



AWMA Magazine
Volume 4, Issue 1, February 2008

In this Issue:

Message from the President

Reminder: Membership Renewal

Interview with Dr. John Sherman

Message from the Editor

Photos from our Members!

Message from the President

November 2007

As the training season here in Montana winds down with cooler weather and a lack of daylight, it is a good time to reflect on what the AWMA has accomplished this year. Our progress is the result of the hard work of our board and committees, and I extend my sincere thanks to them. There are significant challenges associated with running an organization that extends across four time zones and the entire length and width of this country. Nothing is more important than talking in person at our annual executive and general board meetings, but we also continue to keep in touch and minimize cost to the organization by working through email.

As you are all aware, the National Championship was held in Ortonville, MI over the Labor Day weekend and was hosted by Motor City Working Dogs. The majority of the work was done by "Mohawk" John Wiitanen and Paula Daigle. They provided us with a great stadium, fields with consistent and ideal tracking, and then opened their home to us for the best judge's dinner I've ever attended. Newcomer Will Kline did a fantastic job as trial secretary; he truly went above and beyond to help out. Our judges were Mr. Alfons van den Bosch (phases B & C) and Mr. RainoFlugge (phase A). Both were a pleasure to work with and did everything they could to put the competitors at ease. However, they realized that the dog/handler teams that made the podium would be given the opportunity to represent the US at the FMBB and judged accordingly. Congratulations to everyone who participated, including our first junior handler, Lily Westerhoff with her veteran dog Nike.

The 2009 National Championship will be held in Washington and hosted by Cascade Belgian Shepherd Working Dog Club. This club has extensive experience hosting major events and I have no doubt that this one will be well run as well. There will be more information on the event posted soon. Start thinking about setting aside the time to make it either as a competitor or as a spectator.

There have been some other major developments since the last newsletter to report. For over a year, we have been working to establish a relationship with the American Belgian Malinois Club. The rationale is that the Malinois community in this country would benefit from collaboration between the two major organizations that are built around the breed. There are lessons to be learned from the problems that have arisen between other breeds' organizations and I hope that we may prevent some of these issues through open communication. Before the Nationals I sent the board of the ABMC a letter describing how we might collaborate, and this was followed with a conference call in September. We agreed to work together initially to field an agility team to the FMBB competition. As the US representative, the AWMA is the only group allowed to field teams to this international competition. The board felt that it was a missed opportunity to not have involvement in as many of the events at the FMBB as possible, but we are not in the position, nor do

we have the desire, to begin an agility program within the AWMA. Consequently, there was an ideal opportunity for collaboration between the two organizations that would be of mutual benefit to both. The ABMC and AWMA have sent a message to their respective memberships to determine the level of interest in the cooperative agility endeavor. The ABMC has asked their membership for a volunteer who will be their liaison with the AWMA to assist in establishing team selection criteria that will include the results from ABMC regional and national specialty agility trials. Shari Lipski has volunteered to be the agility liaison with the AWMA and with ABMC. She has been working very hard to suggest selection criteria for the 2009 competition, and then will be working to develop the criteria for following years. These criteria will be presented to the World Championship/National Events Committee before coming to the executive board for discussion and a vote. There will be more information on the agility program and the relationship with the ABMC as it becomes available.

There have also been some changes to the structure of the executive board. Our by-laws have the provision for regions, but up until now, there was no mechanism for defining them. I had always felt that there was limited representation on the board for AWMA members who were not able to participate in local clubs, which made it important for the regional director concept to be implemented. Mike Baker took on this responsibility and we had our first regional directors selected at the annual board meeting. These directors will be in place as appointees for this year and then will be up for election by the membership of their respective regions during the coming year. The directors are: West – Les Flores; North – Pat Carpenter; South – Mike Morgan. Les and Mike were recruited prior to the annual meeting and Pat has just recently agreed to participate. I think you will agree that these are people with valuable experience who will enrich the board and also act as focal points for the regions. Mike Baker is preparing guidelines for the duties of the regional directors and will be presenting them to the board in the near future. It is my personal hope that the regional directors will be catalysts for activities in their respective regions that will benefit their members and the AWMA as a whole.

Another recent development has been the preparation and executive board acceptance of new guidelines and forms for club trials. These are available on the website for you to download and use. Some of the important points in the guideline document are:

- Your judge can come from any of the AWDF organization's judges (for example, USCA, DVG, AWMA), any other FCI recognized judge, or SV judge. A specific judge in these organizations may be deemed unacceptable by a 2/3-majority vote of the executive board of the AWMA. We have two AWMA judges at this time; Nathaniel Roque and Glenn Stephenson. Note that WDA and WDS judges are not permitted.
- Clubs should send their request to hold the trial, including the dates, judge(s), titles to be offered and documentation of proof of event insurance to the AWMA's Director of Judges at least 30 days prior to the trial date. Upon approval of the DOJ, trial information must be sent by the club to the AWMA webmaster for inclusion on the website, but no later than 14 days before the trial date. Clubs can allow all breeds or restrict their entries to Malinois only. If restricted, that information must be clearly stated on the entry form and in the information submitted to the DOJ and Webmaster.
- There will be a \$5/title/dog filing fee to be remitted to the AWMA.
- We agreed to offer VPG titles as reciprocity with USCA and DVG. However, AWMA members should preferentially seek IPO titles.
- We would like to have the host club prepare a brief narrative on their trial to be included in this newsletter. Trial results will also be sent to the Webmaster for inclusion on the website.

There are a few other reminders to bring to your attention. Teams who wish to compete at the FMBB must submit their declaration for the event early in February. The dates and person to whom the declarations must be sent will be posted soon. Information on how to qualify is listed at <http://www.workingmalinois.org/events/2008-FMBB-Team.shtml>. The FMBB will be held in May 8-11, in Ljubljana, Slovenia. The next major event for AWMA members will be the AWDF Championship to be held in March in Alabama. As in years past, potential competitors will be required to submit their entries through the AWMA. There will be an announcement posted with the due date and information required as soon as we have it. I would also encourage all of you to submit material for inclusion in this newsletter. The discussion board is a great place to exchange messages, but it isn't ideal for everything. Please send training articles, trial information, etc. to Desiree' Shaw. She will be working with Danny Craig to ensure that the newsletter is published quarterly.

There are many reasons why members of this organization are involved with dog breeding, training, and competing. For most it is a hobby, for some it is a profession. But all of us devote our time and energy to our dogs and the challenges of competition because it is something we enjoy doing. Nearly all of us rely on the assistance of a training helper and our training clubs or groups to prepare ourselves and our dogs for competition. Personally, I can't think of anything that is more rewarding than stepping onto the competition field with a dog that I have raised and trained from a puppy with help from the "village" that it takes to prepare a dog for an IPO trial. We may score well, we may not; but there is always a feeling of accomplishment. And when we reach the competition field, our helpers and judges deserve our thanks; they volunteer because they also have a love for dogs and the sport. I think this is illustrated superbly in a message received in response to a thank you note I sent to Alfons van den Bosch, our judge at this year's Championship. He said: "For myself I think that the job of the Judge is not only to give and take some points but much more important than that is our obligation to make, if possible, some dog-sporters every time we have the chance to do so. Dogs and sport with the dogs is not just a hobby but a passion." I wholeheartedly agree.

Anne Camper

[Renewals for AWMA Membership-reminder](#)

Membership of the AWMA,

It is once again time to renew your club dues. You should have already received a personal email from me, this notice is simply a reminder. Please send in your 2008 club dues to the following address:

Desiree' Shaw
AWMA Secretary
789 River Rd.
Bucksport, ME 04416

Along with your club dues I am asking that you send an updated membership list for your club. Thank you for your membership with AWMA. If you have any questions please feel free to contact me.

Regards,
Desiree' Shaw
AWMA Secretary
dezireeshaw@yahoo.com
207-570-8216

Interview with Dr. John Sherman

PART 2 (continued from the March, 2007 magazine)

Interview with Dr. John Sherman at his office in Raleigh on 10/29/06 at 12:20 PM

Gary: That is probably just my investigator stuff coming out. We probably don't need to do that.

Dr. Sherman: Not a problem. Not a problem.

Gary: I am a criminal defense investigator. What I would like to do first is just ask how you became interested in this aspect and specialty of Veterinary Medicine.



Dr. Sherman: Okay. So I had started with sporting dogs as a participant when I was 13. Doing some fieldwork with Labrador Retrievers. So I was an enthusiast and bit by the bug if you will. Became a veterinarian and my big interest in veterinary medicine was surgery and then I liked working with injuries of the sporting dogs, orthopedics, things of that sort. And my second year out of school I had an unfortunate accident where I had to grab a very large dog quickly from biting a technician. And I had injured two discs in my lower back. And eventually, I had to see a neurosurgeon and they treated and eventually one night I came home from work and I had lost use of my left leg and incontinence. And that was my first back surgery. You know, I was young and in very good shape. I worked out all the time and afterwards, I had a lot of problems adhesions. I ended up getting an ulcer, I had adhesions, I couldn't sit up, and I couldn't walk very well. They didn't know what to do with me, so they sent me to physical therapy and you know they had to break down the adhesions and help me. To take a workaholic and make him do some down time, you know I have to admit I wasn't really happy with my care. I thought it was a lot more reactive then proactive. I was just not a happy camper with everything that was going on. Being also a perfectionist on top of being a workaholic, I realized I wasn't much better as a professional. At that period of time in veterinary medicine, we were very much look at what was wrong and let's say, it's a cruciate, we are going to this surgery, we are going to put him in a crate for the amount of time it takes to heal and then we were done and supposedly fixed and good luck. I really realized that it was by chance that dogs got better. We did nothing more than that. So I kind of made myself and the big man upstairs a promise that if I was able to get back to work, I would do different. And that's what I did. I went back and I started having these folks come back looking for things to do with the dogs to occupy their time and trying to actually work with the tissues and lead them step by step and stay out of complications instead of reacting to it. And I guess that's really where the vision of VetHab was formed. I always tell people that when things are horrible, something good always comes out of everything and that is what came out of health problems. You know I think that early in my career I had a couple of people pretty affluent and well respected in the sport approach me to fix their dog. I got to do the surgery and the dog lived with me. By just having an interest, I was able to return them to the sport which back in 1995 was pretty uncommon with cruciate disease and now like anything, it is a small world and I had more and more people ask me and I hit a crossroads in my career. You know I was out of school 8 years and looking to settle down and find my niche and I started saying I think there is a need out there and no one had done a rehab only practice. Some people had tagged it on to an Eastern medicine practice like with acupuncture. Lori McCall in Chicago had done a practice that was a little earlier but no one had really taken a Western medicine approach and said this is all I am going to do and cater to the sporting dog but also treat the pet. I took the plunge and said I am going to do a clinic that did that only. I can still remember the North Carolina State Board saying boy you want to do

what and you want to call it what?! And um they really were taken back and didn't know quite how to handle it. You know, we worked through it and really set a model for other states to follow. It has been a good experience. I'd say now, back 6 or 7 years ago, it was a very novel idea. Today it is the most rapidly growing area of veterinary medicine.

Gary: Absolutely. So that is all you do is rehab now, or pre. I understand you do some pre-surgery type work too.

Dr. Sherman: Right. We do physical rehabilitation which in that context would be some pre-hab in the way we will get dogs used to the equipment and exercise in getting their body ready for a surgical repair. We do physical conditioning. Getting dogs ready for particular tasks or events. We do weight management, helping dogs and some cats that are overweight. We help dogs and helps recover from injuries. Some of the other things we found ourselves doing, we do a lot in the area of pain management. Almost like a pain management clinic. Helping other practitioners deal with cases that are tough to control. Also working with wound management and very serious wounds rather they be inflicted or secondary to trauma or secondary to like radiation treatment to cancer. We have started doing some of those things also.

Gary: That's interesting. In the course of doing all of that have you found that you are able to do preventative sport-specific type.

Dr. Sherman: Yes. You know obviously when you do something over and over quite a bit. We have found



that there are some injuries that are fairly common in the different dog sports. Schutzhund for example, which I know is your sport, we have found that, you know, there are a lot of neck injuries or cervical injuries. I would say shoulder injuries are #2. Lastly, you know, hind limbs or cruciate injuries. So realizing what injuries are commonly seen in the sport, looking at their typical participants and what the sport demands and then, what I have done is then said, you know, how can we prevent those injuries from #1 a conditioning standpoint, #2 warm up and cool down to include stretching and preparing the body for work, #3 injury recognition. What we have done, we always with our clients,

would include that in our service when we dealt with the actual injury itself or that client would then have a growing amount of people ask can we teach them and also people in their clubs or people in their training groups some of the same things. So we started doing seminars and things on weekends and traveling to places where we talked about those things and looked at dogs and tried to, you know, prevent injuries before they happened with educating people on those areas.

Gary: So you put together seminars that target specific sports.

Dr. Sherma: I have. I'll usually find occasionally I'll have a group that is just one sport but you know, it is a mixed bag out there in some of the clubs and so we'll tailor our talks to the different sports and you know make sure we cover the interests of those in the room and I have found too that a lot of people will do several different sports with their animals and sometimes you have to make sure that for that animal you cover all sports that they participate in. But no, we have tailored talks to you know, to the group who is requesting it.

Gary: Have you found a sport a particular set of sports that you find to be higher risk than others as far as athletic injury?

Dr. Sherman: You know that is a pretty common question and you know, especially from the folks that do agility. I find that is the most popular sport out there. It is about to. People are asking because it involves your average pet. Is it too risky? No I don't think so. The benefits far outweigh the risks and just like with people. Everything has its stresses and strains. It's just realizing what they are and preparing for them. I don't think it has anymore inherent risk than any of the others. And I would argue that time spent with the dog and fun that is brought both to the dog and handler far outweighs the risks. Plenty of people get hurt. Handlers as much as the dogs and I have to say part of me has thought of doing a seminar where I team up with a human sports director and kind of making sure we cover both aspects. I think it is a team. If the handler can't then the dog can't.

Gary: As a bite work helper, I'd love to attend a seminar like that.

Dr. Sherman: You're probably your shoulder and your neck. No definitely it is something that we always concentrate on the dog but if the person is honest and has been playing the game long enough, they will tell you they make as many or more mistakes than their dog ever did.

Gary: Absolutely. And I have an interest in something that you may or may not have already addressed. I think that in our sport, Schutzhund, we have a lot of injuries that are caused by uneducated helpers during bite work. And I think that it would be interesting someday to take somebody with your experience and show them the sport and show them some of it. I understand which you've done some. And maybe come up with some things to do to prevent those kinds of injuries. Has that ever occurred to you?



Dr. Sherman: It has. And I have a good friend that you have probably heard of, Chris Sink. She and I can stay up all night talking about dogs and working them. My dream as a professional is we have a big project going on where we are trying to figure out what normal gaits are for dogs and at different gaits and all different sizes. You can imagine where I would like to go with projects. So you figure out what normal is and then you take the sports and you figure out all the physical demands of it and then you can see where we are going and you can see how to prepare for them in a very logical step way fashion. Then you can start saying well if they don't do that normally, what injuries will happen. Again I have thought of it. I think that will be some of our projects in the future. You have to define normal first but yeah I would love to do it.

Gary: I understand you have specialized or branched out in the area of analysis. Has that had some value in the work you do?

Dr. Sherman: Oh definitely. You know, I think I have always done gait analysis in some form or another. I think using digital video to analysis the sport is invaluable. I think also to critique both the animal and your performance is invaluable. As the event is going on both the animal and yourself are mentally wrapped up in

the moment if you will and you are not always critical or aware of what is going on and let's face it, our eyes see 15-18 frames per second. A camera, one you can go to Best Buy and purchase, is 60 per second. So, functionally 3 times or 4 times the amount of information. I can tell, I have become a better clinician and dog man just by watching tapes of events, my performance, seeing how a dog moves its body, so I can expose myself to that information that I was missing. So when I have people who ask how they can improve themselves or their dog, get a camera. Buy it for the family for Christmas or birthday and when you can purchase something you can use for dog training or the family so much the better. Tape yourself. They've got remote controls, tripods they throw in. Set it up so you can do gait analysis with just that. But you know, as with anything, you are always looking for the better mousetrap or the better toy. What gait analysis or kinematics is actually plot points all on video and if you control an area using an object that is calibrated so you control something in 3 dimensions, you can plot those points out as they move so that you know angles, accelerations, velocities, at all of those points. Figure out the stressor strain on the body and you know it has never really been done before and is really exciting.

Gary: Over the years, I have found watching somebody else's work, no necessarily my own, I can sometimes look and say something is not right. I can't always tell you why or what it is but many times they'll have it looked at and something's wrong. Are you able through the kinematics to get a little bit closer maybe and say I think this might be wrong and actually almost diagnosis or at least field down a little bit.

Dr. Sherman: Yes. Actually we have been able to. You know I have had clients that will travel from all over and as you can imagine to keep tabs on those clients long standing with rechecks will have quite a bit of film or digital video that will be sent back for us to look at. We can monitor patients and look and see if things are right or not. Especially after we are familiar with that patient and know how they move in different situations. So yes, I think that we can by looking at the body and looking for symmetry if you will, we can say they are not moving this area, and usually you can say that they are protecting or not using an area very well therefore, that is where you are suspecting a problem, to put it quite simply. I would love to see a day and I don't think we are too far away from it, especially after we define normals, where people with working dogs will come when their dog is mature, healthy, and without issue, and we will capture a base line so that as you say, you are worried, your performance is off, and you are not quite sure. We can then run another tape and put it to their normal and see any discrepancy and hone in on the spot because as everyone who plays in the sports will tell you, they are so driven, it is tough to identify things. It is very slight. But I have come to trust people's sixth sense if you will. If I have somebody who works with the dog all the time and they say something's not right. I will keep looking until I find it. Because I will tell you, 99% of the time, they are dead on the money. It is just either sucking the information out of time or finding it. But I definitely have come to trust the handler or trainer's knowledge of that animal.

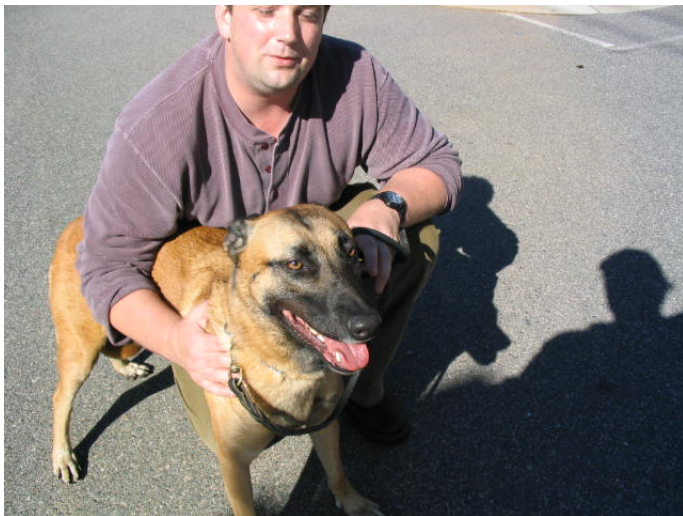
Gary: What I have found also, is that many times, if you pick up something like that, it may not be the area that the dog is showing that is giving the injury. It may be covering for something else. I hear a lot of that actually. No it is the hip and it will turn out to be the left front shoulder or something like that.

Dr. Sherman: You know that is quite common. That is the goal of early recognition and early treatment. These dogs are so driven. They keep going and repercussions of a shoulder that is bothering them then leads to the diagonal hind limb. Problem then gets a lot more complex and a lot more vast if left untreated. That is the goal of the seminars and working with the dog enthusiast is to give them the tools and ability to identify these problems early. One of the things I would like to mention too and like to talk about in seminars and teaching them how to look at the dog. Another big part is journaling. Journaling your dog's performance, journaling what you did. No it doesn't have to be a big complex thing but even down to the appetite, attitude, type of drill and putting an objective score on performance so you can see and try to determine whether it is a

mental thing and the fact that they are not grasping it, or is there a physical impairment anytime you do something. That allows you to really go back and see. For those clients, I always have them bring their journal in and you can pick up trends.

Gary: That's an excellent point. As a behaviorist, that is the first thing I have clients do is eliminate physical possibilities because you can't train a dog whose body is telling him, no I can't do this. Let me ask you getting into that area then. One of the biggest areas that we see debilitating some of our top dogs unfortunately sometimes in Schutzhund are dysplastic hips and elbows. Given that unfortunately that sometimes they are not picked up until it is too late to correct or complete hip replacement. Are there things that can be done to keep a dog with average or worse hips from becoming clinical earlier than we would like to see it? Are there exercises or things that can be done to support those?

Dr. Sherman: Oh definitely. There are things that can be done with less than ideal hips. You know I can tell you I have been blessed to see some perfect hips out there but very few. A lot of them have some type of flaw. What we have learned is that you have to come at it from several different angles. Certainly, I think that supplements definitely have their place and do help. By that, I mean, glucosamines, chondroitin, manganese, new kid on the block is hyaluronic acid and Adequan. All of those things help slow down the degenerative process of that disease. They have their place. Then you have pain relief. Pain is a factor. Using anti-inflammatories if they are needed or other medications or modalities. By modalities, I mean massage, heat,



and things like that to alleviate pain. Because, if they hurt, they are not going to use it. Lastly, muscle and motion. The more muscle and motion you have on a joint, the healthier and better it is going to be. If you muscle to help absorb the shock of moving the joint, there is less stress on the joint itself versus if you don't have it in that much motion, then you go to do a bite and then pivot off of that hip, all of that force is being translated to a not so great joint. Whereas if you had great gluteals and hip flexors and hip extensors, you could transfer a majority of it to the muscle and have very little on the joint. So again, really going after it on a several tier tactic, if you will.

Gary: Based on that, what I would like to do, if it is okay, is look around and see what kinds of things you do. I will tell you the dog that I have in the car with me is one of the best working dogs I have ever owned. She is dysplastic in the left hip. Has never been clinical but I am looking for ways to keep her from.

Dr. Sherman: Sure. Definitely.

Message from the Editor

Hello again,

Wow 2008 is already here! This last year seemed to fly by. I feel like it was a great year for AWMA. At the 2007 AWMA Nationals everyone did a great job, however Steve Gregalunas came out on top! And how can we forget Ivan Balabanov? The AWDF, the FMBB and the FCI, come on Ivan don't you get tired of winning? Whether it was a world championship or a club trial we should all be proud to be a part of AWMA.

We had approximately 24 new scorebooks ordered by our members last year. I want to personally thank you all for your patience as the last two to three months of the year there was a delay with scorebook orders. I do want to remind everyone when ordering scorebooks to please submit a copy of your registration papers with your order form. It is a requirement and it makes things a little easier for me.

As always, I would really like to encourage you all to submit photos or stories for this online magazine. This is all done for the membership so the membership has a right to be a part of it!

Regards,
Desiree' Shaw
AWMA Secretary
789 River Road
Bucksport, ME 04416
207-570-8216
dezireeshaw@yahoo.com



Our Members!



