

One for All, All for One: Scottie Health Registries

by Carole Fry Owen

"How can we make Scottish Terriers healthier? That question has been posed by thousands of Scottie owners. Now there is a map. A place to start. We each need to travel this road, if we love Scotties.

Scottie history was set November 18, 2005, when the Scottish Terrier Club of America (STCA) Board authorized establishment of an open database for the neurological disease Cerebellar Abiotrophy (CA), and later databases for other diseases which don't qualify for inclusion in already established health registries.

Then January, 2006, more blockbuster news followed. STCA's Board authorized joining the Canine Health Information Center (CHIC) registry program and appointed a committee to investigate it and use of health registries in general.

Health registries have long seemed the way to go. But exactly how? It has been no easier for STCA to figure out than it has for other national breed clubs. Even now, only 70 of the American Kennel Club's 154 recognized breeds participate in CHIC. STCA is the fifth terrier club to sign on with CHIC. Twenty-two terrier clubs are not affiliated yet. Even though it has taken a while to get here, STCA is certainly a leader among terrier clubs!

What is this CHIC?

Canine Health Information Center is a centralized canine health database jointly sponsored by the AKC/Canine Health Foundation (AKC/CHF) and Orthopedic Foundation for Animals (OFA). The goal is healthier dogs. CHIC is a source owners, breeders and scientists can use. Testing requirements are set by each national club according to targeted health issues. CHIC is a registry tailor-made for each breed, by each breed club!

The beauty of CHIC and OFA is that health information becomes part of a permanent record, not to be lost when a breeder dies or loses interest.

CHIC works hand in hand with the OFA registries. All dogs found on the CHIC registries are also part of the larger OFA registries. CHIC is a registry within a registry. Dogs are first part of OFA, and always remain part of OFA. When dogs meet CHIC requirements, they are also listed on CHIC--which you might call a super-registry or a sub-registry of OFA.

Orthopedic Foundation for Animals is a bit of a misnomer these days. OFA started 40 years ago to document orthopedic testing, but today is way beyond orthopedics in scope. For instance, when the Scottish Terrier vonWillebrand's DNA test was introduced in 10 years ago, OFA started a vWD registry.

Scottish Terrier health pioneer and breeder Gail Gaines, Nashville, TN, started investigating health registries for the STCA in the mid 1990s, right after AKC/CHF and the STCA's Health Trust Fund (HTF) were established. At that time CHIC didn't exist, but an additional registry, Genetic Disease Control, was in the picture, along with OFA. It was hard to know which fork in

the registry road Scottish Terriers should take. No one wanted to make a mistake.

Things are moving fast in 2006 though. The Cerebellar Abiotrophy Database became reality April 4, with the listing of 27 CA-affected Scottish Terriers, and the further addition of seven more Scotties by April 18.

STCA's Health Registry Committee, of which I am a member, has been at work since January. Our first job was to recommend to the STCA Board which diseases should open the Scottish Terrier CHIC registry, to research other health registries which might be utilized by Scottie owners, and to suggest ways to encourage participation in registries.

Scottie CHIC Opens

Mission accomplished! STCA's Board at its April meeting in Canton, OH, authorized startup of CHIC for Scottish Terriers with a registry requiring three of four designated health certifications. As of June 10, five Scotties are listed as "CHIC Scotties." More will come--with your help. The Health Registry Committee will continue to work to promote use of registries by Scottie owners, and we welcome your input and ideas.

You might be curious to know how the STCA decided on its course of action on registries after what looked to outsiders and some insiders like years of inaction. Our Health Registry Committee of five had the job of sorting through "things." We each had been Scottie breeders and exhibitors and members of STCA and various Scottish Terrier clubs for 20- to 30-odd years. Scottie ownership for some of us went back into the 1960s. You might say we were well grounded in Scotties.

But still with different opinions. And strong minds. And we had a deadline. Our recommendations needed to be complete by April, three short months after convening. Our chairman, STCA's AKC delegate John McNabney expected the committee to reach consensus. Majority rule wasn't good enough.

Things the Health Registry Committee considered in recommending the diseases which CHIC would feature for Scotties included:

- 1) Incidence of various diseases in Scotties
- 2) Recommended ages and intervals for testing
- 3) Expense of testing
- 4) Experience of other breeds with CHIC: pitfalls and successes
- 5) Which disease testing would take Scottie health forward fastest
- 6) Which diseases could be handled by non-CHIC registries
- 7) Palatability of test regimen to breeders and owners
- 8) Incentives to encourage testing and submission of results to registries

One pitfall we wanted to avoid was making entry into the CHIC registry so difficult that few breeders would do the testing. If no one comes to the party, there is no party. We wanted a big Scottish Terrier CHIC registry.

Chairman McNabney insisted the committee avoid an early easy decision and stay at our assignment until we could all agree on the best course of action for Scotties. That was not simple. There was a time I was ready to throw in the towel, and the others must have had their own

frustrations. McNabney's patience in waiting for us all to reach the same "spot" was inspired. We were able to present the STCA Board a unified recommendation for registries, and the Board accepted it. The committee believes in the STCA's new health registry effort, and we hope you will, too.

So How Does CHIC Work?

Any Scottish Terrier which fulfills the requirements for registration on three of four designated OFA and CERF tests will receive a CHIC certificate, appear on the CHIC registry, and be designated a CHIC-certified Scottish Terrier on the OFA registries.

Scottish Terrier diseases chosen to open the CHIC Scottie registry are:

- . von Willebrand's disease (vWD)
- . Patellar luxation
- . Autoimmune hypothyroidism
- . Eye conditions evaluated by Canine Eye Research Foundation (CERF) exams

Registering three of the above tests will earn a Scottie CHIC recognition. Owners must submit vWD and patellar luxation evaluations, but can choose one test from the Scottie CHIC Health Elective: either an OFA evaluation for autoimmune thyroiditis or a CERF eye evaluation. There also is an OFA process that qualifies first generation "clear-by-parentage" dogs without individual vWD DNA tests.

It's not only about CHIC though. Scotties that complete only one or two of the CHIC tests, or other non-CHIC OFA tests, are important, too. They flesh out health knowledge about our breed and about individual pedigrees. Each tested dog is a signpost on the road to healthy breedings.

OFA registries are for all dogs, breeding and non-breeding stock. Your Scotties. My Scotties. Our Scotties. The CHIC registry is for all dogs, too, but the truth is that most CHIC Scotties will be ones used for breeding. With one of the required tests being the vWD DNA test, there is really no reason for the owner of a healthy pet that won't be bred to spend the money to discover if the dog carries the vWD gene.

Other established OFA health registries in which Scotties can participate, separate from CHIC, are: Craniomandibular Osteopathy, Cardiac, Elbow Dysplasia, Hip Dysplasia, Legg-Calve-Perthes and Congenital Deafness. There is also an OFA registry for Sebaceous Adenitis, a skin condition which, though rare, can occur in Scotties. The OFA lineup of health registries is constantly evolving. On June 10, there were 234 Scottish Terrier entries on the OFA registries-- some multiple entries for one dog. The OFA vWD DNA registry has slightly more than half of the Scottie OFA listings.

OFA adds registries from time to time. Right now OFA is looking into a registry for portosystemic shunt, another condition that affects Scotties. A registry to keep track of liver shunt affecteds will be more good news for Scotties.

Beyond OFA, the VetCancer Registry is an independent registry that documents cancer diagnoses in dogs and cats for the benefit of researchers. Entries for the VetCancer Registry are submitted by veterinarians, not owners. You can request, or insist, that your veterinarian list your

Scottie if its cancer diagnosis meets the criteria set by the registry. VetCancer Registry is an open registry and free of charge. Dogs are unnamed, but you can read each dog's information on the website. This is a valuable registry for researchers looking for data on various cancers, but only 97 Scotties are listed to date. Check it at <http://www.vetcancerregistry.com/>

Readers of Great Scots Magazine have been learning about health registries for Scotties for almost as long as the STCA has had registries under consideration. GSM printed the first national article on health registries available to Scottish Terriers in its November/December, 1998 issue! More recent was the four-part health registry series that GSM ran in 2003. I wrote all five articles, and I'm proud of GSM for helping Scottie owners learn all the possibilities offered by health registries.

Enthusied Breeders

Scottie breeders, exhibitors and owners at the STCA Rotating Specialty in Canton, OH, were attending their first STCA educational program on health registries. They learned about CHIC first hand from Eddie Dziuk, OFA and CHIC Chief Operating Officer. I wasn't there, but I heard rave reviews. STCA President Karen Hansen, Elberon, NJ, watched the reaction with pleasure, just hours after the STCA Board adopted our committee's registry recommendations. She reports: "There was much enthusiasm, thoughtful questions, and strong convictions from the majority of attendees on the importance of the STCA joining hands with the CHIC registry. Mr. Dziuk was most complimentary on the response. Afterwards many stayed and discussed the program with their peers. The next day HTF trustees were bombarded with questions.

"When I returned home," relates Hansen, "I phoned Dr. Harvill and was lucky to catch Charlotte to tell her about the resounding success of the CHIC presentation and that we had voted to join CHIC as per Registry Committee recommendations. I forwarded the Registry Committee Report via e-mail and asked that she convey our gratitude for getting the word out! I also told her that I felt that it was an important step forward to be inclusive and reach out to **all** Scottie fanciers. *Great Scots Magazine* is an important voice for doing just that. Unity on behalf of our dogs is crucial as we move forward."

Dziuk's program was sponsored by HTF and professionally videotaped for distribution to regional Scottie clubs. Dziuk says: "It was a pleasure to be invited by the Scottish Terrier Club of America to give a presentation on the Canine Health Information Center (CHIC) and its practical applications for breeders. The turnout was great, the audience was receptive, and the really good news was that the club has elected to participate in the program."

Take special note readers: Dziuk adds, "Owners of non-breeding stock should be reminded that they can participate in improving the health of the breed by registering individual/single results on the OFA registries even if they are not going to pursue the full complement of STCA-recommended testing to qualify for the CHIC registry. This includes results which are normal or abnormal. Greater data in the registries leads to more informed breeding decisions--all in the hopes of applying selective pressure to improve the health of the breed. As a reminder, abnormal results are registered at no charge."

Another important question for pet owners is the permanent identification that registries prefer. Explains Dziuk: "Yes, for CHIC purposes, dogs must be permanently identified via microchip or tattoo; however, the lack of permanent i.d. does not preclude individual test registration for the OFA registries." OFA simply identifies the dogs that don't have permanent identification.

Exciting to me is Dziuk's willingness to make a place in OFA records for Scotties that are clinically diagnosed as vWD affecteds, but haven't had the vWD DNA test. These important dogs don't qualify for the existing vWD DNA registry. Dziuk offers "to handle this in the interim on a case by case basis. Owners of affected, clinically diagnosed dogs that wish to place that information in the public domain may mail me the data including dog name, registration number, sex, owner contact information, and veterinary documentation."

Stay tuned for developing information on how to participate in health databases and registries. Watch for "Registry Central" on the STCA website at <http://clubs.akc.org/stca/> . It's coming soon with lots of helpful information about the health registries available to Scotties.

Ready to Answer Questions-- Your STCA Health Registry Committee

Chairman John McNabney serves on the STCA Board as AKC delegate. He was a key person in establishment of Scottie health databases and registries. McNabney walks the walk. He owns a CA-affected Scottie and entered Fiona into the CA Database. Contact McNabney at 370 Wildcat Hill Rd., Harwinton, CT 06791; ph. (860) 485-9127; e-mail jmcnabney@snet.net .

"It is important that the registries capture all the affected Scotties, even those with an unknown pedigree. While the CHIC registry is intended to provide information largely on breeding stock, the specific health registries that will be listed on the "Registry Central" page of the STCA website exist to serve the genetic health of the entire Scottie community. *Anyone owning a Scottie affected by one of the registry conditions should list their Scottie on that registry.*

"The STCA has established a number of

Scottish Terrier Club of America Action Statement

Scottish Terrier breeders and pet owners are urged to enroll their Scotties in health registries and health databases to help control and prevent disease. STCA promotes registration of clear, carrier and affected status in qualifying health registries maintained by Orthopedic Foundation for Animals (OFA) and the Canine Health Information Center (CHIC). STCA also encourages participation in health databases that may be established by the national club itself and maintained at

<http://www.stca.biz/GrandCentral/>

*Accepted April, 2006, by STCA Board of Directors

Orthopedic Foundation for Animals (OFA) & Canine Health Information Center (CHIC)

<http://www.offa.org/>

<http://www.caninehealthinfo.org/>

Contact OFA and CHIC and Eddie Dziuk at 2300 E. Nifong Blvd., Columbia, MO 65201-3806; ph. (573) 442-0418; FAX (573) 875-5073; e-mail OFA at ofa@offa.org ; e-mail CHIC at chic@offa.org

Canine Eye Registration Foundation

<http://www.vmdb.org/cerf.html>

Veterinary Medical DataBases/CERF, Lynn Hall, 625 Harrison St., Purdue University, W. Lafayette, IN 47907-2026; ph. (765) 494-8179 Fax: (765) 494-9981; e-mail CERF@vmdb.org

Scottish Terrier Pedigrees

<http://www.stca.biz/pedigrees/>

To add pedigrees, contact Mary O'Neal, 13855 Peacock Rd., Laingsburg, MI 48848; ph. (517) 641-6242; e-mail to maryscot@net-link.net

VetCancer Registry

<http://www.vetcancerregistry.com/>

STCA Cerebellar Abiotrophy Open Database

Access database and CA educational information through--

<http://www.stca.biz/GrandCentral/>

incentives to encourage participation in CHIC, including recognition of CHIC-registered Scotties in STCA's *Bagpiper*, the *STCA Handbook*, and catalogs for regional and STCA specialty shows, and the issuance of an STCA certificate recognizing CHIC certification."

STCA CHIC Liaison Helen Prince is very involved in Scottie health work as an HTF trustee. She has held many national and regional Scottie club positions. Prince is the lady with answers. Contact her at 2810 Allspice Rd., Port Republic, MD 20676-2619; ph. (410) 586-8421; e-mail haprince@comcast.net

Prince is excited about "deals" to promote health registries: "OFA has offered FREE registration for any Scottie vWD test results that are dated before May 6, 2006 and half-price (\$7.50) for test results dated after May 6, 2006. At this point, this offer has no time limit. All you need to do is obtain the 'Application for a DNA Based Genetic Database' form from OFA, fill in the required information, sign it, and attach a copy of your vWD test results. You can get the form either by contacting OFA by phone (573) 442-0418 or by downloading the form from their website <http://www.offa.org/>."

By early June, VetGen had tested 1457 Scotties for the vWD gene. We are hoping OFA's generous offer will bring most of those dogs onto the vWD registry!

HTF has "deals" of its own for Scottie owners. Prince lists discounted vWD tests, AKC DNA profile kits and microchipping, and cheaper eye tests through STCA regional club CERF clinics as ways to save money. Some offers occur in conjunction with the two annual national specialty shows. You do not need to be an STCA member to take advantage of these "deals." Contact Prince for more information on the health specials.

Dr. Marcia Dawson has been in the middle of registry deliberations for years, formerly as STCA HTF chairman. She is a veterinarian and has been the Scottie "point-person" on bladder cancer research. Contact Dawson at 3220 N. County Rd. 575 E., Danville, IN 46122-8689; ph. (317) 852-4393; e-mail hijinks@hughes.net .

"Over 11 years ago, the STCA's Health Trust Fund started looking hard at registries and how these valuable tools could be used for the benefit of our dogs. The variables were many, and the task was complex. At that time, we all knew that information about all Scotties was valuable and essential to our understanding of breeding healthier dogs for the future. Whether the Scotties were healthy or affected by any disease, whether they were carriers or tested clear of defective genes, we knew that we needed all of the data to assess risk in proposed breedings and to be able to understand the complete picture of disease spread in our breed.

"It took time to digest and understand the registry process, and it took patience to wait for the best direction for all Scottie owners and breeders. And now with CHIC, that time has arrived for Scottish Terriers."

Kathi Brown bred and owns Ch. Blueberry's Attitude Dancing HOF, an STCA Hall of Fame dog and the #1 Scottish Terrier in both breed and all-breed competition in 2004 and 2005. Brown is a good example that show breeders do care about health of the Scotties they produce. She is one of the first Scottie breeders with a CHIC-certified dog. Carly is a very special Scottie,

winner of 11 Best in Shows and two National Specialties. She is also a health champion, being one of the first five Scotties on the new CHIC registry. Brown's Ch. Blueberry's Surely You Jest also went all the way to Best of Breed at the 2005 STCA national specialty as an 8-month-old puppy. Henry has two of his CHIC tests and is almost there, too. Brown is former STCA President, former HTF chairman and current HTF trustee. Contact Brown at 296 Taylor Road, Stow, MA 01775; ph. (978) 897-4717; e-mail KMBrownScience@comcast.net .

"I often refer to breeding through the analogy of whether one is a craps shooter or a bowler. Consider that in shooting craps one is at the mercy of luck while a good bowler will consider all information--size and weight of the ball, arm swing, trajectory, speed, placement of the shot, etc.--in order to make a strike. As a breeder, record keeping, an eye for a good Scottish Terrier, knowledge of genetics, and pedigree analysis is fully complemented by open, honest and valid information on critical health issues.

"The CHIC and OFA sites will provide reliable information critical to informed decisions on selecting the best paired matings, as well as long-term planning for producing the best Scottish Terriers in conformation, soundness, and health. The registries will benefit the conscientious breeder who needs as much information as possible before selecting dogs to be mated.

"The STCA online pedigree program will fully complement the CHIC and OFA registries. Each owner should check the Scottie pedigree site at <http://www.stca.biz/pedigrees/> to ensure that his/her dog is listed."

Carole Owen, that's me, and I've owned Scotties since 1967. I enjoy writing about Scotties and health issues and am a former STCA HTF trustee. You can reach me at 1203 N. 9th, Temple, TX 76501-1964; ph. (254) 791-1365 or (254) 760-1437; e-mail ritescot@aol.com .

"It can't be stressed how important it is to make sure your dogs are listed among Scottie pedigrees on the STCA website at <http://clubs.akc.org/stca/> . Parentage of dogs on the OFA and CHIC registries is not made public unless the parents themselves are on at least one OFA registry. OFA does not provide pedigrees. Breeders need to be able to find your dog's pedigree if your health information is to help anyone.

Scottie pedigrees can be sent to Mary O'Neal, 13855 Peacock Rd., Laingsburg, MI 48848 or e-mail maryscot@net-link.net . Mary usually can construct pedigrees if she has AKC registration information on at least the parents of a dog. Even if you do not have an entire pedigree, send Mary what you know about your Scottie's lineage.

"The cheapest and easiest CHIC/OFA registry test is the OFA patellar luxation evaluation. Every pet owner, and every breeder should complete this one. You can have the simple physical exam done at one of your dog's routine veterinary appointments if you take your vet the OFA evaluation/application form. No anesthesia is required.

"The thyroid test is also easy for your own veterinarian to submit to an approved lab. The test is not, however, the same T4/T3 blood test that most veterinarians routinely use. If your Scottie needs a thyroid test anyway, ask the vet to use the test which qualifies for the OFA/CHIC registry."

Carole Owen is a freelance journalist, veteran breeder and STCA member, now enjoying her husband's retirement in Temple, TX. She is a Master Gardener and serves on the STCA's new task force to create Scottish Terrier health registries.