

My Journal

Lucky Speed



July 1, 2003 to August 3, 2017

Forward

I adopted Lucky from Northern Virginia Sheltie Rescue (NVSR) in March 2013. Lucky was our third adoption from NVSR. Martha Heisl, his foster Mom, asked me to let her know how he was going periodically. I discussed it with Lucky and he decided to dictate his experiences into this Journal. He's a really cool dog with interesting perspectives on the world.

Lucky passed away peacefully last night. He had requested that I compile his journal entries and pass it along to NVSR. So here it is.

Lucky was my buddie and the best fur friend a guy could have. I miss him a bunch and look forward to seeing him at the Rainbow Bridge when my time comes.

Claude Speed

August 3, 2017

The Rainbow Bridge

Just this side of heaven is a place called Rainbow Bridge.

When an animal dies that has been especially close to someone here, that pet goes to Rainbow Bridge. There are meadows and hills for all of our special friends so they can run and play together. There is plenty of food, water and sunshine, and our friends are warm and comfortable.

All the animals who had been ill and old are restored to health and vigor. Those who were hurt or maimed are made whole and strong again, just as we remember them in our dreams of days and times gone by. The animals are happy and content, except for one small thing; they each miss someone very special to them, who had to be left behind.

They all run and play together, but the day comes when one suddenly stops and looks into the distance. His bright eyes are intent. His eager body quivers. Suddenly he begins to run from the group, flying over the green grass, his legs carrying him faster and faster.

You have been spotted, and when you and your special friend finally meet, you cling together in joyous reunion, never to be parted again. The happy kisses rain upon your face; your hands again caress the beloved head, and you look once more into the trusting eyes of your pet, so long gone from your life but never absent from your heart.

Then you cross Rainbow Bridge together....

2013

Well the new year started and it was really cold. It didn't bother me much but you should have seen the things Dad went through for our morning walks. Monday was the best day. He was wearing his usual long sleeve shirt and a sweater because he says the office is cold on Mondays. Then he put on a pair of insulated coveralls. I call it his blue gumby suit. Then the down parka and reflective vest. Then his fleece gloves. He looked like that kid in Christmas Story. Could barely flex his arms. I was thinking – how is he ever going to be able to pick up poops?

Speaking of poops, for some reason, there are a lot of poops being left on the side of the walk along our path. So, I've been indulging myself whenever I can - doing my part to improve the environment. Because of the cold weather Dad refers to them as disgusting poopsicles and does his best to prevent me from getting them. I like to think of it as maintaining my probiotics. All depends on your perspective.

Dad always picks up my poops so I don't get much chance at them although I almost got a routine going that let me get at least a little one. While he was bending over to pick up my poop, I dropped a little one behind him on the walk. Then when we returned down the walk, I could just scoop it up before he recognized what it was. He figured it out pretty quick and now looks for my little denouement before we move on. That's a pretty cool word for it, isn't it? Leila does that regularly and Mom calls it her coda, but Dad says denouement is the proper term.

I helped Dad mop the kitchen floor yesterday. He was doing a really wimpy job so I gave him lots of advice as shown on the video he took. I watched it later and told him to keep his day job. He'd never make it as a videographer. I asked him to attach it so you can see what I mean.

Mom and Dad gave me an ocelot chew toy for Christmas. It's one of the few that weren't first shared with the other dogs. Here's a picture of me with it in the living room.



This morning, I insisted on taking ocelot outside in Reston and then left it lying forlornly on the porch. Dad said, "I told you not to take it outside." Well, all I have to say is that he's lucky I didn't take it out into the woods. Then he'd have to go out and find it.





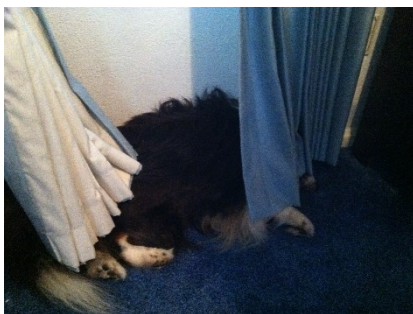
I keep telling Dad that I continue to “youthen”. Here’s a picture of me rearing up on the table for the first time since I’ve been living here. Dad was eating soup and corn bread and it smelled so good that I got motivated to try to reach it. Dad scolded me severely. He said that the good and bad news is that I was strong enough to rear up on the table. He said that I had to stop begging. But I’m a poor starving dog who’s a mere shadow of my former self. Doesn’t he have any sympathy for me. Guess not!!

Guess that’s all for January 2013.

Feb 1 – Dad got me a light to make me more visible when we take our walks early and late. It flashes a bright green and is really cool. We showed to Mom and she sang out, “Lucky is a flasher! Lucky is a flasher!” Of course – that was the idea. It can’t be too bad since Dad put a light like mine on the back of his vest with the reflective tape.



Feb 18 - Dad went on a business trip last week and the first thing he did when he got back was to do the laundry. Here’s a picture of me helping him sort the clothes. Note that it’s important to hold them down so they don’t crawl around. Laugh if you will, but you haven’t smelled Dad’s laundry. I also tried helping him by shredding his handkerchiefs. They look and feel a lot like Kleenex but are a lot harder to shred. Dad decided to put them up on a chair.



Here’s my favorite place to sleep in the Norfolk house – with my head up under the curtains. Admire the carpet while you can. They took it all up last weekend to expose the hardwood floors beneath it. Casey, Leila, and I aren’t happy. Even Casey slipped and crashed under the front of the couch. Mom has put down some area rugs so we can tiptoe across the slippery floor to the next rug.

Yea!!! We went to the vet last weekend for our annual checkups and my official weigh-in. I’m 35 lbs now – not 35 plus something but fluctuating between 34.8 and 35. How cool is that!! It’s a long way from the 65 lbs I started NVSR at. Dad says he’s going to watch me carefully because he thinks this is about where I ought to be. But I’m initiating play with Casey and Kaylee and running around the back yard more. My blood test was fine and the vet told us to reduce the thyroid medicine a little bit. We’ll see if I’m at my optimum weight.

March 9 - I love our weekend walks. Dad usually takes me a different path so I get to see some unfamiliar or almost unfamiliar stuff. He also lets me sniff around as much as I want. That’s

pretty cool. This morning, we took a path through the woods and watched three deer walk along beside us. They had HORNS on their head and looked really scary. Dad said they were bucks with antlers, one with 6 points, one with 4 and one with 2. He said that he'd never seen that many of them together in the same place. I bounced around a bit but didn't try to chase them. They finally decided they should run away and all I could see then were their white tails bouncing through the woods.

It's been a year since I came to live with Dad. Time really flies. All in all, I'd say it's been a good year. I'm feeling good, Dad and I still like each other, I have a great time playing with Casey and Leila, and Mom takes great care of me when I stay in Norfolk. I'm glad our paths crossed – thanx to NVSR.

April 4, 2013 – Hallelujah, Dad has finally figured out how to whistle for me properly. He's tried all sorts of whistles to get me to come or get my attention but finally decided to use the classical dog whistle – five short tweets and one long one rising at the end. So, I perked up my ears and came to him. Before that he used variations of horse whistles and some other unintelligible sounds. I didn't even look at him or tilt my head inquisitively to encourage him. I just ignored him. Anyway, now it seems that we understand each other more – only took a year.

We went for our usual walk the other morning and I did my first #2 (He told me that sophisticated dogs use that term instead of poop.) I heard him say, “Oh man, I only have one bag this morning.” Well, what could I do about that. So, I did two more #2s just to spin him up. He said, “Lucky, are you sure you can't find a little more of that in you this morning?” No, but I could have probably choked on a piece of grass and lost my breakfast for him. But I didn't. We had to walk the same path in the evening so he could pick up my #2s. Then he couldn't find them – duh!! He's a good scout so picked up a couple that probably weren't mine, although he passed the one that looked a horse's #2. I'd hate to see the size of that dog!

April 24 – I always thought my name was Lucky Speed but Casey and Leila are telling me that it's Lucky No-Grass Speed. When we take our afternoon walks, Dad is talking to Mom on his cell phone. I like to stop and nibble grass whenever I can. He first reminds me that I'm a sheep dog not a sheep and then just says “Lucky. No grass.” He tells Mom that he says it at least 100 times each walk. She often puts her phone on speaker so she doesn't have to hold it up to her head so Casey and Leila can hear the conversation. They laugh at me and say “Lucky no-grass, Lucky no-grass.” It doesn't bother me although I wonder if that is hyphenated and whether it's a one or two word middle name.

Dad's been scurrying around the house for the last few weeks so much that I've barely seen him. He says he's getting it ready to sell. From the way he's stacking things up in the front rooms, I suspect we are moving. A couple of weeks ago, we visited a nice campground in Aquia, right off I-95. It looks like a nice place and we selected a site up on a hill with a view. Dad says we're moving there in June. We met a couple of standard poodles (boy, are they ever big) who seemed like reasonable people to be around, although I wonder if they will be there next time we are. I'll be glad when we move, actually. He's been working on the basement and upstairs so much that it's almost like being in the house by myself except for the strange noises.

May 1, 2013 – Dad’s off on a business trip so I’m stuck in Norfolk. It’s not too bad. I get to play with Casey and Charlie, our youngest grandson from next door. Mom takes good care of us. She talks to Dad each afternoon on the phone. He calls her when we’re in Reston at the same time every day so we all know who she’s talking to. This afternoon, Casey starts barking and shouts to me that Dad’s on his way home. We all started barking and running in circles. Mom said, “No, Dad’s still in Albany,” and put the phone on speaker so we could hear him. Leila went over to stare into the phone and Mom assured her that Dad was in the phone and not on his way in. We settled down, all disappointed. We miss him.

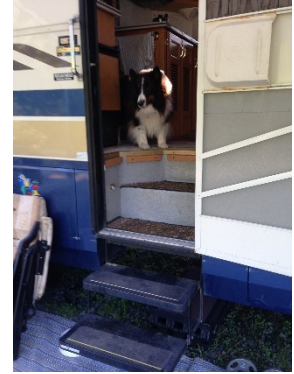
After our snacks at 1100, I like to go outside and wander around the back yard, sniffing and listening to the rest of the world. Casey has started coming out with me. He’s always been too timid to come out before but I guess I’ve finally convinced him that it’s safe out there. We’ve started playing more. He streaks from one corner of the yard to another and I intercept him along the way and nip at him. I suspect he could jump over me if he wanted to. I tried following him and he’s just too quick. Perhaps if I can continue to youthen, I’ll be able to give him a run for his money.

June 12, 2013 – Wow, it’s been a long time since I was able to get Dad to write anything in my journal. I tried out his voice recognition software so I could write in it myself but it doesn’t interpret “dog” very well. I guess it’s OK that Dad’s been busy because we finally moved out of the Reston house. He’s been working on it so hard that I’ve barely seen him. It’s no fun at all to have him in the same house but hidden upstairs where I can’t go or down in the basement working on stuff. Anyway, he finally got it up for sale and we had a really nice family make an offer on it. Dad’s all happy that they decided to buy the house.

So – here’s where we are living now at a campground in Aquia, VA. We’re perched up on a hill that Dad says is a huge ant hill. He has spent a lot of time spraying and cleaning house. He says that having an ant problem will certainly encourage one to keep the kitchen clean. He stacked dinner dishes in the sink just before our evening walk. When we returned he found the counter top covered with ants. He says he has finally gotten ahead of them but we’ll see. I like living in the motor home. I get to spend a lot of time with Dad and we take some really interesting walks through the trails in the trees. No trash trucks or school buses to chase, but lots of squirrels.



In my continuing efforts to youthen, here's me at the top of the steps into the motor home. The top step is about at the level of Dad's chest. I surprised him the other day when I trotted up the steps. I had to take a little run at it but I was able to make it. Since then, I've done it about half the time we've been out. I don't even have to take a run at it now. I just have to remember not to think about it too much. If I do, I balk at the first step and Dad has to lift me in to the 3rd step.

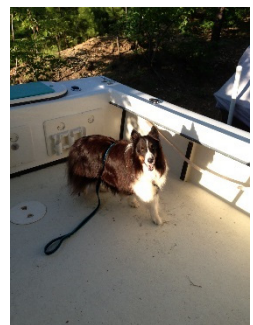


Another month gone by and life is settling into the new routine. Dad finally sold the house in Reston so we're officially residents of Norfolk but we're living in Aquia most of the time. Confuses me but as long as I'm with Mom or Dad, I'm flexible.

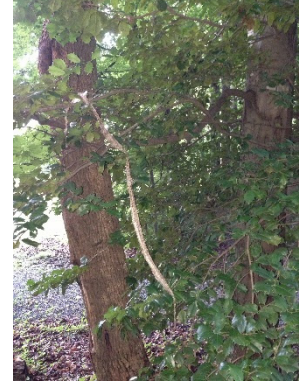
Dad made cornbread muffins for dinner the other night and left one in the middle of the table on a paper plate while he went out to run some errands. When he returned, the plate was on the floor and no muffin could be seen. He said, "Lucky, did you eat my muffin?" I just looked at him with my wide-eyed, innocent stare and wondered what he was talking about. I was doing pretty well until my tongue leapt out of my mouth to lick my lips. Dad exclaimed, "I knew it was you!" He said he was happy that I could get up that high on the table but I wasn't supposed to be eating people food. He puts things up on the kitchen counter now. It's too tall for me.

We had another encounter a couple of weeks ago. Dad came home, changed clothes, and was walking down the hall when he stepped in a wet spot right at the corner by the bathroom. "Lucky, did you pee on the floor?" Again I looked at him like I didn't understand what he was saying. He got on the floor to sniff it and then scolded me – but not too severely. He cleaned it, rinsed it, and soaked up all the moisture. Took him forever. Then the next morning, he noticed that the wet spot was even wider than before. This time he checked under the bathroom sink and discovered that one of the pipes was leaking. He hugged me and told me he was sorry for scolding me. I'm an understanding kind of guy so let him feel guilty for a while.

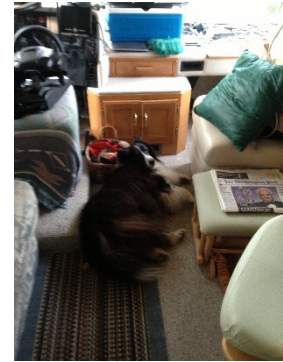
Mom and Dad got a fishing boat. Here's me on the back of it. I don't have a life jacket because it's not in the water. Dad says he's going to take me on it soon but I'll have to wear a PFDFD. That's personal flotation device for dogs. Sounds pretty cool, huh? I'll get him to take pictures when we actually do it.



This is a snake skin we found hanging in a tree on one of our walks. Dad says it's about 4 feet long. I just think I'm glad I didn't see the snake that wore it. Dad says I shouldn't worry because it looks like it was in the king snake family. We saw a live snake too. It was about a foot long and really skinny and bright green. I barked at it but Dad wouldn't let me play with it. Mom looked it up on the web and said she thinks it was a green tree snake. It's OK with me if they stay in the trees.



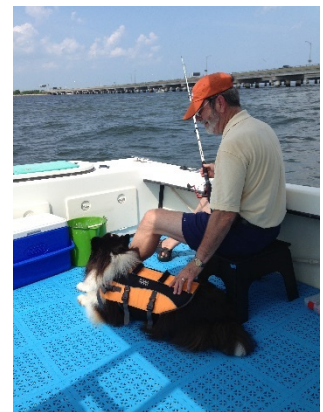
I found the coolest place in the motor home – it's way up front with two air conditioner ducts blowing down on it. I'm usually there when Dad comes home.



Guess that's all for now. Dad and I are meeting my new dog walker today. Hope she's nice. I'll know more after next week.

8/24/2013 - Well, I finally put a good one over on Dad. He's always telling me, "Lucky, no grass." So, we were going up the first hill at the campground and I was trying to snatch little bites of grass. Dad kept tugging on my leash to remind me that he didn't want me to do that. Later, I stopped to hike a leg on a bush and discovered a clump of grass right by my head. I took a bite and he didn't tug my leash. That was really cool!! So - every few steps I started hiking my leg on whatever was near a clump of grass so I could take a bite. Dad declared himself "nonplussed." I raised an eyebrow at that and he told me that means that he doesn't know what to do about me. He thought really hard about it. About half-way through our walk, he declared me "empty" and wouldn't let me stop to hike a leg any more. Sometimes, he's no fun at all and certainly doesn't appreciate a dog's creativity.

I finally got to go out on the boat. See my pretty PFD (that's personal flotation device for dogs). We all went to the pet store to get it. That was exciting enough in itself. Then the only one they had was PINK!! Fortunately it was too big so they went to look in the back and came out with this one. It's fairly comfortable but a little warm - sort of like wearing a parka in the middle of summer. I was able to find shady spots on the deck and didn't pant very much because of the cool breeze. Mom and Dad went out in the bay to fish and I managed to stay upright most of the time. Can you imagine that they were throwing perfectly good little pieces of shrimp into the water on the end of strings. I tried to get them to give them to me but they wouldn't. They're so wasteful!!

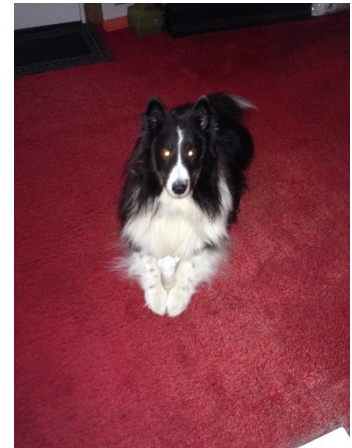


9/25/2013 - This is Casey – I wanted to add a word to Lucky’s journal. Lucky has been telling us about his trip on the boat so I was wondering what it was really like. Then last weekend, Dad decided to take me fishing instead of Lucky. The PFDFD (Personal Flotation Device for Dogs) fit me better than it fits Lucky and I think it looks much better, although I wasn’t sure at first. I just stood there when they first put it on my since I wasn’t sure what we were doing. Then Mom and Dad took me for a ride in the truck. I talked and talked during the trip to the marina and then bravely walked down the dock and onto the pier that goes out beside the boat. Dad lifted me onto the boat and let me wonder around. Mom was worried that I might jump off since I’m more athletic than Lucky and was nervously walking around. She fastened my leash to a cleat (??) and I settled down to show them that I was going to be OK. When Dad started the engine, I got a little anxious but didn’t stress. Then I found me a quiet place to lie while they fished. It looks like I’m hiding in the picture, but I was really just staying out of the way that wouldn’t get me stepped on when they caught a fish. They shuffle around so vigorously whenever a fish bites the hook that it’s wise to be out of the way. I don’t think they’re aware of anything else when that happens. Bottom line is that it was an interesting experience and I guess I’d be happy to do it again. Lucky was lamenting the fact that he didn’t get any of the shrimp, but I thought it just smelled fishy – yuck. Dad says he’s going to get me and Leila our own PFDFDs so we can all go. That should be interesting.



This is Lucky back on the journal again. I’ve been out on the boat again and I’m really glad the weather is cooler. That PFDFD is hot. Dad decided to put down a brick walkway yesterday and I was allowed to help. I barked and barked every time he used the shovel, rake, hoe, or broom. I wanted to make sure he was doing it right!! Then I monitored him as he moved bricks from the back to the front and dirt from the front into a pile in the back. He gets lazy if I don’t keep him moving. Dad got a text from his daughter next door asking if I ever got hoarse from all the barking. He replied, “No. Lucky can keep going for hours.” Mom asked him if he thought I should go in because I was being so noisy. He said, “No. This is the only time I let him bark as much as he wants. We’re always telling him to be quiet in the house.”

11/11/2013. Here I am with one of the rawhide chews Dad gave us. He only gives us one at a time. They're pretty big so we were all surprised that Leila really latched onto it and carried it all around. The chew is about the right size for Casey and me but Leila is about half our size. Shared among the three of us, the chew lasts a couple of weeks. Sometimes a dog just needs something to chew. BTW, I call this picture my Halloween shot since it has me with really cool, glowing yellow eyes. Wish I could do that all the time.



Speaking of Halloween, I volunteered to help Dad give out candy on the front porch. He just sat there while about a jillion kids came by. I promised not to bark at them but he and Mom decided that the three of us would do better in the back bedroom. Darn it! Then Dad told us that several people brought their dogs along – so I would have had the chance to meet some more neighborhood dogs. Maybe next year, I can convince him to let me wear a costume and sit out front with him. Wonder if I could fit one of the grandson's pirate costumes. Can't you just see me as Captain Jack Sparrow?

11/30/2013

Wow – another year almost gone. It's been really cold here in Norfolk but I like to lay out in the sun in the backyard. Mom and Dad let me stay out there a lot whenever I want to. I get to lay in the sun and lay poopsicles under the leaves until later when I can go back and crunch them. Yum!!

Dad had to go back up to Northern Va last week for work. He was gone two nights and most of the next day. The following morning, he was looking for one of his sandals. He got down on his hands and knees to look under the bed and under the dresser. He looked behind the clothes hamper and finally asked Mom if she'd seen it. She said, Yes, "Lucky took it out to the porch." He went out there and found it all safe and sound because I didn't chew it up. I like to spend time on the enclosed porch because it's the coolest part of the house and I wanted to feel that Dad was close by. I miss him when he's gone.

On our walk this morning, we were passed by a man on a bicycle with his dog running beside him. I thought it was interesting but Casey really wanted to run along with them. Dad wouldn't let him and he was so disappointed. "Dad's just no fun at all sometimes." Casey told me.

Thanksgiving was a busy time this year. Mom and Dad's kids and the grandkids all converged on the house. We dogs were being good but Casey and Leila insisted on sitting on the couch and that didn't leave any room for the humans so they put all of us in their bedroom. We could see the grandkids running back to the play room and making lots of noise but we weren't supposed to bark at them because some of them are afraid of dogs. Plus we didn't get any chance to clean up any spills. All in all – not as much fun for us as for them. We got lots of attention and loving after everyone else left to make up for being stuck in the bedroom so it wasn't a total loss – and a tiny bit of chicken gravy in our dinner – Yea!!

It's so exasperating walking with Casey. Not only is he jumpy at all sorts of innocuous things but he insists on sniffing, sniffing, sniffing, sniffing everything. Dad keeps telling him to make quicker marking decisions. I like to call him our scenteologist (that's for scent archeologist) because he wants to sniff off the entire scent history of a spot.

Dad makes biscuits on Sunday mornings for him and Mom, the grandsons next door and US!! Ours are small ones about the size of cut green beans and Dad says they're healthy because they're low fat and low salt. I just know that they're wonderful. Dad calls us his baby birds and included this picture of the three of us all lined up for our biscuits.



I went to the vet for my blood work last month and was pleased to discover that I'm still a svelte 35 pounds. Yea!!

Now it's 2014 and things have settled down to a routine. I'm really glad it's starting to warm up. Dad, Casey, and I spent much too much time walking in the cold rain and snow. Dad decided that Leila needs more exercise so started walking her after he walks Casey and I. She really likes that. Sometimes, he takes me with her. She has a leisurely pace that suits me fine.

When we walk in Norfolk, we either go around two long blocks or we walk around the school. Both are about a half mile long. That is just about right for me. I start getting tired toward the end of them. I tell Dad that's because I'm almost 11 years old and that if he were as old as me, he'd be slowing down too. He just tells me that if I had his arthritic knees, I'd be walking even less. IMO, he need to get his sympathy from someone else!

When we walk, I'm usually on Dad's right side and Casey is on his left so that puts Casey nearest the street. Part of our walk is along a busy street and Casey gets really spooked by the cars coming up from behind us. He crouches down with his ears down and says he wants to run away. So, Dad swaps us for that stretch, calls us into a heel position, and Casey is much more calm – although he still walks along with his ears laid back. After we turn the corner and get past a yard where a little dog lives, Dad releases us to the end of our leashes. The issue with the little dog's yard is that he marks all along the chain link fence and Casey and I get stuck sniffing it. I can usually move on after a couple of sniffs, but Casey will stay there for days sniffing every inch.

March 27

Mom and Dad bought another boat that is large enough for all of us to live on.



Here's a picture of me looking out the back.

That entry is about shoulder high on Dad so he got some steps that make it easier for him to lift us off the boat. It's not a very graceful way to manage it but the boat's so high that it's the best we can do right now. Dad says he's still working on a gangway, a hoist, or something to make it easier for us to get on and off. You probably can't see it but we're all wearing harnesses with our leashes fastened to them. Dad says that if we fall off the dock, he can haul us back up with no problem. We have PFDs (Personal Flotation Devices for Dogs) for when the boat is moving but Dad feels that the harnesses work better on the dock and aren't as bulky.

Casey was the first one to go into the "drink." He'd been "on a muscle" all day about something or other and had actually nipped Mom on the elbow once. Boy, did he ever get scolded for that. Anyway, we were going out for our evening walk and were meandering down the dock when he decided to scold Leila about something. She and Mom were up ahead of us and when he got to her he hit the end of his leash and took a sharp left turn. Bad idea!!! He went right off the dock into the water. Fortunately, the docks float so he was only a couple of feet below the dock but he sure got wet. He was swimming along beside us when Dad lifted him out of the water with the leash and harness. That part worked like a champ, but Casey wasn't very happy with the situation. Dad just laughed.

Here's one of my favorite pictures doing what I do best on the boat – sleep. Remember to let sleeping dogs lie!!



Leila and Casey like to sit with Mom on the couch. Even though this is what we all do at home, it's different on the boat. The gentle movement rocks us to sleep so easily.

After 3 months “on the hard,” Mom and Dad got the boat back and we’ve been living on it 5 nights a week. We’ve had her out on the open sea and I’ve learned how to handle the rolling pretty well – I just lay down until it all goes away. We like to sit on the front of the boat in the evenings and watch the sun go down. Leila and I like that – particularly since we get to lay with Mom and Dad.



I took a selfie!!! Dad let me use his iphone and I got me and Leila in it. She wouldn’t hold still so I wasn’t able to take a very good picture. She keeps saying something about me stealing her soul when I was trying to get our heads together. She doesn’t really like Mom taking her picture either. It’s not much worse than the ones you see on TV.



Dad took me for a ride in the dinghy! It’s a small inflatable boat that leaks. He says it won’t sink because it’s all full of air. That may be true but I still got my lower half cold and wet. Dad says that when we make our big cruise, he might have to take us to the beach to do our business so we need to get used to riding in the dinghy. I thought it was kind of exciting and looked all around at the passing boats and birds.

You can’t see my PFDFD (personal flotation device for dogs) but I’m wearing it. Dad didn’t like the first one he got me so he bought one that is a little lighter and more flexible. The bad news is that they first got one for Leila and it was too big so I ended up with it. IT’S PINK POLKA DOTTED. I’m sooo embarrassed to be seen in it. But Dad says it keeps me safe so I guess I should be happy that I have it. He says we need to try it out in the water sometime so we can make sure it floats me with my head out. Personally, I believe the pictures that came with it. Wet is wet.



October 8, 2014

Hallelujah!! After two years of trying to train Mom into helping me up on the couch, I finally succeeded. Every morning, I sit at her feet and stare at her, asking for a little help getting up on the couch with her. She and Dad ask me what I want and I think at them – I want to get up on the couch. Dad usually takes me outside for a bit or shuffles his feet so I'll play with them. Eventually, I get tired of messing with them and lay down somewhere. One day I walked around between the coffee table and the couch and laid my chin on the couch. Mom finally got the idea and helped me up. I was soooo happy. Leila is really put out with me because that was her sole property but I'm big enough I don't have to worry about her. After all, possession is 90% of the law and if she isn't already there, then the couch is fair game.



Dad took me to the vet last week for my thyroid check. I'm still my stable, svelte 36 lbs and my blood work came back normal. The walks we're taking continue to work although I think they could feed me a little more. A nice round 40 lbs sounds more like the right weight for me. Dad doesn't agree.

We're living on the boat 5 days of the week now. Dad takes it out every couple of days to practice and log sea time so he can get his Captain's license. I like the gentle rocking we get while in the slip. The other day we went out to have dinner and the water was a little rougher than he expected and we were rolling a lot when we anchored. Rail to rail is what Dad said about it. Mom decided we had to go back in because she certainly wasn't interested in eating so we went back in. On the way to the dock, we got boarded by the Coast Guard – lots of nice men with guns all over the boat. They inspected the boat and found that we had all the stuff we're supposed to have. I was glad that Leila and I were in our PFDFDs and Mom and Dad too. Made it look like we know what we are doing. What an experience!!

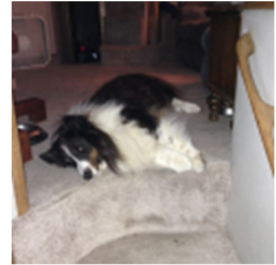
10/13/2014

I've discovered a new way to mess with Dad. When we start on our walk, I trot right behind him on the floating dock so he can't see me. Then I touch his calf with my cold, wet nose. He jumps and looks around for me but I move from side to side. He says, "Lucky, that's yucky," and continues on the walk. I do it again on the other calf and he jumps again. After that, he ignores me so I touch his hand as he swings it back. He says, "Yuck, Lucky," and usually stops to give me a hug. Then we continue on our walk like we always do – with me a little ahead of him.

There's a particulate stretch of our walking path with tall grass on the side. Dad usually calls me to a heel so I won't be grazing on the grass. This morning, we were passing some pampas grass so he didn't think I'd try for it. Well, I grabbed a clump and then dropped most of it when he pulled my leash and told me, "No grass, Lucky." I kept one long piece of it across my mouth and worried it around a bit until I got tired of messing with it. He called me Farmer Jack for the rest

of the walks because he said I looked like a farmer chewing on a piece of straw. I saw a farmer on TV the other day so I think it sounds like a good idea to me. I wonder if he would get me a pair of overalls to go with the straw.

October 24, 2014 – Here I am in one of my favorite places on the boat – right at the top of the stairs down to the galley (that’s an interesting name for a kitchen). Notice there isn’t much room on either side of me. That’s my effort to help Mom and Dad postpone Alzheimer’s disease and to work on their balance. Every time they want to go down into the galley, they have to carefully place each foot to either side of me and then carefully step down to the next step. I’ve seen Dad come romping down those steps and watched him crash one time really good on his back. When I’m at the top, there’s no chance for him to do that. Then the best part is that when he’s coming up from the galley, we’re literally face to face and he often gives me a snuggle and kiss on the top of my head. How cool is that for benefits all around?



Dec 19, 2014 - Mom and Dad's daughter, Hollie, who lives next door got an Australian Cattle Dog puppy named Cady. Mom and Dad recommended that she get a rescue dog but she wanted to raise a puppy. I guess every human deserves at least one puppy in their lives. Every weekend she was over visiting us with the grandsons and the granddog, she was complaining about only getting 2 hours of sleep at a time since Cady needed to go outside to do her business - even though she still went in her crate sometimes. Mom and Dad say they don't remember having that problem with the last two Sheltie puppies they had. Anyway, Cady drives me nuts. She wants to play, play, play and I'm an old guy. I can barely follow her with my eyes when she's running around all over the place, so there's not a chance I'll be able to move with her. Casey was slower and I couldn't play with him either. Sometimes, she lays beside me and just barks at me to get up and play. Here's a picture of her at 16 weeks in one of the few moments she wasn't racing around. She's getting better and spends a lot of time playing with the grandsons. She's learned not to bite and Hollie says she's sleeping through the night with very few accidents. Mom and Dad say they're really happy to have rescue dogs that were beyond this point in their lives.



December 24, 2014 - Dad built another step for the steps up onto the boat so Leila and I could manage to get on board. He built a little gangway so I could walk across from the steps to the boat and back again since I don't jump anywhere. It's pretty cool although Leila got a little too brave and jumped from the top white step to the boat and didn't make it. She bounced off the boat and went splash, right into the water between the boat and the dock. She went under and popped right back up again and was swimming along when Dad reached down to pull her back up on the dock. Mom was frantic and carried her onto the boat to dry her off. We all think she has learned her lesson because she goes to the top of the steps every time now.



Here's a video of me coming down the steps. (Dad hasn't figured out how to make it play the right direction so you might have to tilt your head to watch it properly.) I've learned to walk across the gangway, turn carefully on the top step and then run down the white steps. I'm not very graceful but I get down OK. Dad plans to put astro turf on the steps to help keep me from slipping. I'd show the video of me going up but I'm embarrassed for you to see Dad pushing me up the steps. My back legs aren't strong enough to launch me more than two steps up so I crash on the third. Dad has tried to teach me to climb or walk up the steps with my back legs but they're too short to reach from one step to another. Fortunately, my front legs are long enough and strong enough to walk up the steps if Dad gives me a push. So I'll just be very proud of how I'm able to come down without having to be carried up and down. Dad says my self esteem is much better now. I just know that I'm much happier when I don't have to be handled like a bag of potatoes.



IMG_0897.MOV

December 25, 2014 – This is my third Christmas with Mom and Dad and I just wanted to wish all the nice folks at NVSR, particularly my foster Mom, Martha, for your part in helping me to enjoy three more Christmases. MERRY CHRISTMAS!!!

March 7, 2015

Wow!! Time sure flies when you're having fun!! Just looked back at my last entry and saw it was Christmas. Feels like it's only been a few weeks. Winter on the boat has been a real challenge. The heaters on the boat froze up because Dad says the raw water got too cold and the heat pumps don't work that way. All I know is that it got right nippy. Where we sleep in the aft stateroom (isn't that a cool thing to say?) the floor is really cold and Dad's been worrying whether I need a sweater. I tell him I'm fine but he says I'm starting to show my age and he can

almost see my skin through my fur in some places. I tell him that's because the harness pushes it around funny. Maybe next year. It'll be getting warmer soon, I can feel it in my bones.

I'm the ice-eating King of Bay Point Marina. Here's a picture of me with a little piece of ice. I've carried some around that are the size of my head. I graze along when we're walking and when I find the right one, I dart my head out and snatch it. Dad doesn't like me getting ice from the dock but he lets me grab and eat some when we take our normal walks.



Dad has been learning some dog obedience stuff from Hollie who has been going to dog obedience training with Cady, her new Australian Cattle Dog. He learned Leave It and has been telling me to leave it with the ice he doesn't want me to eat. I know that command and generally do it without hesitation. He's even discovered that I listen to this command much better than I ever have to "No Grass." If I'd known he knew so little about dog commands, I'd have gladly gone to obedience training, just to teach him how to talk dog. He knows stay, sit, and heel OK but none of the other good ones. It's taking me such a long time to train him!

This is an important day for me – it's the three year anniversary of me coming to live with Dad and Mom. It's been a good three years. I'm still my svelte 35 lbs and still walk my mile a day (except for when it's 8 degrees and blowing). I've taught Mom and Dad to get me up on the couch and I've learned to manage the tall set of steps getting on and off the boat. I have my sea legs and am turning into a genuine boat dog. Mom and Dad say we're going to Key West in the boat in two years. I'm feeling good and don't look like a dog who's almost 12 so I'm looking forward to that trip. Right now, the thought of warm weather in February sounds really good.

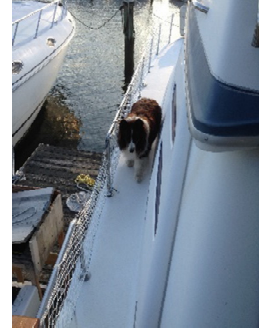
May 30, 2015

Wow, it's been a while. Dad says that between work and lots of boat projects he just hasn't had time to work on my journal. IMHO (I just learned this! What a cool expression.) he could spend a little of his margarita time each day and write about our day. Oh well, you can't teach an old dog new tricks. He did do one thing that's pretty cool – a new set of steps down the back of the boat. He says that this will allow us to go other places and to get down into the dinghy while at anchor. Personally, I'm happy right here and although the dinghy is OK, the thought of getting into it while the boat is rocking doesn't like too much fun for me.



However, to prove that this old dog can learn new tricks, I told Dad to attach a video to this entry to show me going down it. Dad taught me to go slow since I usually just run down steps but there isn't much space at the end of this to round out. See how controlled I am. Step-stop, step-stop, step-stop, and then hop across to the dock. Cool, huh?

Mom and Dad put a net around the life lines so they wouldn't worry about us going out on the deck. So now, while they are sitting on the back deck, I can walk all the way around the boat all by myself. Leila isn't brave enough to do it unless Mom goes with her.



Mom and Dad also got a really nice, thick astro turf mat for the back deck. As you can see, I made good use of it. It's nice that they put a little white pad there to soften the blue pad. Dad said, "Lucky, that's for you to use to pee on when we're out on the water." Right!! Why would any dog want to do that? He went online to research how to train dogs to use a mat on the boat and discovered that he needed to start about 10 years ago with me. You'd think he would know by now to check these things out before he spent money on them.



We continue to live on the boat for 5 days a week so I get lots of time to catch up on my sleep – except when they get underway.

September 13, 2015

Dad says I'm getting threadbare!! Look at my pictures. Do I look threadbare to you? Mom says that the harness rubs all my under fur away so I'm a little thin there because the weather's warm. Glad she's on my side. Dad points out that the stick he saw in my tail turned out to be my actual tail bone when he tried to remove it. So, I've lost a little of the white fluff on the end of my tail. Big deal!! Did I point out to him how ridiculous he looked when he got a bald spot that wiped out half his mustache? Or that I notice that he combs his hair forward to cover up his widow's peak. No-o-o-o. I just trot along minding my own business. Threadbare – pooh.

Dad's been letting me free-range a bit on our walks. There's a patch of grass about 200 X 50 feet that goes out to a gazebo by the water. It has a fence on one side and the docks on the other, so he says it's OK for me to walk along with him off the leash. I really like that! I stay close to him but I can play with the other friendly dogs we sometimes meet out there and I can sniff wherever I want. Doesn't take much to make me happy.

Mom likes to fish off the front of the boat. She only catches little ones but uses them to bait the crab trap. Crabs sure smell good but they don't share them with us. Dad says he'd catch more fish if Mom didn't catch so many that he has to take off her hook. He sighs and says, "At least Mom baits her own hook." I think it's funny. Just about the time he gets his line in the water and sits down, Mom says, "I got a bite," and up he hops. It's good for him, Heh, heh.



11/19/2015

Dad and I took a walk in the rain

Which has always been such a pain.

He put on my jacket

Firmly fastening my placket

So Mother Nature could bring out the sun again!!



Cool, huh. Dad's been trying to teach me haiku. He said it's the kind of day that cries for a poignant sense of poetry, but all I could manage was a limerick – whatever he says about learning new stuff to forestall Alzheimer's. I'm older than he is now and I really don't care. He also read me a little bit of *Old Man and the Sea* – a cool book about lots of food eating other food (all fish) – so I guess I could have said, in my best Hemingwayesque, "The clouds boiled against the dawn like gray oatmeal. Going to rain for sure. My red poncho shone in the gloom. Still too dark to find fish. Stopped raining so I'll take a nap."

This makes my head hurt. Haiku another day. The nap sounds good.

January 31, 2016

The year started off with a bang. The first week of January, I thought I had a stroke. I was walking along normally, stopped to sniff, and then started frenetically walking around in a tight right-hand circle. I could barely stand up. Dad carried me back to the boat. I tried to stand up but kept falling over to the right. Man, I thought I was a goner – could see the rainbow bridge and everything. Mom and Dad took me to the emergency pet hospital and all I could do then was lay still and groan. I felt so terrible. The vet wasn't sure what was causing my problem so

Mom and Dad left me there for observation overnight. The next day, I was able to do my business outside and was able to come home. They suspected some sort of nasal infection so gave me some pills for that. The diagnosis was vestibular vertigo – hard to say but definitely tangles up an old dog. Anyway, all turned out well. The pills made the infection go away and I'm back to about 95%. The vet also gave Dad some ointment to put on the end of my nose to remove the crustiness. Yuck!! Although he also smears some peanut butter on my paw to take my mind off the stuff on my nose. Okay!!

February 21, 2016

What a screwy month!! Dad says we're getting meteorological whiplash. Here's me pulling watch duty during a 60 degree day. Tough job but someone needs to keep a watch for vagrant squirrels. I'm proud to say that none of them tried boarding the boat while I was watching.

Dad got me a new harness. The old red one was OK but this one is a real outdoor dog harness. Padded chest plate and all. I feel like a rock-climbing dog. Of course, I don't climb rocks but since Dad has rock-climbing sandals that he only uses to walk me, we can both pretend and dream a little.



We went for a row in Dad's dinghy yesterday – another 60 degree day. Dad was rearranging stuff up in the forward stateroom and discovered Casey's old life jacket. So he passed it down to me. I feel like a real DOG in this one. My other one was the product of a tangled order and was pink with white polka dots. I won't mind a bit if he misplaces it somewhere on this boat. We had a nice row. I like to bark at ceiling fans and several of the large sailboats have windmills on the back and those really get me spun up. I dance

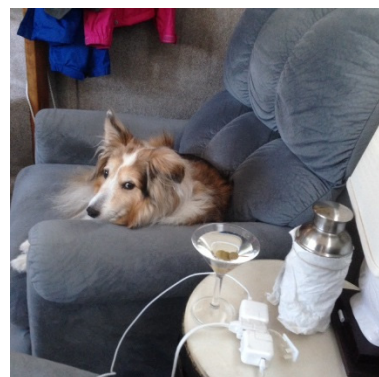
around in the dinghy and bark a lot. Dad just laughs and keeps my leash under his foot. Right – like I would really jump out of this little boat.

August 8, 2016

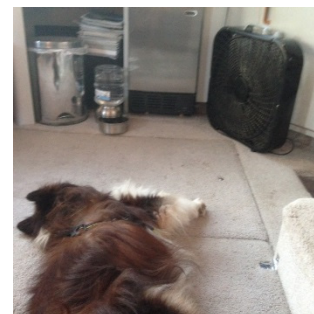
Wow – time really flies when you’re having fun. Leila and I decided to ask Dad to take a more formal photo of the two of us in our favorite boat doggie poses. Makes us look like we own the place. Leila has decided that the settee (see, even a special word for a couch) is her property. That’s all right with me. I’ve been up there and it’s too hot for me. Dad thinks this one would be a good candidate for the Sheltie calendar. Hopefully, he’ll pay attention and ask someone.



This is Leila in Dad’s chair. That’s not her martini. She sniffed it once and told me that it smelled like paint thinner. Yuck!! Everyday about 1600 (boat talk for 4 pm) he makes a little cocktail to signal that the work day is over. He’s kind of cute about his routine – get stuff out of the bar, go down 4 tall steps to the galley, fiddle with the drink stuff, come back upstairs to the bar to get the funny glass, back down to the galley to make the drink, back up to the bar to put the bottles away, back down to the galley to get the glass with the olives and a snack, back up to his chair to discover that Leila has taken it over. As soon as he starts his routine, she hops up in his chair and watches him. Then, he has to ask her if he can have his chair. She always makes him ask twice (personally, I think she has control issues).



Dad has found me a new boat doggie job. It’s been so hot and muggy lately that I’ve been tasked to monitor the heat and humidity as they flow out of the box fan. He says that it’s an important job and requires dedication, focus, and perseverance. Sounds just like me. It’s a job I can do with my eyes closed. People who don’t live on boats just don’t appreciate the challenges of maintaining proper climate control on a boat.

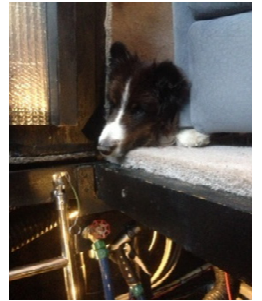


Dad took me to the vet to look at some crusty spots on my skin. Good news is that the vet said that my skin was healthy. Bad news is that he said Dad needed to brush out all the undercoat. So, Dad has been brushing me several times a week which isn’t a bad experience at all. However, I’m getting really threadbare. First my tail gets bald and now the rest of me is barely covered. I told Dad that I’m on my way to becoming a rare hairless Sheltie- except for my head and legs. I’ll look like I got a really bad poodle cut. The vet looked at me again and tells us that my skin is healthy and my thyroid count is right in the middle of the therapeutic range. So Dad says that if my undercoat doesn’t come in this winter, he will make me a sweater. I think I

would like an argyle or Scottish tartan. He says he will use my life jacket as a pattern since it fits me well.

September 20, 2016

Dad was changing the sea strainer and was having of what he calls a non-technical day. That usually means that he tries to avoid handling sharp, pointed tools. Well, he said the job had to be done, so down into the engine he proceeded. He managed to pull the old strainer and replace it with a clean one without incident or injury. Probably because I was supervising. How did he get along without me?



Dad continues to worry about me getting cold this winter so he made me a jacket. It's one layer of gabardine wool and should work OK until the temps get down to freezing. Note the strap going around it. Not only does it hold the jacket in place but it also serves as a harness in case I fall into the water. Pretty cool, huh!! He plans to make another one with a quilted lining. If this were a video, you'd see Leila circling like a shark. She's so jealous she can't stand it. Guess Dad will have to make one for her too.



November 27, 2016

Some people have fixations about shoes, some about handbags, briefcases, or fishing rods. Well, I think Dad has a thing for harnesses. I'm on harness number 4 now. He saw one on a cattle dog that goes climbing with his Dad. He dangles below him on this rig with a front harness and a hip harness. Dad tried it on me and told me that he would get me one if my back legs stopped working. Then I went into the drink a couple of times. First my back legs didn't make it onto the dock and I slipped back all the way in. Dad hauled me up by my new jacket. Another time, Carmen, our neighbor, was helping Mom while Dad was at work and my rear end fell into the water. She had to pull me out by my old harness.



My back legs seem to work OK but seem to have lost their spring, so Dad got this harness to help me with my back end. I'm still getting used to it and he's working on how to integrate it with my jacket. He likes problems like that – says it helps him postpone Alzheimer's. Anyway, the harness works well and I shouldn't go into the water again. If it makes him happy to work with harnesses, then I guess I'll humor him.

Wow – it’s been a long time since I was able to inspire Dad to write about me. I’ve been thinking at him for months now. He’s been a little distracted since he bought another boat in February. It’s a little sailboat he plans to race on Wednesday evenings. I haven’t been on it yet. He says he needs to rig a halyard (whatever that is) to lift me on. I was just looking back over my journal and saw a picture from last February 2016 when the temp was 60 degrees. Seems like the same thing happened this year. Global warming might not be all bad. If the water rises, at least we’re on a boat. In any event, I’m afraid to admit that I’m finally getting a little old. As great-grandma used to say, according to Mom, “It’s no sin to get old, just darned inconvenient.” So here’s a picture of the sock on my leg. Looks like a cast, but nothing is broken. My wrist hurts and I lick it a lot. When the hot spot appeared, Dad kept telling me not to lick it. He tried putting a soft cone on me but I looked so sad at him that he took it off and put the sock on me. Sometimes, when I’m not wearing it, I absentmindedly lick my wrist so he puts it back on again. Guess I’ll have to wear it forever. Both Mom and Dad are helping me more with the lifting harness to help make sure I don’t hurt any more joints.



The vet also told us that I have early stages of kidney disease so I have my own special food now. Leila is envious because she is tired of her special food and would like to try mine – but Mom won’t allow that. So – we all just keep going on day by day, happy to see another one come and go. And this old dog is still the best in the neighborhood at sleeping in the sun.

June 14, 2017

Well, the vet gave me some pretty powerful pain medication so I’m getting along fairly well now. I’ve stopped licking my leg so I don’t have to wear that silly sock anymore! The whole food thing got way out of hand. That kidney diet is the most tasteless, awful tasting bit of cardboard that I have ever put into my mouth. No way Leila was really going to take it from me. In fact, I prevailed on Mom and Dad to let me switch back to Leila’s potato-rabbit food and I’m doing OK.

I’ve learned a new trick. Leila is having some sort of urinary problem that causes her to pee about a million times a day. She started going on the back deck, so Mom got her a nice astroturf pad and tray to use. She runs right out the door (sorry, hatch) and pees on the pad. They tried that a few years ago and Leila and I decided that it made a nice deck bed for me. Mom gave it away. Now, since Leila is going on it, I decided that I would go on the deck in the bow. I take a nice long walk up there, wet down the deck and wander back to the aft deck.



It's pretty cool. Dad comes right out there and washes it down. It's good for him to get up and move around – helps him maintain his strength and balance.

Whiplash Alert!! – Here I am at the house. Dad was going to dig a big hole in the ground to find out where an old heating oil tank was and I was helping him scope it out. Turned out it was about 3 feet to my right. I tried to supervise him, but he is so dead set on doing it his way, I finally decided to take a nap. There's only so much ignoring an old dog can take.

That's all for now. I'll try to remember to remind Dad to write in my journal sooner next time.

August 3, 2017

Hi, this is Leila, Lucky's companion. Mom and Dad adopted me from NVSR about 9 years ago. Lucky asked me to make the last entry in his journal if he passed away. Well, he did it last night in his sleep so I guess he's happily at the Rainbow Bridge running around like a young dog. He was worried about the progression of his kidney disease and was unhappy that his body was failing on him. But he was happy that NVSR rescued him and that he had a great 5 years here with us. He kept an upbeat outlook on life which impressed all of us. He asked me include his latest Haiku in this journal entry. I told him it was a little too bittersweet for my taste, but he insisted.

Only five years with Dad

Green, red, and gold leaves falling

Forever – a hollow term