



# The Sheltie Spin

Newsletter of Northern Virginia Sheltie Rescue  
"Giving Shelties a New Leash on Life"

Winter 2012

We wish our Sheltie family a very happy holiday season and a 2013 full of Sheltie love.

We reached into our bottomless Christmas stocking full of Sheltie photos and found these for your holiday smiles.



Hmmm ... naughty or nice?

Someone opened all the gifts early!



Definitely all nice!



A Christmas "Angel"



## Could You Open Your Heart and Home to a Senior Sheltie?

We have three senior Shelties who have been looking for homes for quite some time. All of them are wonderful, sweet dogs, hoping to find someone who will love them for the rest of their lives, however long that might be. They just need a soft bed, regular meals, gentle walks, and lots of love. If you'd like more information about any of these beautiful dogs, please don't hesitate to ask: [foster@nvsr.org](mailto:foster@nvsr.org). In addition, all of these seniors are eligible for our permanent foster program. There is more information about all of them on our Shelties Looking for Homes page on our website: [www.nvsr.org](http://www.nvsr.org).



**Lady Beth** is a beautiful, small merle girl who has trouble with her joints. She cannot walk very far or do steps. She has a lovely, sweet temperament and is absolutely no trouble in her foster home. She would love any attention given to her.

**Milo** is a handsome larger boy who loves his gentle walks, especially to see what is new in the neighborhood. He's affectionate and friendly to everyone he meets. In fact, he's happiest if there are lots of people around. Milo has difficulty with steps, so living on one floor is best for him.



**Shellie Hope** has been "hoping" for a new home for a long time. She's a pretty girl who has arthritis, so long walks are not for her. She does enjoy ambling around the yard, though, catching up on the new smells and sights. She's affectionate and loves attention, including frequent brushing.



### Are You Killing Your Sheltie with Kindness? Keep Your Sheltie Trim, Healthy, and Happy

It doesn't take long ... an extra treat here, a dropped chip there, just another little piece of cheese. The next thing you know, your happy little Sheltie is sporting a bulge around the middle. Her ribs are suddenly "missing" and the "waist" she had is now a straight line from her shoulders to back legs. What to do?



Weight gain is dangerous for our four-footed friends. According to WebMD.com, **one in three dogs in the United**

**States is currently overweight or obese!** One extra pound on a 25-pound Sheltie is a lot greater in proportion to your dog's total weight than for a human. The health risks are the same for your Sheltie as they are for you, though. Increased weight puts more stress on your dog's joints and spine, which can lead to or aggravate increased wear and/or arthritis. It also increases the risk of Type II diabetes, some tumors, heart disease, and high blood pressure. In addition, an overweight dog will probably live a shorter life than one at a healthy weight. You want your Sheltie to stay with you a long time, don't you?



So, how do you tell if your furry little buddy has a weight problem? You can stand over him and look down to see if he has a "waist" between his ribs and back legs. (OK – we know that Shelties have a lot of fur. Use your hands to smooth the coat down to the skin.) Your dog's body should "pinch in" somewhat. His tummy should show a definite "tuck in" at about the same point in the body when viewed from the side. If you can't feel your dog's ribs while rubbing his sides without pressing hard, he has extra weight. You can also weigh your dog on a bathroom scale. Weigh yourself and note the number. Then, weigh yourself holding your dog, and subtract to get your dog's weight. Your vet can give you a range of numbers normal for your dog. Variations outside this range should be cause for concern.



Weight gain can be caused by many factors. Most commonly, weight gain in pets is caused

by insufficient exercise and/or too much food. Remember that your dog can gain just as much weight from eating too much good food as it can from eating too many treats. WebMD states:

*"A dog's calorie needs can be surprisingly small. Little dogs that aren't very active need as few as 185 to 370 calories a*

*day. A dog weighing between 67 and 88 pounds may need between 1,100 and 1,700 calories a day."*

How can you help your dog maintain a healthy weight?

- Measure your dog's food and feed the amount your veterinarian suggests. (Amounts on the dog food bag are usually very overstated.)
- Make sure you're feeding a good quality dog food. (See our article in the Summer *Sheltie Spin* – on our website – for recommendations.)
- Limit treats or give low calorie treats such as baby carrots. Remember that giving a Sheltie a small-sized Milk-Bone (actually Milk-Bones are NOT recommended) is proportionately the same as giving a human a hamburger.
- Make sure your dog gets 20 to 60 minutes of exercise per day, depending on age and health. This is good for you, too!

Before putting your dog on a diet and exercise program, check with your vet to ensure your Sheltie is healthy and ready to exercise. Ask how much exercise to start out with on a daily basis. A dog that hasn't been on regular daily walks can't start walking two miles a day with you or chase a ball for an hour!

Another reason to check with your veterinarian is that some chronic diseases cause weight gain. Two notable ones in Shelties are Cushing's disease and hypothyroidism. Cushing's is the result of too much cortisol (a hormone) in the dog's body. It can be caused by a physiological problem or it can be a side effect of some medications. Hypothyroidism (low-functioning thyroid gland) is not uncommon in Shelties, especially older ones. The test for hypothyroidism is a simple blood test, and the treatment is an inexpensive pill. If you suspect your dog has any physical cause of her overweight, contact your vet for more assistance. There are excellent articles about both hypothyroidism and Cushing's disease in Whole Dog Journal ([www.whole-dog-journal.com](http://www.whole-dog-journal.com)).



Shelties are genetically programmed to store up fat. Consider where they came from – the harsh Shetland Islands where meals might have been few and far between. You have to ignore those appealing eyes begging for "just one more treat" and get

out the leash for a nice long walk. It's your responsibility to keep your dog healthy and trim, if you want your Sheltie to live a long, happy life!



## Dog Parks – Good or Bad? It Depends

Many cities and towns have public dog parks set aside for dogs to exercise and play off leash. They are becoming more common especially in urban areas where places to exercise dogs are not available or are inconvenient. Dog parks are the fastest growing segment of public parks in the country.

The physical setup of dog parks varies from standalone fenced areas with minimal amenities to inclusions in large public parks with water features, lighting, and rest rooms. There are some unfenced off-leash dog parks, but they are not the norm. Any dog park might require proof of licensure and vaccinations for everyone's safety.



A well-designed dog park will have double (“air lock”) gates to prevent escapes and permit slower entry into the park. (Keep your Sheltie on leash until you're well into the principal fenced

area.) There should be a list of rules posted near the gates, and a fence or wall between the “Large Dog” and “Small Dog/Puppies” areas – very important for the safety of the dogs. Large trees or shade structures are very nice. Drinking water may or may not be available or shut off during the cold months. Small children generally should not be allowed in a dog park to prevent falls or other injuries. In addition, some dogs don't get along with children, so don't allow your children to run around with dogs you don't know. Dogs can act very differently in a pack situation in a dog park. They can gang up on a child or a submissive dog or just generally be hooligans.

If you're considering going to a dog park with your Sheltie, visit the park at different times during the day and evening – without taking your dog inside. Notice when the busy and not-so-busy times occur. Observe how your Sheltie reacts near the park – is she excited to join the fun? Frightened? Nervous? Dog parks aren't for every dog and can be dangerous if there are bully dogs in there running loose.

A dog must be well-socialized and trained



to “come” to be off leash in a dog park. Owners must ensure their dogs are well behaved and cause no trouble with other dogs or owners. Owners must stay at the park and supervise their dogs' activity. (When you do your initial observation, notice if the owners are socializing with each other and ignoring the dogs – NOT a good sign. At one park recently observed, a dog owner dropped off his pit bull mix and left to do errands!) Know how to read canine body language before using a dog park, as early warning signs can prevent trouble. Dog fights are preventable, and very scary to break up, with the possibility of serious injury. Offenders should be banned from the park for everyone's safety.

A visit to a dog park is not a substitute for a good walk or exercise session, but could be a social addition to your Sheltie's day. Give your Sheltie a brisk 30-minute walk before entering the dog park. It's beneficial – for both of you – and can help reduce assertive behavior.

Any time dogs socialize, disease transmission is possible, especially for contagious diseases such as kennel cough (bordatella) and canine influenza. Transfer of parasites is also possible, so minimize this by treating your Sheltie with Frontline or a similar topical treatment. Feces should be promptly picked up and disposed of.



Dog parks are great resources - if used wisely. Know your responsibilities and keep a close eye on your Sheltie! Dog parks aren't right for every dog, and adopted dogs may have issues that appear in a “pack” situation at a dog park, including bullying or being bullied. It's perfectly okay to have a Sheltie that prefers NOT to go to the local dog park.

Following are some websites for finding and learning about dog parks. Your town or county may list dog parks on their website.

[www.dogpark.com](http://www.dogpark.com)

[www.dogfriendly.com/server/travel/guides/dogpark/dogpark.shtml](http://www.dogfriendly.com/server/travel/guides/dogpark/dogpark.shtml)

[www.ecoanimal.com/dogfun/](http://www.ecoanimal.com/dogfun/)

[www.speakingforspot.com/blog](http://www.speakingforspot.com/blog)



### Volunteer Spotlight: Jenni Frock

Jenni Frock stumbled on NVSR several years ago when the Sheltie she adopted from another rescue group passed away. One of her abiding passions is helping animals, and Sheltie rescue was the perfect choice for her free time. Since she joined the NVSR volunteer ranks, Jenni has fostered several dogs, finding them great new homes (she even adopted one), done home visits, and attended and set up several events, for example, at Barrel Oak Winery.

Jenni has a life filled with music and animals, two things she's passionate about. If you listen to country music,



you may have heard the voice of Jenni Chase, DJ on WMZQ-98.7 in Washington DC. That's our NVSR Jenni using her on-air name. (If you're out of the area, you can listen online.)

Jenni hosts her country music show from 9:00 to 2:00 M-F, and she spends many weekends at charity events on behalf of the station. She originated WMZQ's "Pet of the Week" feature with the Washington Animal Rescue League, and she has interviewed the WARL CEO on the station's community activities show. We're proud that she mentions rescue, adoption, and specifically Sheltie rescue whenever she can. Jenni says, "The Country community is incredibly generous and filled with tons of animal lovers."

When she's not spinning CDs at the station (or however they send out the music), she and husband John take care of their menagerie at home. They have two dogs of their own: Bear, an NVSR Sheltie adoptee, and Travis, a golden retriever/cocker mix. They also "always have room for a foster dog." In addition to the two canines, Jenni and John have five hens ("It's great to have eggs every day") and two pygmy goats. We don't know if the hens have names, but the goats do – Aggie and Nittany. Aggie is a special challenge – she's a "Houdini," able to climb over every fence. So far the new 6 ½ foot fence has kept her in. By the way, the goats are named for their alma maters – can you guess which ones?

Jenni and John recently "tied the knot" at the October Renaissance Festival. They met through WMZQ when John sent an e-mail to Jenni, which turned into e-mail chat, then a phone chat, a first date, and ... well ... the rest is history. We know that John is a good cook.



He and Jenni managed the hungry crowds at the picnic last September doling out hot dogs, watermelon, and all the trimmings.

Because Jenni's abiding passion will always be animals, we know we can count on her volunteer help for years to come. Here's a photo of her at the September picnic when she said goodbye to her foster, Rocky – one of those bittersweet foster experiences. She considers it a privilege to work with people like our NVSR volunteers who are so involved in helping animals find homes.



### Old Town Scottish Walk

We had a great time at the Old Town Scottish Walk on December 1. Our Shelties were a big hit! We were outnumbered by the 40+ Westies in the parade, but we made up for that with Sheltie CLASS and STYLE. Here are a few photos of our "marching unit" waiting to step off with all the pipe bands.





## Holiday Tips for Shelties

### 1. *Don't lose your Sheltie!*

#### If your Sheltie will be cared for by someone else

...

- Be sure the dog's tag has a phone number where someone can be reached 24/7.
- Be sure the dog's collar/harness fits snugly.
- Check fences for gaps and be sure the person will ALWAYS have your dog on leash.

#### If you travel with your Sheltie ...

Your Sheltie may try to get out a door (including a car door) or out of a yard to try to head home. Travel with your Sheltie in a crate (the best way) or in a seatbelt harness – the safest method for everyone!

#### If you will have guests in your home ...

- Visitors mean doors open more frequently, people are greeting, and little dogs are not being watched carefully. Use a crate, a baby gate, a closed room, or a leash to ensure your Sheltie does not slip out the door.

### 2. *Teach your Sheltie to greet guests politely.*

Dogs jump up on people because it works – they get attention. And, they rarely care if it's positive or negative attention. So, if your dog jumps up on you, turn away, stand tall, fold your arms, and take a step away. If you will do this a few times, your dog will give up the jumping, because she isn't getting any attention. When she sits quietly for attention, give her a "jackpot" of treats. (Don't tell her to "sit" while she's jumping on you – that just gives her more attention.) The positive training mantra is: Reward the behavior you want.

If you don't have time to work on this before your guests arrive, keep your dog on a short leash while guests arrive or put him in another room. Then, you can introduce him to the guests when things quiet down a bit.

3. *Keep your Sheltie on a regular diet and try to avoid excessive treats and unusual foods.* It's very

tempting to include your Sheltie in holiday treats. Use "holiday carrots" instead!

4. *Keep up with your Sheltie's regular exercise program.* It's good for you, too!

5. *Watch out for poisons, like poinsettia plants and dangerous foods like garlic, onions, grapes, raisins, and chocolate.* It is very expensive to take your Sheltie to the emergency vet on Christmas day. Keep decorations and wrappings up off the floor.

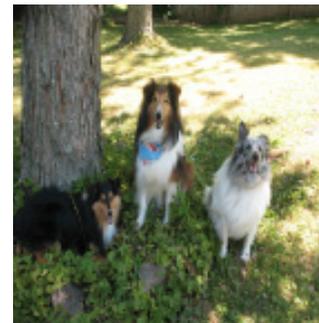
Here are two excellent websites for year-round Sheltie safety:

[www.doggonessafe.com](http://www.doggonessafe.com)

[www.familypaws.com](http://www.familypaws.com)



"No, Dad, we want SANTA to pull our wagon."



**GAM Printers of Sterling, Virginia, where Cady, Tigger and Spirit's family work, is pleased to support Northern Virginia Sheltie Rescue by designing, printing & mailing their newsletter.**



## Holiday Shopping for the Shelties!

Here are some ideas for holiday gifts that will also help NVSR.



The 2013 NVSR Calendar, of course! 12 months of gorgeous Shelties. We still have them available. \$18 plus \$1.50 for postage. [www.nvsr.org](http://www.nvsr.org)



Beautiful Sheltie angel ornaments. Lots of sweats, shirts, totebags. Purchase on the NVSR website [www.nvsr.org](http://www.nvsr.org) or write to [shop@nvsr.org](mailto:shop@nvsr.org).

Do your holiday online shopping through the iGive.com or GoodSearch.com portals and help NVSR that way. No cost to you!!

## Northern Virginia Sheltie Rescue Directors and Coordinators

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Dana Greenwood, Mary Ellen Jones, Nancy Tisdale  
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**Thanks also to the many volunteers who help transport,  
foster, and contribute their time to help the Shelties  
who are brought to or found by NVSR.**

Newsletter submissions to [sheltiespin@nvsr.org](mailto:sheltiespin@nvsr.org)

Website [www.nvsr.org](http://www.nvsr.org) • E-Mail: [shelties@nvsr.org](mailto:shelties@nvsr.org)

Note our new address

Northern Virginia Sheltie Rescue  
977 Seminole Trail, PMB 314  
Charlottesville VA 22901  
703-912-4002

Graphic from [www.kennelcity.com](http://www.kennelcity.com)



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### I would like to make a donation to the Northern Virginia Sheltie Rescue

Name \_\_\_\_\_

Address \_\_\_\_\_

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#### Donation Amount:

\$25     \$50     \$75     \$100    Other \$ \_\_\_\_\_

Make checks payable to Northern Virginia Sheltie Rescue. Mail to Treasurer, NVSR, 977 Seminole Trail, PMB 314, Charlottesville VA 22901

Northern Virginia Sheltie Rescue, Inc., is a nonprofit, 501(c)(3), tax-exempt corporation. A financial statement is available upon request from the Commonwealth of Virginia Division of Consumer Affairs, P.O. Box 1163, Richmond, VA 23218-1163.

#### NVSR MISSION STATEMENT

NVSR will take in any Sheltie in need regardless of age, except those with histories of repeated, unprovoked biting. Dogs accepted into rescue will be evaluated in foster homes, receive veterinary care and necessary resocialization, and ultimately be placed in homes where they will be loved, protected, and well cared for. We support efforts to reduce pet overpopulation; all of our Shelties will be spayed or neutered prior to adoption or, if not yet at a safe age to be neutered, placed on a spay/neuter contract at the time of adoption. NVSR is a 501(c)(3) organization.