



SWISSRIDGE

PAWSLETTER

SPRING 2015



Welcome to the Spring 2015 SwissRidge Kennels newsletter!

I was happy to hear that so many of you enjoyed the first edition. I was even happier to see some new faces join the SwissRidge Kennels Facebook group as a result of it. Prior to the first newsletter's distribution, many people who adopted their pup before 2010 didn't even know the group existed. Now, the group comprises nearly 3,500 members and provides an excellent venue to connect with other owners. You may be able to find your pup's siblings, for example, and you can certainly find answers to myriad questions from those with plenty of hands-on experience. If you haven't checked out the Facebook group yet, please join our online community. That's where you'll often hear news first!



Did you know that SwissRidge is...

- In the midst of building a state-of-the-art kennel in Schomberg, Ontario?
- Continuing to export puppies seamlessly to the U.S. in compliance with new CDC regulations?
- Expanding its charitable outreach and launching a Hall of Fame?
- Hosting a reunion (AKA Doodle Romp) on August 22, 2015?
- Anticipating the first litter of the long-awaited original SwissRidge Doodle?
- Developing an "everything you need for your new pup in one click" package with Greenhawk, a well-established pet supplies chain?

Read on for more details.

A New Kennel... and So Much More

The new SwissRidge facility in Schomberg, Ontario is well underway. The walls are in and painted, and the tiles are down. The outdoor work, including building large play yards and installing canine grass, will begin when the ground dries out. If all goes as I hope, the grand opening will take place in late summer. (But we all know how renovations can drag on!)

This facility is obviously not just a kennel to me, but the realization of a long-held dream. Since I began breeding dogs as a teen, I have envisioned my furry pack in luxurious accommodations, and this design really delivers. Equally important, it draws on the latest research in animal husbandry to ensure safe, sanitary conditions.

I took great care in every single decision around this project—right down to the color of the floor tiles, to the amusement of my friends and family. But my attention to detail is already paying off. In March, the city's kennel inspector visited the site and was so impressed with the work-in-progress that she suggested I provide input on the design for a new animal shelter in the area—a huge compliment!

Transition to New U.S. Importing Rules for Dogs

I've been exporting pups from Canada to the U.S. for well over 15 years. I believe most states now have at least one SwissRidge canine citizen, and most have dozens.

Importing puppies to the U.S. has always been fairly straightforward. In August 2014, however, the

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Centers for Disease Control (CDC) introduced an additional step that prospective owners must take before bringing young pups into the country.



The CDC's general requirement is that all puppies be vaccinated against rabies before entering the U.S., and only considers the pup fully immunized 30 days after vaccination. As the rabies vaccine may not be administered until a pup is 3 months old, this regulation means that without advance permission puppies cannot be imported until they are 4 months old.

Previously, the CDC routinely authorized admission of pups into the U.S. prior to rabies immunization providing the owner entered into a dog confinement agreement. For many years, my clients signed the form and imported their pups without a problem. Now, clients must e-mail the CDC to request approval for a dog confinement agreement in advance of importing.

Since the rule change, many of my clients have requested and received permission to import their pup prior to full immunization—typically at 8 weeks of age. In fact, I'm pleased to

report that the CDC has approved every request to date.

You can find out more about the CDC's new process on my website, and connect with other owners on the Facebook group to hear about their experience in importing a puppy.

If you prefer to leave your pup with us until it is fully immunized, that is also an option. Read on for more information!

Standardizing the Imprinting Program

Several years ago, we introduced the SwissRidge Imprinting Program, which gives young puppies a head start in training, including: crate training, house breaking, commands such as “come,” “sit,” “down,” and “stay,” walking on a leash, and socialization.

The Imprinting Program grew steadily in popularity even before the CDC changes, as word spread about how much easier it is to bring home a well-mannered pup that's already on track with basic commands. People are busier than ever these days, and having some of the basics covered leaves new owners with more time to enjoy their pup.



Now, more than 40 per cent of my clients leave their pup for at least one month of imprint training with very positive reviews. The two-month program is bringing even better results. I feel confident saying that any pup receiving Imprint Training—especially for two months—will have a significant head start in life and be quite advanced for its age when it comes home.

Since this time last year, our Imprint Program has nearly quadrupled in size. I have worked hard to locate and hire people with the patience and skills to work with very young puppies. At the moment, I have about 15 people on my roster who can welcome your pups into their homes. During their stay, puppies integrate with their temporary families, where they are socialized to a variety of stimuli—sights, sounds, other dogs, children—in a safe, controlled environment, and start to learn basic commands, along with crate and potty training.

With this expansion, expert trainer Lucas Mucha and I realized we would need to formalize our approach to ensure consistency across the program. Our strategy for ensuring all puppies receive the same standard of training, includes:

- Meeting with Imprint Trainers as often as needed to provide advice and discuss tactics appropriate for each pup's needs;
- Balancing the workload—most Imprint Trainers accept no more than two pups at a time so that each pup will have sufficient dedicated attention;

- Requesting regular updates and videos on pups; and
- Developing a step-by-step socialization guide to support trainers (and ultimately all owners).

A consistent, cohesive approach to imprint training doesn't guarantee that all puppies leave with exactly the same skills, however. Every pup is different. Some will learn better at this early stage than others. But all will have the same opportunity during imprinting to establish a strong foundation and make your training easier when the pup gets home.

If you are worried about missing the critical bonding period with your pup, don't be. Puppies are primed to bond long beyond the first 16 weeks of their lives. I have highly trained pups going home at 6-8 months that bond quickly and thoroughly with their owners.

Your pup will readily adapt to its new life when it joins you, and you'll easily master obedience training with the foundation already in place.



Please check out the reviews on my website, but here are a couple of new ones I'm glad to share:

"Everything is going great. She is integrating well into our home and getting along well with our other dogs. The 2 months of training has been very beneficial. She had one accident the first night and that was our fault.

She is doing good with crate training and follows basic commands well. I would rate the training 10/10."

"I cannot imagine taking care of or training an 8-week-old puppy. It helps us so much that he had the basic training. We are very happy with his training and wish he had more!!! I would say the program is excellent."

Introducing... SwissRidge Dogs for Kids



For many years, I have made it a point to "give back" by fundraising for and/or donating dogs to children with special needs. When my operation was smaller, my charitable outreach could be more grassroots. I liked to be hands-on with the people receiving and working with my dogs.

As my business grows, it makes sense to formalize my approach. Over the past two years, the SwissRidge Facebook Group has become a powerful force in fundraising. Together we have raised nearly \$18,000! I've been truly astounded and inspired by my clients' generosity. Going forward, I'd like to harness that goodwill and direct it, where I can, toward specific objectives.

With that in mind, I announce "SwissRidge Dogs for Kids." My overarching goal is simple: to make a difference in a child's life, one dog at a time.

Every dollar we raise via the Facebook group or other activities will go into this fund and be allocated to children with special needs—by way of dogs, of course!

This year, the lion's share of the money we raise will likely go to Autism Dog Services. I keep coming back to this excellent organization because I've seen the impact of their work in person. As in the past, I intend to donate a puppy to the organization in 2015 and allow them to match it with an appropriate child. Funds raised throughout the year will pay for the specialized training that puppy needs to best serve its family.

We're already off to a great start. Together, we raised over \$3,000 from the sales of the SwissRidge dog calendar. I know we'll raise many thousands more at the annual Doodle Romp.

To support that effort, I will select with great care what I consider to be an absolutely perfect tri-coloured Bernedoodle—the pup I would keep for myself—and donate it to the cause. This pup will go to the highest bidder!

It will be an opportunity for people on the waiting list—or any other approved bidder—to leap to the front of the line and collect the "breeder's choice." I will reveal the selected puppy first on the SwissRidge Facebook Group, with auction details. So please join the group, if you haven't already.

Expanding my charitable outreach is another one of my cherished dreams coming true. I could not be more

thrilled that my clients support this effort. Please send me any ideas for fundraising you may have. I know we can do some great work together.



As much as I love the Annual SwissRidge Doodle Romp, with the hectic summer ahead I considered skipping it. There were so many disappointed people, however, that I had to relent. Besides, it is a key fundraising opportunity.



Last year, over 200 people attended the romp with around 60 doodles. We raised \$5,500 that went toward specialized training for Ollie, the Goldendoodle pup I donated to Liza Sneyd and family. Two of Liza's sons face challenges that a service dog can help alleviate. Here is Liza's update:

"Ollie has been the most incredible addition to our family. His unique relationship with each of my sons is so personal and extraordinary. Ollie is currently in Grade 3 at McCann's Professional Dog Training School. Once Ollie has completed this level, he will be ready for specialized training from Wade Beattie at Autism Dog Services.

Wade will train Ollie to meet some of the specific needs of Ciaran and Shay, including opening and closing doors, picking up small dropped items off the ground, providing balance support in tight spaces. He will also make sure Ollie has the skills he needs to pass the public access test. We are forever indebted to the SwissRidge family for providing our boys the opportunity to have a service dog. Ollie has been a life-changer for Ciaran and Shay. He has instilled a sense of pride and confidence in the boys. Thank you for this gift that continually keeps giving."



To streamline the romp workload, we're making some changes this year. We'll only have a few vendors, and ideally only a few high value auction prizes. We are also making the event pot luck.

DOODLE ROMP!

Date: Saturday Aug. 22nd

Time: 11am - 3pm

Location: Pinetree

Pet Care Centre

5951 Highway #6,

Guelph, Ontario

www.pinetreetpetcarecentre.com



Check the Doodle Romp page on the website for the latest news, and helpful links for those travelling from the U.S.

Please let me know if you have any high value items you could contribute for the auction. Ideally, we want to make the most impact without creating a huge workload for our busy volunteers. **Please purchase your tickets ASAP on the website: www.swissridgedoodleromp.com**

SwissRidge Hall of Fame

I invite you to visit the new online SwissRidge Hall of Fame at www.bernedoodles.com. My goals for this page are simple: to profile your accomplishments with your dogs; and to entertain!

If you've worked hard with your dog to achieve therapy designation or the Canine Good Citizenship award—or any number of challenging feats—let's celebrate them! Please forward your news, and ideally a photo, and we'll give you the SwissRidge press you deserve.

On a lighter note, I often hear about my dogs mixing and mingling with people who are in the public eye. Some dogs are even owned by public figures. If you happen to have a photo of a SwissRidge dog with a prominent figure in any arena, please share it with all of us in the virtual Hall of Fame.

I got quite a kick out of seeing Motley and Vedder, owned by Jamie Amell, working the Hollywood angle. Jamie's brother, Robbie Amell, starred in the movie *The DUFF*, and is also on the TV show *The Flash*. His fiancée, Italia Ricci, stars in *Chasing Life*. When Robbie and Italia visited recently, they graciously

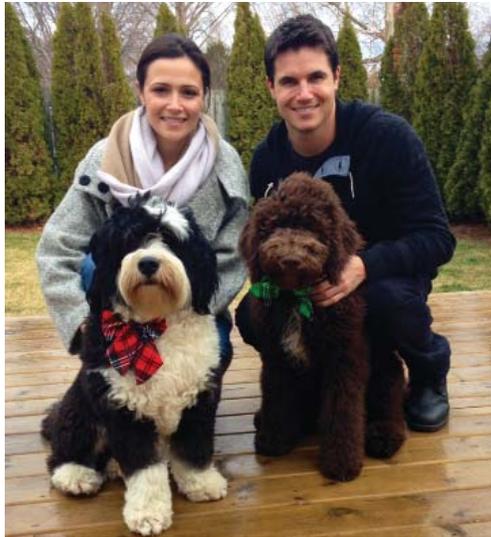
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posed with their furry “nephews.”

That’s a gorgeous foursome!

I will also be framing the real photo, along with several others, and hanging them on an actual Wall of Fame in the receiving area of my new Kennel.



Great Expectations

I’ve spoken before of my plans to develop a unique SwissRidge hybrid that combines all the traits and features I love most. Over the past two years, I’ve worked incrementally toward this goal, litter after litter, holding back the pups I need and bringing in fresh lines from other kennels.

I’m pleased to announce that Willow, a Bernedoodle-Goldendoodle cross (AKA a Golden Mountain Doodle), has been bred with Levi, an Australian Labradoodle. If Mother Nature obliges, the first original **SwissRidge Doodles** will be born in May.



Levi + Willow = The Swissridge Doodle!

Willow comes from a long line of amazing dogs bred at my kennel. I can trace her history for four generations. Indeed, her grandmother on her mother’s side, my beloved Ginger, passed away only recently at 17—a very advanced aged for a Golden Retriever. Lazeeza, Willow’s mom, is one of my favorite breeding dogs ever. She recently retired and is living with my cousin.

Levi comes from quality lines and has been producing consistently healthy, attractive and good-tempered pups. In my view, he’s proven himself worthy of this honor!

With this announcement, I formally open the waiting list for the SwissRidge doodle. Needless to say, production will be on a small scale at first, and will evolve as I see results. But I have every reason to believe these pups are going to be spectacular.

Your Doods

This new column is, as you can guess, intended to profile your dogs. I welcome nominations for future issues, but this time, I wanted to feature Lucho and Chago, standard Goldendoodles owned by Paula Bund. Eleven years ago, Paula was brave enough to take home two littermates at once—something that is still quite uncommon.



Here’s what Paula had to say about her boys:

“They brought me so much joy over the years, changed my life and gave me a new purpose. Through them I came to meet new friends and colleagues. Through them I came to photography.”

Paula shared one of her beautiful photos of her boys at age 11. Thank you, Paula!

Introducing... Harlow!

Now and again I keep my pick of a litter and tuck it away in my metaphorical “puppy vault,” often with a goal of using it in my breeding program. A pup needs to be special to make that cut, and Harlow is certainly that. She’s an Australian Bernedoodle out of Blossom and Levi, and I see so much potential in this little girl. She is sweet, loving and very social—and of course, drop-dead gorgeous. The Jennings family kindly offered to foster Harlow while they await their next puppy, so “brother” Lefty is showing her the ropes. I can’t wait to see Harlow grow into her potential.



All in the Family

As I noted earlier, the SwissRidge “family” that has developed on Facebook continues to astound me with its generosity and kindness. In the past year, we’ve celebrated many wonderful moments together, and consoled each other in some sad ones.

One event that really stands out is the disappearance of Bently, a mini Goldendoodle owned by Kelsie and Chris Scheeler. For a full week, we were all on tenterhooks, compulsively checking to see if Bently had been found. Lucas and I joined other SwissRidge owners and volunteers as the search continued day after day. Meanwhile, someone set up a fund that helped with the search. I think the collective sigh of relief when Bently reappeared was felt across North America. But for me it also struck a very personal note, as I remembered a similar joyous reunion with my own dog, Dizzy.



Sometimes I shake my head over my good luck in having such wonderful clients and this remarkable community. I know I am not the only one who feels that way, because many are choosing to take their acquaintance off the page and meet in person. There have been many “mini SwissRidge romps” in places as diverse as New York City, California, North Carolina, and several in Toronto.

Check out the photos on pages 9-10. I had a lot of big dreams for SwissRidge, but this “family” is really beyond anything I could have imagined. Thank you!

Preparing for Puppy with One Click

I’ve always sent prospective owners a list of items they need to get ready for their new pup. It’s a “bare bones” list, and people are always asking for more advice. Experienced owners frequently share their favourite products on the Facebook page. It’s a lot to digest and can mean some running around in the weeks before your pup comes home.



Recently, Garry Millage, the owner of two SwissRidge dogs as well as two successful retail chains—Greenhawk Harness & Equestrian Supplies and Bark ‘n Fitz—proposed pulling together a great starter package for new puppy owners. After soliciting input from clients on Facebook, and doing my own research, I’ve come up with a list of recommended products that Greenhawk is assembling in online packages for tiny, medium and standard dogs. By summer 2015, new SwissRidge clients across North America will be able to click once and have everything they really need for their new pup shipped to their doorstep.

Greenhawk will also be featuring

SwissRidge dogs as models in its marketing material. There was a photo shoot in Oakwood in February that the dogs enjoyed more than I did. They were wearing their sturdy Shedrow coats and romping in the snow, while the humans stood by freezing on a -30 C day. Pandora was an absolute ham, rolling, pouncing and burrowing into the snow. I wouldn’t be surprised if she demands an agent!



Stay tuned as I work with Greenhawk to make the transition to new puppy owner a little easier for clients. And if you are interested in checking out these coats or other pet supplies, please visit www.greenhawk.com and www.barkandfitz.com

Health and Wellness

In this new, regular column I will share my current thinking on issues affecting canine health in general, and doodles in particular.

Lately, a number of clients have asked me whether or not they should request that their pup’s stomach be “pinned” during routine spay surgery. This procedure, called gastropexy, sutures the dog’s stomach to the body wall, preventing it from twisting and causing gastric dilatation and volvulus if the dog should develop bloat.

Bloat occurs when gas accumulates in a dog’s stomach, and it becomes even

more serious when the organ twists and flips over. Left untreated, bloat can kill a dog within hours.

While bloat can affect any dog, it is most common in larger dog breeds, along with those who have deep and narrow chest cavities. Standard Poodles are more prone to bloat than other breeds.

While the incidence of bloat is fairly rare, its impact is so catastrophic that I do, in fact, recommend gastropexy during spay surgery, especially for standard doodles. Routine neutering of male dogs does not offer the same opportunity to pin the stomach. Since abdominal surgery itself comes with risks, I am less inclined to recommend gastropexy for males. However, you will want to discuss this issue with your veterinarian.

There are strategies for avoiding bloat:

- Provide smaller, regular meals—luckily, doodles tend not to be gluttonous eaters;
- Avoid allowing your dog to drink large amounts of water right after eating;
- Keep food and water dishes on the floor to reduce the chance of your dog's swallowing air along with its food;
- Wait at least 45 minutes after feeding your dog before exercising him/her; and
- Stick with a routine diet—table scraps or food that is high in carbohydrates may produce too much gas and lead to bloat.

Symptoms of bloat include restlessness and pacing, salivation, retching, and enlargement of the abdomen. If you have the slightest suspicion of bloat, take your dog to a vet immediately.

Ask Sherry...



What are the results of your raw food trial?

Last summer, after a great deal of research, I began feeding my dogs a raw diet. I have long been concerned by the fact that I consume high quality, fresh, organic food myself, but might not be providing the same to my dogs. I always want to do the best I can for them.

The raw trial meant buying six freezers for expensive food, and staffing up to ensure the process went according to plan. Tailoring raw food to each dog's need was much more complicated than dropping kibble into a bowl, and I was really pleased with how well we handled both the complexity and hygiene.

Unfortunately, the outcome was not at all what I had hoped. The majority of my dogs clearly fared better on Royal Canin than they did on raw. In fact, the impact was quite negative, overall. My "moms" had dull coats, less milk and an increase in mastitis, which of course meant more bottle-feeding for puppies. Some of those same moms have new litters now and all are doing great after the switch back to Royal Canin.

I am extremely disappointed, to say the least. I really wanted to deliver a glowing review of the raw diet, but my dogs simply didn't thrive on it. I have continued feeding raw only to Sting, a very slight Poodle who has filled out nicely.

Nonetheless, I support anyone to try a raw diet with their dogs. Every dog is different, and many of my clients report good results. But my experience was not positive enough to endorse across the board. At least the experiment confirmed my confidence in Royal Canin, a food that has served SwissRidge dogs well for over a decade.

Ask Lucas...



My dog is afraid of... bikes, skateboards, trains, etc. What can I do to help?

To help your dog conquer a specific fear, the dog must experience the stimulus in a different way than the brain perceives it. There are multiple methods to address the issue, including:

- Desensitization, which involves increasing exposure to the offending stimulus, starting at a very low level.
- Counter conditioning, which involves attaching a prediction to a

stimulus. For instance, if a dog fears bikes, we must condition the dog to believe that bikes are followed by high reward. As an example, think about what happens when you start preparing your dog's food: you pull out his bowl or food container and he starts wagging his tail. He knows through conditioning that the appearance of his bowl is followed by dinner.

- Flooding, which is the direct exposure to a stimulus to provoke the fearful behaviour. The dog confronts the stimulus until the emotional response changes and the dog realizes that there is nothing to be afraid of.

When working with dogs on fearful behaviors, I recommend starting by exposing the dog to the stimulus with enough distance that the dog is comfortable and not reacting.

Approach the stimulus and reward calm behaviours with high reward treats; increase distance when needed to revert back to a calm state. At times we may need to take the dog's attention onto us to get closer to the stimulus. For instance if your dog loves working for food, we can use this as an advantage and get closer to the stimulus while the dog does an activity it enjoys.

In the worst case scenario, where the flight response is very strong, we must physically place the dog into the situation using negative reinforcement. This is where flooding can occur. There is usually a purge of energy and resistance followed by some easing.

When working with a dog on fear issues, I first address leash pulling and assign a command for tension like "heel." This is necessary because if the dog begins pulling away from a

stimulus and not settling, negative reinforcement may be required to snap the brain out of this state to redirect. However, giving a correction without a command could make the dog associate the correction to the stimulus, which perpetuates an endless loop of the behaviour. By giving a command while the dog is pulling, we associate the correction to the command, keeping the stimulus separate.

We need to allow the dog to experience a stimulus without overbearing tension to be successful and begin counter conditioning. Once we have achieved some kind of "acceptance" to the situation we can begin.

Happy training!
Lucas



Autumn ~ my Golden Mountain Doodle

What's Next?

Well, puppies, puppies and more puppies! At least, I hope so. The trend lately has been big, healthy litters, and while that has kept us very busy, it has also made many new owners happy. Just for fun, I will leave you with a few photos you haven't seen yet.

Beyond that, I hope to see many of you at the romp in August.

I expect the next newsletter will be an announcement of the new kennel's grand opening!

Hugs,
Sherry

Remember, we'll be auctioning the perfect Bernedoodle pup for a great cause! Stay tuned to the SwissRidge Facebook group for details.



Wookiee ~ one of my new Australian Labradoodles





SWISSRIDGE MINI ROMPS

Making new friends across North America



NEW YORK



WASHINGTON, D.C.



MISSISSAUGA, ONTARIO



SOUTHERN CALIFORNIA #1



NARRAGANSETT RHODE ISLAND



NORTH CAROLINA



SOUTHERN CALIFORNIA #2



*God sent me an angel dressed in fur
to show me the real meaning of love.*



*I've never known a sweeter,
more intuitive, fun-loving dog
than my Ginger. I was blessed to have
her as my companion for many wonderful
years, and more hikes than I can count.*

*Her legacy will live on through
generations of SwissRidge dogs.
Our last day by the water Ginger loved so
much was beautiful and bittersweet.
Until we meet again, rest in peace my sweet girl.*

