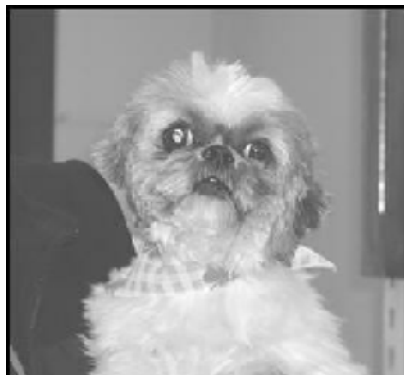


# The Wintergreen Post

Volume 3 Issue 1

SHAPE UP Edition

Spring2004



## Pet Profile - Toni McGuinness

Breed: Shih Tzu  
 Color: Mostly white with some brown  
 Birthday: Born in 2000  
 Veterinarian: Easthampton Animal Hospital  
 Favorite Kennel Activity: Being cuddled in the arms of anyone who can't resist that face!

~Owned and Loved By the McGuinness Family~

Although she must miss her Golden Retriever friend, Ginger (who passed away earlier in the year), Toni seems to enjoy being the center of attention! She's quick to bound into the arms of anyone who is willing to scoop her up....and, let's face it, who can resist that happy-go-lucky attitude? Toni loves treats, belly rubs and, most of all, snuggling! Maybe we're all just a little partial to her because she

reminds us of the Shih Tzus that Jean Miller, who started the Wintergreen Kennels, used to breed, but either way, staff at the kennel are always happy to see Toni.

***It has been known for many years that excessive body weight (or obesity) is not healthy.***

***Here are 10 good reasons why you should keep your pet lean, trim & fit.***

The most common nutritional disorder in animals and humans living in modern society is excess body weight or obesity. Various reports have estimated that 24-44% of dogs, and 25% of cats are obese (defined as 15% or more above their optimum body weight). That obesity is so common in pets is a surprise because for most pets it is simply caused by overfeeding, which is avoidable.

If owners were more aware of the dangers of obesity - perhaps they would be more diligent about controlling the amount of food that they provide for their pets. Here are Provet's TOP 10 good reasons to keep your pet lean, trim and fit:

1. Obesity can reduce life-expectancy
2. Diabetes is very common - it affects 1 in every 200 dogs and 1 in every 400 cats, and many of these cases are associated with obesity. It has even been shown that 61% of obese dogs have poor glucose tolerance and high insulin concentrations in their blood (both signs of a pre-diabetic state) long before clinical signs of diabetes, such as increased thirst, occur.
3. Orthopedic problems are made much worse if an animal is overweight. That isn't surprising because the additional weight puts unnecessary stress and strain on the biomechanics of limb and joint function. It has been estimated that 24% of obese animals have some form of locomotion problem. Veterinarians have many anecdotal reports about obese animals scheduled to have major surgery for their orthopedic conditions which did not require surgery once they lost weight.
4. Excess body weight increases workload for the heart and almost doubles the risk for circulatory disease to develop.  
The risk of developing skin disease is increased in obese individuals
5. Overweight animals have difficulty exercising because of the effects on locomotion and also due to the effects of excess body tissue on respiration - making breathing difficult.  
Reproductive problems in males and females is often associated with excess body weight
6. There is evidence that obese animals have a lower immune resistance to infectious diseases
7. Obese animals have altered metabolic rates and their individual "set point" for body weight is higher than it should be. This makes achieving and maintaining weight loss very difficult for owners once obesity is established.
8. Obese animals have a higher anesthetic risk, and a higher risk for wound breakdowns following surgery.

If your pet is gaining too much weight get the advice of your veterinarian before it progresses to obesity.

**Keep your pet lean, trim and fit by:**

**Controlling calorie intake to avoid excess**

**Maintain a regular DAILY exercise program**



Your pets probably see more of Jared than you are likely to see. "Behind the Scenes", he helps feed, medicate, water and exercise them as well as he keep their quarters neat and clean. Of course, Jared does appear out front wearing long blue gloves as he washes the dishes.

One would never guess that he has crossed the International Date Line in the mid-Pacific ocean. Other special events of his service in the US Coast Guard: intercepting Haitian refugees off the Florida Coast and playing in a Coast Guard team against a Haitian team on Haitian sail (Haitians won). Immediately upon graduation from Williston-Northampton school, Jared enlisted for a four year tour with the Coast Guard. Soon came a six month service in the blistering heat of the Persian Gulf monitoring maritime commerce. Then followed a cruise in the icy Alaskan waters.

Wintergreen Kennels was founded by Jared's grandparents, Jean and Lew Miller before Jared's birth. Parents, Judith and Michael Conlin are the proprietors. Thus Jared is the third generation to provide quality care for your pets.

--Lew Miller

#### GROOMING TIP

##### BRUSHES & COMBS: HOW TO CHOOSE THE RIGHT ONE.

Choosing the right brush or comb for your pet is an important first step for even the most basic home grooming.

#### Brushes

Although there are many different shapes and sizes, there are basically three different brush types.

**Bristle Brushes:** Bristle brushes can be used on all coat types and vary according to the spacing between bristles and the length of the bristles. In general, the longer the hair coat, the more widely spaced and longer the bristles should be. Also, the coarser the hair, the stiffer those bristles need to be.

**Wire-Pin Brushes:** Wire-pin brushes, with or without rubber-tipped ends, are the preferred choice for pets with medium to long hair and those with curly or woolly coats. **Slicker Brushes:** Slicker brushes have fine wire bristles and are especially useful for removing mats and tangles.

#### Combs

Rubber curry combs are effective at massaging the skin and removing dead hair from short-haired breeds. It is also a good idea to have a Grooming Rake or Matbreaker on hand to remove mats.

When brushing or combing, be gentle and take your time. Be especially careful when removing mats or tangles. Brushing can and should be a pleasant experience for your pet as the gentle stroking feels good on your pet's skin. It does not take too many painful 'rips' through snarls, however, to make brushing a procedure your pet will try to avoid rather than invite. The best way to build trust and make this a pleasurable bonding time for both of you is to brush your pet often, preferably daily. This prevents problem mats and tangles from developing.



Above info from [www.peteducation.com](http://www.peteducation.com)

#### Kitty Korner

##### Frequently Asked Questions Regarding Obesity

**WILL SPAYING OR NEUTERING MY CAT FAT?** Spaying or neutering your cat will not make your pet fat unless you feed your cat too many calories or do not give your cat enough exercise. It is true that neutered and spayed animals burn fewer calories than intact pets, so we generally need to feed them less.

**HOW FAST SHOULD MY CAT LOSE WEIGHT?** In general, a good goal would be to have your cat lose 0.5-2.0% of its body weight per week. A weight loss of 2% or more per week can cause more harm than good. It is especially important that obese cats do not lose weight too rapidly.

**DO I HAVE TO USE A REDUCING DIET OR CAN I JUST FEED LESS OF MY CAT'S NORMAL DIET?** Some cats, especially those who do not have to lose a large amount of weight would do fine on a lesser amount of their normal food. Cats who are on a special diet because of another condition (e.g., bladder stones) should remain on that diet and simply be fed less of it.

There are several advantages to feeding a balanced commercial weight reduction diet. First, weight reduction diets are generally high-fiber, low-fat

diets which have a low energy density and allow a greater loss of body fat than simply feeding smaller amounts of a high-fat diet. This is because fat contains over twice as many calories as protein and carbohydrates and low-calorie dense foods tend to produce satiety (a feeling of being full) at a lower level of calorie intake. In addition, more energy is used in digesting and absorbing low-fat, high-fiber diets.

**HOW CAN I TELL IF MY CAT IS OVERWEIGHT?** As in people, some cats are big-boned and some are fine-boned, so just checking the weight of an animal can generally not give us enough information to make a determination. Some cats are at their optimal weight at 7 pounds, while others are in fine shape at 14 pounds. By checking several areas on your pet: the ribs, base of the tail, spine and shoulders, the 'waist,' and abdomen we can get a good idea of the body condition of an animal.

**WHY DID MY CAT GAIN WEIGHT WHEN I FED WHAT THE MANUFACTURER'S LABEL RECOMMENDED?** The label recommendations are a guideline and are based on caloric needs of what the manufacturer considers an 'average' cat with 'average' activity. In my opinion, many cats will gain excess weight if fed what the manufacturers of cat foods suggest. I would always start at the low end of the suggested amount to feed and monitor my cat's weight for several weeks and adjust the amount fed accordingly.

Also in answer to the question, I would have to ask another question: 'What else does your cat get to eat?' If your cat gets table scraps, treats, and a 'little something to make the food taste good,' that is most likely the reason your cat is gaining excess weight. The calories in the 'little extras' add up very fast.

Above Information from <http://www.peteducation.com/>

### Calendar of Upcoming Events

Looks like there's lots of pet related activities going on this spring. Be sure to mark your calendar!

#### **Northampton Rabies Clinic (\$10.00)**

April 3, 2004

Smith Vocational School / Dr. Ricksgers

**Dogs:** 9 – 10:30am **Cats:** 10:30 - Noon

#### **MSPCA Microchip Clinic (\$28.00)**

April 4, 2004

**Dogs** (on lead): 10 – Noon **Cats** (in carriers): Noon – 2p.m

*For more information, call the adoption center at (413) 736-2992*

#### **Easthampton Rabies Clinic (\$13.00)**

April 17, 2004

Public Safety Complex / Dr. Hayden

From 1 – 2p.m.

#### **Westhampton Rabies Clinic (\$13.00)**

April 17, 2004

Dr. Hayden / From 2:30 – 3:30p.m.

*For more information, call the Westhampton Town Hall*

#### **Southampton Rabies Clinic**

April 24, 2004

Southampton Highway Dept. / Dr. Hayden

From 1:00 – 2:00 p.m.

#### **Atkins Dog Parade (\$3.00/dog)**

April 24, 2004

Atkins Farm 413-253-9528

Check In: 11am – Noon Parade Starts at 12:30

*For more information, visit [www.dakinshelter.org](http://www.dakinshelter.org)*

#### **MSPCA's 22nd Annual Walk For The Animals**

May 2, 2004

Court Square, downtown Springfield

*For more information, call the adoption center at (413) 736-2992*

#### **Dakin Shelter's 3rd Annual Book & Plant Sale**

May 23, 2004

Valley Veterinary Hospital Hadley

Valley Veterinary Hospital, Inc.
For more information, visit http://www.dakinsheffer.org/



'If your dog doesn't like someone you probably shouldn't either.'
- Unknown

Kids Korner

Unscramble the letters to find activities that you and your pet can do together to stay in shape! Answers are listed below.

1. LIWKAGN \_ \_ \_ \_ \_

2. SFBEERI \_ \_ \_ \_ \_

3. KIHING \_ \_ \_ \_ \_

4. GAITILY \_ \_ \_ \_ \_

5. GGJONIG \_ \_ \_ \_ \_

6. AYPLTECFH \_ \_ \_ \_ \_

Smaller Collar Doggie Bone
For The Dog That Needs To Lose A Few Pounds!

- 1 c. beef broth
1/4 c. skim milk
1 tbsp. margarine
1/2 c. shredded reduced-fat cheddar cheese
2 1/2 c. whole wheat flour

3 1/2 C. WHOLE WHEAT FLOUR

Preheat oven to 350 degrees. Mix shredded cheddar cheese with flour. Add skim milk, margarine and beef broth. Knead dough until firm and roll to ¼ inch thickness. Stamp out with cookie cutter and place on an ungreased cookie sheet. Bake for 30 minutes.

Makes 2 ½ dozen.

From *The Doggy Bone Cookbook*, by Michelle Bledsoe

"You can say any fool thing to a dog, and the dog  
will give you this look that says, 'My God, you're RIGHT!  
I *NEVER* would've thought of that!'"

- Dave Barry

## Answers to Word Scramble

1. Walking
2. Frisbee
3. Hiking
4. Agility
5. Jogging
6. Play Fetch

## Calorie Content of Foods People Use as 'Treats'

Let us face it, people like to give their pets treats. Treats are often helpful as training aids and can be used to distract pets undergoing procedures such as removing mats, trimming nails, etc. Sometimes, we give dogs treats as a health benefit. And sometimes, it is just fun to give pets something special. Unfortunately, the type of treat or amount given can result in our pets receiving too many calories.

The 'average' calorie need of an 'average' twenty-pound dog is 690 kcal. As you can see from the chart below, the calories from giving that twenty-pound dog one large Milk Bone morning and night, a leftover slice of pizza from lunch, and a cookie for dessert at dinner will almost equal the dog's calorie needs for a whole day.

### CALORIES FROM TREATS PILE UP PRETTY FAST.

Food Item	Kilocalorie Content per Unit
Milk Bone Dog Biscuits - Small	20
Milk Bone Dog Biscuits - Medium	40
Milk Bone Dog Biscuits - Large	115
Pounce for cats	3
Whisker Lickin' for cats	3
Carrot (medium baby-sized)	3
Green Beans (canned, drained, 1 cup)	25
Air-popped popcorn (1 oz.)	108
Pizza Hut's Cheese Pizza (1 slice, medium)	259
Arby's Cheddar Fries (small order)	399
Chocolate Chip Cookie	180

Soft Serve Ice Cream (1/2 cup)	113
McDonald's Quarter Pounder with Cheese	525

From Your Veterinarian  
 Holly Frisby, DVM, MS  
 Veterinary Services Department,  
 Drs. Foster & Smith, Inc.

**When is a dog considered to be fat?**

Veterinarians often use a 9 point scoring system to evaluate the body condition of pets. A point value of 1 means the dog or cat is extremely thin to the point of emaciation. A score of 9 means the pet is grossly overweight. And like Goldilocks and the three bears, a score of 5 is 'just right.' To determine body score, there are several specific areas of the dog or cat we look at. Remember, these are guidelines. A Greyhound with a score of 5 is still going to be thinner than a Bulldog with the same score.

**NOTE:** We have included some illustrations to the left of this article which depict the contours of various body scores.

To perform the rating, we first feel the pet's ribs. We should be able to quite easily feel the ribs. There should be a slight amount of fat over them, but each rib should be distinct. If you can see the ribs, the pet is too thin. If you can not feel them at all, the pet is very overweight.

Second, check the area near the base of the tail. There should be a slight fat covering over this area and it should feel smooth. If the bones protrude, the pet is too thin; if you can not feel any bones at all, the pet is very overweight.

Third, feel other bony prominences on the pet's body such as the spine, shoulders, and hips. Again, you should be able to feel a small amount of fat over these areas. If these bones are easily felt or visible, the dog or cat is too thin. If you can not feel the bones beneath the layer of fat, the animal is obviously overweight.

Fourth, look at your pet from above. The animal should have a definite waist behind the ribs. If the waist is extreme, or again, bony prominences are visible, the animal is too thin. If there is no waist, or worse yet, the area between the ribs and hips is wider than the hips or ribs, the dog or cat is grossly overweight.

Fifth, look at the pet from the side. Dogs and cats should have an abdominal tuck, i.e., the area behind the ribs should be smaller in diameter than the chest. This can vary a lot between breeds. Irish Setters and Greyhounds, for instance, appear to have a much more distinct abdominal tuck, since they are so deep-chested. An animal who is too thin will have a very severe abdominal tuck. Overweight animals will have no abdominal tuck. If you feel your dog is overweight, consult your veterinarian to determine if there are any other medical problems before starting the animal on a weight reduction program. Your veterinarian can also suggest various diets, how fast your pet should lose weight, etc.



**Have you thought about a Wintergreen Gift Certificate?**

A great idea for a gift of grooming or boarding!

Speak with someone in the office for more details.



