Many dog owners are aware that chocolate, coffee, and grapes are toxic to dogs, but are you aware of the risk from ingesting the common natural sweetener xylitol? Xylitol is found in a variety of products, including chewing gum, toothpaste, mints, floss, candy, chewable vitamins, and sugar-free baked goods.

Continued on page 5.
We’re busy at the Mt. Nittany Dog Training Club! Here are some of the events the club holds every year:

- Four agility trials (February, May, July, and November/December)
- Two tracking tests (April and October)
- One obedience and rally trial (June)
- Three semesters of classes (spring, summer, and fall)
- One Canine Good Citizen test (June)

We get together for several members-only events, including an awards banquet in March, a picnic in July, and a potluck dinner at the January annual meeting. Our regular general membership meetings are the second week (usually Tuesday) of January, March, May, July, September, and November. Board meetings are the first Tuesday of every month; any club member can attend board meetings.

We also have special one-time events. Already this year, we have had an obedience judging seminar, a nose work seminar, a de-stress day on campus, and an agility seminar featuring world-class instructors.

Did You Know?

If you’re interested in a fall nose work class with Silke Wittig at Ag Progress, contact Leslie Demmert at ldemmert@verizon.net!

NEWSLETTER SUBMISSIONS
Do you have a brag, training tip, or other news item or suggestion for the newsletter? Send it to news@mndtc.org.

DON’T MISS

For more information on some events, go to the MNDTC events page at www.mndtc.org.
WOW, we had the most EVER dogs at our Canine Good Citizen test on June 3! We tested 22 dogs and 18 passed! And the few that didn’t pass were very close! Just a little more training and they will get it, too! So proud of everyone and thanks for coming out! (And, for the first time in three years, the weather was gorgeous.)

Special thanks to Kim Paley and family for checking folks in and being part of the “crowd” and to Kim Murnyak for providing a fantastic stable dog for the meet-the-dog test! Testers were Amanda Jones and Helen Smith.
Donalee McElrath’s Aria, aka Ch Sazbrat’s Enamoured, finished the ASCA competition year as #2 Aussie in conformation (#1 bitch). She had taken Best of Opposite Sex at the ASCA Nationals in California last year, hence the decision to see how she could do in breed competition. Nationals are in Colorado this September - wish them luck!

Five Cheers for MACH 5 Surge as he and Elaine Swancer ran their 100th Double Q at the June Nita Nee trials. At five years old, Surge is MACH 5 TopFlite Gameboy Power Surge, UDX2 OM1 MXC MJB2 TQX, papillon, owned and loved by Marliene Froke.

Summer Star’s Black Swan “Natalie” was awarded her very first Q with a first place in Novice JWW at the Williamsport Dog Training Club agility trial on June 8. “Mom” Roxanne Rishel says, “It was love at first sight when Natalie and I met a year and a half ago! She is out of CH Summer Star’s In Memory Of Feinlyne and GCH Royal Guardian’s That’s My Boy. Natalie is also the first dog from Summer Star to compete in the agility ring!”

Roxanne Rishel says, “I am so happy to brag about my little brown and white parti girl! Windwhisper Mocha Suprize “Bindi” was awarded her Novice FAST title at the MNDTC agility trial on May 10! I adopted Bindi when she was one year old and we have been playing at agility ever since. Bindi is out of CH Windwhisper Hot-N-Spicy and CH Schiely’s Special Edition.”

Diana Sheatler’s Great Dane Bella earned her NADAC Novice Agility title last month.
Goose, Lisa’s shy guy Sheltie, earned his first leg in Beginner Novice obedience at the MNDTC trial. This was a huge accomplishment for him!

J.J., a 7-month-old standard schnauzer owned by Lisa Davis and Linda Dobbie, attended a herding instinct test recently. Entered in two runs, he passed in both, earning his herding instinct certificate—not an actual title, but his first steps in that direction.

Check out JJ’s photo in the Nosework article on page 10.

Janny Olsen and Daisy Moonbeam show off their MACH ribbons, earned on May 27 at the Golden Triangle Obedience Training Club agility trial in Cheswick.

More Congratulations!

New Kid on the Block
Brenda Palmgren has added another member to her Welshie household, 10-week-old Glory (Aroura’s Yankee Clipper Keepsake). Brenda will be showing Glory in conformation and hopes to train for performance titles, too.

Xylitol (continued from page 1)

While xylitol offers many health benefits to humans, it can be deadly to dogs and should not be fed to pets.

Ingesting 100 milligrams of xylitol per kilogram of body weight may cause a rapid release of the hormone insulin, resulting in a sudden decrease in blood glucose (potentially life-threatening hypoglycemia, or low blood sugar) for dogs. The drop in blood sugar occurs within 15 minutes, while the symptoms of hypoglycemia (vomiting, depression, loss of coordination, seizures, or coma) may be seen within 30 minutes after the dog consumes the xylitol-containing product. Exposure to higher doses of xylitol may result in fatal liver failure in some dogs. Click here for more information.
Member Spotlight

Kaitlyn Dreese and Elaine Swancer

Aside from superb handling skills and devotion to their dogs, what do Kaitlyn and Elaine have in common? They both started their record-breaking performance careers as junior handlers. In this issue of Mt. Nittany Dog Tales, they share some of their highlights.

Kaitlyn and Elaine often compete in the same agility class. At the recent Berks trials, Kaitlyn and Robber edged Elaine and Wizard by just under 1 second to win the Master JWW 24” class. Both now await AKC’s announcement of the Invitational, which features the top five dogs of each breed: Kaitlyn for agility, and Elaine for obedience and agility.

Kaitlyn Dreese

Seacrett and Karli weren’t always close in Double Qs. At one point, both needed about 10 Doubles. Then Seacrett earned her MACH 6 about the time Karli needed five Doubles. And then came June 1 at Nita Nee and they both needed only one Double Q. Amazingly, they pulled it off!

It’s really great to compete at the national level. Our first chance was the 2011 AKC National Agility Championship in Virginia, where Seacrett made the finals and finished 12th overall. That was enough to set my goals for more national competition. This spring both dogs competed in the Nationals in Tulsa, OK. At the end of the first day, Seacrett placed 30th and Karli 31st, right in line for the finals. But in the third round they each had faults, which dropped their placements to 65th and 70th.

Kaitlyn: Our first International Sweepstakes (ISC) ribbons! International courses have height classes of 26”, 18”, and 14”. Karli runs 26”. In the Standard class she placed fourth, with one bar down. She came back to win Jumpers with a clean run! Scoring is different for ISC. The run has to be clean to count as a qualification, but knocked bars, refusals, and missed contacts do not keep you from placing. The only disqualification is a wrong course. This ISC trial was in Tolland, CT.
Kaitlyn Dreese (continued from page 6)

Probably our most exciting national experience is the AKC Junior Invitational, the only event held exclusively for junior handlers competing in agility. I’ve competed in the Superior (untitled dogs) and Excellent (titled dogs) divisions with Seacrett, Karli, and Phil, Sagehill Floating on Forever, AX AXJ OF. In the 2011 Nationals, Seacrett won the combined Excellent division and Karli won the combined Superior division. In 2012 Karli won the Excellent division and Phil won the Superior division. Seacrett competed in the regular AKC Invitational that year, and with four clean rounds, we were the top Junior Handler, the #2 Border Collie, and the #4 dog in the Herding Group.

I’m also training and running Robber, Sagehill Time Bandit, MX MXJ MXF, owned by Elsie Maylott. This spring we competed in the 2013 International Team tryouts in Minnesota for a spot on the European Open (EO) team. Neither of us had flown before, so this was a new experience all the way around. Friday was practice day. The main ring was sectioned off into three areas, and we had two minutes in each section. I never realized how out of shape I was until I tried to run for six consecutive minutes in the agility ring. Saturday we ran Standard and Jumpers courses. Those scores were combined to determine the finalists. Twenty large dogs ran the finals. The 21st dog was the demo dog, whose score did not count for the team. Robber placed 22nd, just missing the final cut. Even though we didn’t make the finals and the team, we left with our heads held high AND goals for next year!

I have trained four dogs, and one skill remains the common denominator: patience. Although at age 6 when I started training my Parson Russell terrier Kruiser, I did not recognize the concept of “patience,” Kruiser taught me pretty quickly.

Kaitlyn’s Story continued on page 13.
Elaine Swancer

Wizard kept me on my toes as we worked concurrently on obedience and agility for his OTCH/MACH. We alternated weekends between the two. The middle of winter and summer are about our only “off” times, but then we’re usually training. Finally, we got to where he needed just one more point for obedience and one more Double Q for agility for those titles. He finished his OTCH in April at Clarion and his MACH three weeks later at Cheswick.

Although I haven’t checked it out, I may well have been a “junior handler” before AKC even thought of the junior handling program. When I was 12 years old, my uncle gave me an 11-month-old German shepherd dog, Arax. I didn’t know bow-wow about dogs, so Arax and I learned together. I found an ad for dog training, and soon we were hooked on obedience. By age 15, I put my first UD on a dog, which coincidentally was at a MNDTC trial...a “few” years ago. That was the first in the GSD breed for the youngest handler. At that time, there was no recognition for “juniors,” so the trials enticed me to enter by saying they’d offer special prizes...leashes, collars, things to encourage me to continue.

After I’d graduated from Penn State with a B.S. in animal bio-science, I decided to seriously get into dogs. There was only obedience and tracking then. No agility. First, I needed a dog. Almost from the beginning, I was drawn to Rottweilers. I liked their structure, their temperament, their working ability.

The story of my first Rottie is familiar to most of us: an ad in the paper. My source was classified ads for breeders in the AKC Gazette. Magnum was flown from Florida to Central Pennsylvania, sight unseen until he came out of the crate. Fortunately, it worked out well. We got my first OTCH in the 1980s. This was the first Rottie OTCH. Later we got a TD and a TDX, coming one month apart and each on the first try.

Wizard makes a JWW course sizzle.
Wizard runs a backside-of-jump maneuver in JWW.

“Steady Eddy” Radar was the first Rottie to earn a MACH, and the first OTCH/MACH in AKC’s Working Group.

Continued on page 9.
Elaine Swancer (continued from page 8)

My next Rottie was a bitch named Frisbee. Unfortunately, she was retired by an injury after getting a UD.

Levi came next, and he also got his OTCH. Then when he was 6 years old, AKC introduced this new performance thing called agility. He loved it immediately, and I did too. He became the first Rottie to attain MX and MXJ.

In all these years, I’ve only bred one litter: Levi x Frisbee, which produced Radar and Bubbles. Radar, my “steady eddy” dog, was 4 years old when he started agility. He was the first Rottie to earn a MACH, as well as the first OTCH/MACH in AKC’s Working Group. He became the first All Stars Ultimate Dog, which combined scores for obedience and agility the same day.

Yoda became the second OTCH/MACH in the Working Group, retiring just shy of MACH 4 when he injured his neck. For four years he qualified for both obedience and agility at the AKC Invitational, meaning he ranked in the top five Rottweilers in both sports. Even today, he loves to hang out at classes. I let him run the 8” courses, minus contacts, and he’s demo dog for obedience. He especially likes being a “post” in the figure 8 exercise because he’s “paid” with treats.

In addition to my Rotties, I’ve enjoyed running other dogs for their MACHs. T-Bird, a golden owned by Jancie Benninghoff, got two MACHs. Marliene Froke’s Doberman Jinks got two MACHs, and her papillon Surge finished his MACH 5 just two weeks after Wizard finished his OTCH/MACH. I’ve also put MACHs on my brother’s dogs Bubbles and Echo.

Continued on page 15.
Dogs Love Nose Work!

The K9 Nose Work Seminar was a huge success! Eight working teams plus plenty of auditors gathered at Ag Progress the afternoon of June 30 to hear Certified Nose Work Instructor Silke Wittig give an introduction to this growing dog sport. Club member Leslie Demmert organized the seminar.

More nosework photos on pages 13 and 14.
While I’m waiting for questions on dog training, I’ll continue with my overall view of dog training.

Let’s start by talking the language. Some folks talk about “positive dog training,” some talk about “clicker training,” and almost all look with distain at what they call “traditional training.” So let’s clarify.

Although I will devote a column to each of the preceding schools, let me clarify what I mean by the terms (and others may define them differently). “Traditional training” is a term often used derogatorily about training methods predominant in the 1970s and ’80s. It’s weighted more heavily towards the “don’t do this” school, based on the theory that training is based primarily on teaching the dog to avoid mistakes (and thus a punishment). In all honesty, I doubt there are many folks who train like this now, but some still do.

“Positive training” is a theory that is almost the opposite of traditional training and is based on the theory that ANYTHING negative (even like saying “no”) is bad for the dog and should be avoided. Trainers eschew telling the dog what NOT to do and only reward the desired behavior. “Clicker training” is strongly associated with this school, although I will not be using the term in this way. Bear with me and we’ll explore all the different theories over time. But first, let’s explore some other terms that all schools (and probably some of your classes) use.

When you teach your pup something, you want him to offer a behavior to you (or in some cases to refrain from one). The first thing you need to do is to get him to do what you want him to. So you “prompt” that behavior…do something that gives you that behavior. We want our puppy to sit. We take a piece of food and raise it slightly above his head toward his ears. If we restrict his ability to back up, his head will come up and his butt will go down. Now we’ve prompted the behavior.

Next we want to “mark” that behavior. That is, we want to say/do something that calls the pup’s attention to what he’s just done. So the “mark” has to be something that really impresses him. Most dog trainers will load the mark in such a way that it means something to the pup. We can load it affirmatively or negatively. But the mark should be some sound that is out of the ordinary or offered in a tone that is out of the ordinary (otherwise, what we do will probably go right over the pup’s head).

There are a lot of options here. We can use a clicker, a small plastic instrument that makes a sound your pup doesn’t hear in normal life. If we click, the pup will probably look at us. Since we want the pup to associate good feelings with the sound, we will click
and then treat the pup. Soon he will believe that the click is a “good sound” and that something nice will follow.

You can do this in your TV room during commercials...simply take a bowl of treats (small and tasty), wait until your pup is near you, click, and then give him a treat. The pup doesn’t need to DO anything; he probably will look at you, but regardless, you will reach down and give him a treat. If you do this consistently several times over several days, you will find that when he hears the click, your pup will come running to get the treat. Click means treat.

You can do the exact same thing with a word as long as it’s distinct enough (or uttered in a sufficiently emotionally laden tone) to elicit the pup’s attention. Some folks use “YES!,” said enthusiastically. This is followed by a treat. Clearly, you can also load the sound with negative associations...if pup starts to squat (pre pee stance) you might want to say “STOP,” clap your hands or smack the floor (please, never smack the pup!), pick him up and take him outside, and then use your positive mark (yes/click) when he completes the job.

You will need to be careful with your negative mark. For almost everything you don’t want your pup to do, you will need to provide him with an alternative...“Don’t do this, do THAT,” Not fair to tell your pup he can’t pee on the carpet unless you tell him where he’s supposed to do it (he’s got to go somewhere!).

So, now we’ve loaded our mark. The pup knows the sound, “yes” or click, is important. So we’ve prompted the sit, and when he gives it, we will click or say “yes” and treat him WHILE he’s sitting.

Now we are reinforcing that behavior...increasing the probability that he will offer it again. If you mark the behavior every time you move your hand over his head and then reinforce it, you will find that he is sitting pretty much on your signal. Now you will pair that signal with a verbal command, and the completed sequence will look like this: You say “sit” and raise your hand. The pup sits. You say “YES!” or click and treat. You’ve created the behavior and increased the probability that he will offer it again.

Next time (unless you submit questions) we’ll talk about using some of these strategies to teach a retrieve.

Submit a question to be answered in this column by emailing macleod05bcs@gmail.com.

### Birthday Cake for the Dogs

1 egg
1/4 cup peanut butter
1/4 cup cooking oil
1 teaspoon vanilla extract
1/3 cup honey (optional)
1 cup shredded carrots
1 cup whole wheat or white flour
1 teaspoon baking soda

Preheat oven to 350 degrees. Grease a six-cup spring mold, Bundt pan, or 8x8 pan.

Combine the egg, peanut butter, oil, vanilla, and honey (if desired) in a large bowl; blend well. Stir in the carrots, and mix thoroughly. Sift together the flour and baking soda and fold into the carrot mixture. Spoon cake batter into prepared pan.

Bake in preheated oven for 40 minutes. Let cake cool in pan for 10 minutes, then turn out onto a wire rack to cool completely.
We started trialing in the Ag Arena in January 2003. Kruiser refused to perform any behavior on the table, and his contacts consisted of leaping and diving, then coming back to bite me. Even in his more experienced years, he would roll on the ground until we ran out of time. Or he’d run into a tunnel and refuse to come back out! He wasn’t much better at home. He chewed and ate shoes, belts, and even the tags off pants. He learned how to open the garbage can by stepping on the pedal.

Yes, patience was firmly planted in my mind. Every dog after Kruiser has seemed an angel. But I loved Kruiser dearly. Everything I learned from him has applied to any puppy. When he and I started training, I focused only on stepping into the agility ring and having a good time. I never thought about competing in Nationals or World Team tryouts. But soon I was exposed to the full world of agility and then I aspired to compete at the highest level.

I have several goals in mind now and I train to achieve them. Originally my ultimate goal with Seacrett was consistency in the ring. When I learned last year that she was in the top 25 border collies, I moved training up another notch. I set my sights on the AKC Agility Invitational. To qualify, you must be in the top five of your breed. And we made it. So now we’re waiting for July when we’ll find out if Seacrett has qualified for 2013.

Nosework! (continued from page 10)

Kim Murnyak’s Shiva

Instructor Silke Wittig, Bonne Jacobs, and Marble
My first goal for Karli was to qualify for the 2013 AKC National, which she did. Now we’re conditioning her to jump 24” and 26” in hopes of competing internationally. This year I’d like to qualify Robber for the 2014 Nationals and the 2014 International Team tryouts for the EO and the Agility World Championship (AWC) team. As for Phil, I’d like him to mature a bit more because he still makes some baby dog mistakes.

It’s not all conditioning and training in our house. The dogs keep my folks and me busy and laughing. As a puppy, Seacrett would grab a toy out of my hand and run laps around the training area until she was tired. That transferred a few months later when she’d run to her leash instead of taking victory laps. Karli was a chubby, lazy puppy who turned into a little biting fiend. She’d leap off contacts to bite my arms. The only way to stop her was to pick her up and carry her out. Eventually she learned that biting was bad and it caused punishment: “time out” in her kennel. Today I still struggle with her biting, but it has improved greatly over the last year.

Both of these seemingly difficult training challenges were slightly easier thanks to everything Kruiser had taught me. A lot of patience. A lot. I absolutely love my border collies, but I’m still attracted to the terriers. I think eventually I’ll have another terrier, but I’ll always have a border in my house.

This fall I’ll begin my final year of high school. Currently, I am a starting setter for the volleyball team, and I write/edit for the school newspaper. I plan to apply to Juniata College, located a short distance from my home, and plan to major in pre-veterinary medicine. Commuting home each day, I fully expect to continue my agility training.

Agility will never be just a hobby; my entire life revolves around my dogs. My ability to work through several obstacles and persevere toward my goals stems from agility. Training harder is the only way to reach my goals.
For one reason or another— injury, illness—I’ve run several of my students’ dogs in trials. All are different but fun: Labs, goldens, mini Aussie, Airdale, Scottie, and all-American.

Looking back on obedience, I’d say the biggest difference between the ‘80s and today is a more upbeat and positive attitude of handlers. Back then we tended to be more robotic. Today training includes more food and toys, which produces dogs with more animation. Dogs and their handlers seem to have more fun. For the most part!

Obedience competition is stiffer today. Winning scores are higher than they used to be, but entries have decreased. I tend to enter the same trials, mainly because of distance and time limitations. In shows that used to produce 20-25 points in Utility, in the past few years the winning scores now only bring 6-8 points.

The sport of agility has shown amazing development and learning curve for both handlers and their dogs. When you watch Master classes today, it’s hard to remember the overall expertise of, say, 10 years ago. It’s almost a different sport.

People often ask which I like best or which is best for dogs—obedience or agility—and I can’t really say one or the other. They complement each other. You could have an obedience dog without agility, but you can’t have a top agility dog without at least basic obedience. I could never have one without the other. The two are an integral part of the relationship with my dogs.

Obedience gives you a more responsive and better disciplined dog, while agility gives you a confident dog that is willing to work away from you.

There’s another dimension to my life with dogs. That’s teaching others how to have fun with their dogs and enjoy either sport. I especially love it when young students learn to work with their pets and build amazing bonds with them. It also gives me great pleasure when they beat me in the ring. That shows that I was able to provide the tools they needed to succeed. In the years I have been teaching, I have four students now working on OTCHs. In agility, my students and I have achieved a total of 42 MACH titles. And there are more on the way.

Rainbow Bridge

UOR2, UAG1, U-Ch, GCH Ken-Dar’s Arctic Thunder Cloud RE CGC TT TDI

“Thunder”

8/03/06-6/19/13

You were taken too young and are so badly missed. You were my trooper, and one great and sweet malamute!

—Darlene Puhatch