socializing and exposure to the world process. I so strongly believe that this is essential to a dog's development, that it even shapes what time of the year I will accept a new puppy into our family. I live in Montana and work full-time, and under those circumstances will never buy a fall or winter puppy. I cannot imagine more of a hardship on us all than to get a puppy going into a long dark winter, coming home when it's dark, having no place to take him or walk him. So to that end I will only buy early spring puppies, and then I drop everything I'm doing for two months to spend most of my spare time taking the puppy to someplace new every evening and on weekends. All the behavioral research suggests that the age period from 8 to 16 weeks (i.e., 2 months to 4 months) of age, is critical to introducing a puppy to new sights and sounds, all kinds of people and new experiences. At that age he can best absorb and psychologically handle new things in his life. No matter what you do, it is imperative that you get the puppy out of your house and yard and OFF his property (even if it's just a walk down the street or around the block), several times a week, within that age bracket if you want a confident agility competitor.

So, knowing that many agility trials are in dark, cavernous and sometimes noisy barns, I actively seek taking my new puppy to buildings, large and small, noisy and quiet. This was easy with Finn since I was campaigning Jesse (my Malinois) and he just came along to all agility and obedience trials with us. The Vallhund as a breed seems to be particularly cocky and confident, and I could enter the building of a noisy all-breed dog show to walk right smack into the mid-

dle of the Great Danes and St. Bernards waiting outside their rings, and Finn always took it in stride. Often after I had finished showing my Malinois in either obedience or agility, I would walk Finn around and let him meet fellow show-goers – great opportunities to plug the breed and get him more socialized, all at the same time. Of course puppy classes of any kind are always valuable as well, and although Finn arrived in Helena before Petco did, I would not hesitate to take a puppy into such a store once he'd had his first couple of shots.

With a young puppy geared for agility, I was always on the lookout for interesting playgrounds and playground equipment. I always had goodies in my pocket, and would lift him up onto a picnic bench and let him walk across, closely held by leash and collar, feed on the other side and lift him down. Or turn him around and go the other way. That got him used to narrow boards (although for a 10-12 week old puppy, a bench isn't too narrow), and got him used to heights all at the same time. If nobody was looking, I'd walk him across the top of the picnic table, as well. At one particular playground, there were very low 2 and 3 foot-high slides for very young children; I would lift him up to the top of those and let him slide down, again with my hand very close to the collar for safety – just to give him a different experience. At some jungle gyms, if there were multiple stair-steps to climb up and if he could negotiate them, I'd let him climb up and down. A particularly prized piece of jungle gym equipment that I visited often was a sway bridge affair that joined two platforms – the feel of it was exactly like the UKC sway bridge, and just the fact that it moved under his feet was a valuable experience. I'd let him follow a piece of food across, coax if necessary, praise and feed some

more on the platform, turn him around and go the other way, then lift him down. At one playground there was a contraption that looked a little like the men's Olympic parallel bars, with support bars running from the parallel bars to the ground. I don't exactly know what the kids were supposed to do on it, but it provided a perfect chute or trench on the ground between the two sides. I would place a goodie on a target (margarine lid), show it to him, walk him back to the other side (on leash), let him go and he could go charging through the chute to the target – this was the beginning of getting him to go out or go on ahead in agility. Off leash I would do run-bys alongside this piece of equipment working him both off the left and the right, to get him used to working both sides of me. Once we had that down, I'd place my target, walk back to the other side and send him from an angle,



Finn takes the tire jump

to get him used to looking for the "openings" of equipment such as a tunnel or chute – piece of cake for him. That was as much as we could do, since at that point we had no "Stay" in our repertoire. Another contraption was something that looked like a metal slide, level and only a foot or so off the ground, with safety bars on each side. I would place him on one end and he would have to carefully walk/run to the other end. That got him used to metal under his feet. In short, once you get used

"I was always on the lookout for interesting playgrounds and playground equipment."

Raising the Agility Puppy by Marion Erp (continued from page 4)



Finn in the tunnel

to regular outings with a puppy, you start looking for places and things to introduce him to, and you can let your imagination run wild, with whatever you find. It's a lot of fun and the only caution is to not let your puppy get scared or hurt himself – keep a hand on or close to a flat buckle/snap collar when dealing with heights of any kind or where he might fall off something. In between play-ground excursions, we would walk in the hills and he could practice his “jumping” by negotiating over bushes or low logs or whatever was in his way.

On an actual agility field, the possibilities are endless. I read somewhere once that all you have to do is introduce your young puppy to all the obstacles, placed as low as they will go, for confidence purposes, and then you could leave the agility field altogether until he grew up. He would remember his early, successful experiences and could pick up his training when he was more mature. I never had the patience for that. I trained on all the equipment from the beginning, adjusting to Finn's growing skills as he got older. The one exception was weave poles – there isn't much point in teaching a half-grown dog to weave when his body will be different at maturity and the movement would be different. All jump obstacles were worked with the poles on the ground. We would work straight jump chutes, place targets and have him take 3 or 4 jumps in a row, hang back and have him take more and more of them by himself for the distance work, teach him to work both sides, teach him to turn, and if so inclined, one could work on Lefts and Rights. I liked patterning him to 5 or 6 jumps in a

straight line, then suddenly calling him to turn after 2 or 3 jumps, to take a perpendicular one, just to teach him to listen. Tunnels are a no-brainer for a young puppy, and closed chutes follow – again working off the right and left of the dog and teaching them to find the opening from various angles, plus the verbal cue for each obstacle. Many of the basic concepts necessary in agility can be worked with a puppy, without ever stressing the joints by jumping: learning the names of the obstacles, following the lead hand, doing front or rear crosses or changes of sides on the flat, using food. I always introduce the contact obstacles to my puppy at a young age, using lowered equipment, making sure they are happy on them first, and then working on stopping at the bottom on the yellow zones for the



Finn on the A-Frame

dog walk and teeter. If the puppy is a little tentative about the entire obstacle, I back chain it by lifting him on the down ramp of the dog walk and let him walk down, then we start up a little higher next time. However, I let (and am still letting) Finn scamper up and scamper down the A-frame without stopping. One word of caution regarding the teeter (see saw). I have seen dog after dog after dog get spooked because they had the teeter slam on them, and that combined with the sudden movement was all it took to set them back for

months. I would urge EXTREME caution on the teeter, having a helper lift the teeter down as the puppy goes across, and keeping very close control on the dog's collar/leash as he gets on, finds the pivot point and walks on down, SLOWLY. There are undoubtedly different ways of teaching the teeter nowadays, but try to prevent the puppy from getting frightened at all costs – better to leave it to experienced instructors if at all unsure about it. All of the learning on the contact obstacles, by the way, can be done slowly. Speed comes later as the puppy gains confidence.

Puppy training is loads of fun. Just keep it light and happy, keep your puppy busy and tired, let him learn about his world. If you have some idea of where you are going with him, as in agility competition, introduce him to some basic concepts – go to some trials for ideas, or to some classes -- and work in short sessions. Use lots of food, reward and praise liberally, give him some work time and lots of down time to just be a puppy. His skills will improve because you have given him a hundred different experiences in a few short months, he will have a foundation on which to build, and now you can relax!

Marion Erp lives in Montana with her Vallhund, Finn (Fennican Yahoo Finnboy, RN, NA, NAP, NAJ, NJP, NAC, NJC, NGC, TN-N, TG-N) and her Belgian Malinois, Jesse (CH MACH U-UD, U-AG2 Desperado Del Roble, UD, RN, TD, O-EAC, O-EJC, O-EGC, TG-E, O-TN-E, WV-O). Jesse earned his MACH (Master's Agility Champion, AKC's highest agility title) this fall. The MACH requirements are: 750 speed points and 20 double-Q's at the top level (excellent B). Speed points reflect the number of seconds a dog runs under the course time, and double-Q's are earned by qualifying in both Standard and Jumpers on the same day.

“Many of the basic concepts necessary in agility can be worked with a puppy, without ever stressing the joints by jumping”

Canine Vaccines Part II by Bonnie Conner (continued from page 3)

recommends booster at 1 year, revaccination once every three years. (I will be following up with titer-testing starting at two-three years of age after the one-year booster.)

Canine Parvovirus (CPV-2 MLV): Causes high death rate in unvaccinated dogs “primarily from gastrointestinal disease”. Again, doses in puppies at 6-8 wks, 9-11 wks, 12-14 wks and then adding another at 15-17 wks of age. The manufacturer recommends annual boosters. AAHA: “When a puppy is vaccinated with MLV and revaccinated at one year with MLV, killed product could be used as booster before three years”.

Canine Adenovirus-2 (CAV-2): This infection can cause a self-limiting respiratory disease in some infected dogs but produces an immune response that cross-protects against canine adenovirus-1 (CAV-1). The CAV-2 is safer than the CAV-1 as the CAV-1 has caused side effects. Again, AAHA recommends vaccines at 6-8 wks, 9-11 wks and 12-14 wks. The manufacturer recommends annual boosters. AAHA recommends a booster at one year of age and then every three years.



Paige on the
A-frame

Rabies (killed): Rabies causes a fatal neurological disease which humans can catch. AAHA recommends one dose as early as 3 months of age, then booster at one year of age. Rabies vaccination laws are different in various states. It has been said that some states will accept titers, but I have no proof of that as of yet. Also I have been told that the rabies vaccine is exactly the same whether it is noted as a “one-year” vaccine or a “three-year” vaccine.

NOTE: Something also to think about is the amount of vaccine the dog receives. A toy breed receives exactly the same amount of vaccine as, say, an Irish Wolfhound. Ask for a smaller dose.

AAHA OPTIONAL VACCINES:

Distemper-Measles Virus (D-MV): Given between 6 and 12 weeks of age, the measles part of the vaccine cross-protects against CDV (canine distemper) and is not inactivated by maternal antibodies. Within 72 hours of vaccination protection occurs. Should be used at 3 to 4 week intervals. Not recommend for dogs “under 12 weeks of age especially female dogs destined as breeding stock.”

Canine Parainfluenza Virus (CPV): CP is one of the causes of kennel cough, which is an upper respiratory disease. The vaccine does not stop the infection, but does lessen the seriousness of the disease and vaccination protection is only of short duration. “The duration of serum antibody without vaccination was up to three years. Therefore, the value of revaccinating dogs annually with CPV cannot be demonstrated”.

Leptospira spp: “If only one serovar is present in the vaccine, any protection, if provided at all, is for that serovar (e.g. *Leptospira canicola*) and not many others that can infect the dog.” Otherwise, the vaccine given the dog probably does not cover the virus on the ground. Lepto is mainly a problem in the Great Lakes area of the U.S.

Bordetella bronchiseptica (B. bronchiseptica): “kennel cough” can cause self-limiting upper respiratory disease and rarely causes

life-threatening disease in healthy animals. This disease can be handled effectively with antibiotics. The vaccination does not block the disease, only lessens it and the vaccine is of short duration. It is possible the vaccine does not cover all the field strains.

Borrelia burgdorferi (B. burgdorferi): Infection can cause clinical disease in some susceptible dogs recommended only for dogs at high risk of exposure. Most recommend the Lyme borreliosis vaccine over the killed bacterin for reasons of safety (fewer reactions). Nine weeks of age for first dose, second two-four weeks later. AAHA recommends annual boosters just before tick season.

NOT RECOMMENDED VACCINES:

Canine Coronavirus (CCV): This causes mild gastrointestinal disease unless concurrent infection with CPV occurs. Usually not contracted by dogs under six weeks of age. “There is no indication that this organism produces a disease of clinical significance.

Giardia spp: Can cause small bowel diarrhea and is not life threatening. There are many strains of Giardia and it is not known whether the vaccine is of value in more than one type. The vaccine does not prevent infection, but may reduce shedding of the organism and reduce clinical signs.

NOTE: When I moved to NM, my dogs came down with Giardia. They were treated for the symptoms. The next spring when they contracted it, it was one to two days of minimum sickness that didn’t need treatment. The dogs were building up a resistance to the problem. This year, one dog, new to the area was sick for one day.

CANINE ADENOVIRUS-1 (CAV-1): Can cause acute and potentially fatal hepatic disease in unprotected animals and some dogs can experience chronic debilitating disease. This disease is “rarely documented in North America, but the organism is still maintained in nature and if the vaccination were discontinued, it is likely that the incidence of the disease would become common.” CAV-2 does give immunity against CAV-1.

THOUGHTS:

- Increasing the number of components increases the likelihood for adverse effects. “Care must be taken not to administer a product containing too many vaccines simultaneously if adverse events are to be avoided and optimal immune responses are sought.”

- “Killed vaccines are safest against adverse reactions because they cannot cause the disease for which the vaccine was designed to prevent. However, killed vaccines are much more likely to cause hypersensitivity reactions”. Individual response is dependent on the status of the recipient’s immune system.”

- “Puppies under four months of age may be more susceptible to disease and they are the main target for core vaccines. Very young and possibly very old animals may have a diminished response to vaccination due to age-related suppression of the immune system.”

Bonnie Conner (Skyview Kennel) has over thirty years’ experience as a dog breeder and trainer. She lives in New Mexico, where she teaches clicker obedience classes and breeds Swedish Vallhunds.

<http://www.swedishvallhundsskyview.us/>

A Bit About This Issue's Contributors by Amanda Lowery

This has been quite a special issue, and I think we're very lucky to have received such fascinating articles. So I'd like to tell you a little about this issue's contributors:

Bonnie Conner's newsletter contribution history speaks for itself: she told us about puppy temperaments in our first issue, and in the last issue and this issue she shared her research and thoughts about vaccinations. The thinking in this area is changing quickly, I think it's really something that dog owners should keep themselves informed about, and Bonnie's articles are a great place to start. With her articles about this subject, I think Bonnie's provided us with a great resource that can help us be more informed dog owners. Bonnie travels all over North America competing in conformation with her Vallhunds, has been teaching classes and doing agility with her dogs since the sport first arrived here, and hopes to start agility competition with Paige (her "agility nut") this spring. Bonnie's many years of dog experience, her love for dogs, and her concern about their fair, holistic and humane treatment, make her a wonderful resource. Bonnie has consistently shown herself to be someone who is happy to share her knowledge and offer educated opinions, and I hope we can look forward to more interesting articles from Bonnie in future issues.

I was thrilled when **Outi Huuskonen** said she was sending an article for the newsletter. Outi is a very valuable contributor to the Swedish Vallhund mailing lists, and it's wonderful to have a perspective on agility from someone who isn't only an experienced and knowledgeable trainer in her own right, but is also someone who can provide us with a different, Finnish perspective

Agility Websites:

UKC Agility: <http://www.ukcdogs.com/dogevents/rules/a-index.shtml>

North American Dog Agility Council: <http://nadac.com/>

United States Dog Agility Association: <http://www.usdaa.com/>

AKC Agility: <http://www.akc.org/events/agility/index.cfm>

General Agility Info: http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Dog_agility

AgilityNet (UK Agility info): <http://www.agilitynet.com/>



(Finland is home to some of the most successful agility Vallhunds in the world). Outi has been doing agility since 2000: she tried agility with her former dog (a Siberian husky), but hadn't had any formal training before Jonni arrived and showed her that he was a dog who needed something to do. Jonni loved agility and Outi kept taking classes with him until she "finally had the guts" to start competing in 2001 in Varkaus. It took them nearly a year to move up to Class II, but then things picked up rapidly — they qualified to move up to Class III in a single weekend. She attributes much of her current success in Class III competition to the coaching of Pete Huotari and Jonathan Watts. Outi practices once a week in winter and when she's competing a lot, she doesn't train as much. She says weaves, rear crosses and contacts are a priority in her practice work. She says "the first dog is the hardest" and is applying what she's learned from training Jonni to her newer dog, Bella.

Marion Erp has contributed pictures (Finn's handsome face graces this issue's front page) and great articles on tracking and agility to the newsletter, and she sets a wonderful example by being a very experienced dog trainer who is open to, and interested in, learning new methods and new approaches, and incorporating those she finds useful into her training (including clicker training). Marion started obedience training in 1975 with her first show dog (a Rhodesian Ridgeback), and started agility in the mid 1990's with her Irish Water Spaniel, when the AKC first started an agility program. In addition to training around the house, she does obedience once or twice a week, and agility as often as possible. She also does tracking when the winter temperatures are reasonable, and shows in obedience, agility and tracking in Montana and the surrounding states during the spring, summer and fall. I am very grateful for the very real contributions Marion has made to my own dog training education, and to the caliber of the information she offers to our newsletter.

Have a safe and happy holiday season everyone, we'll see you back here again with our next newsletter!



In future issues:

Rally Obedience

Book & Equipment Reviews

Useful Websites

ASVS: www.vallhund.net

UKC: www.ukcdogs.com

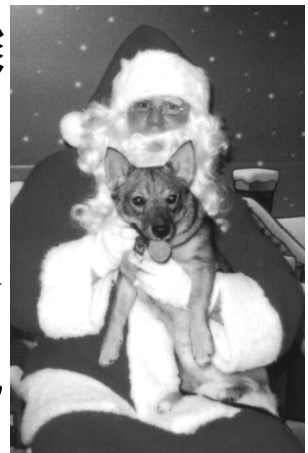
CERF: www.vmdb.org/cerf.html

OFA: www.offa.org

PennHIP: www.pennhip.org

SKV (Swedish Club):
hem.passagen.se/skv76/english/eindex.htm

Suggestions, submissions and general comments are always welcome. You can email me at amandalowery@charter.net, or contact any of us at the addresses listed on our website: www.vallhund.net.



HAPPY HOLIDAYS AND
A HAPPY NEW YEAR!

