



The Sheltie Spin

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

Winter 2022 - 2023

Santa and Mrs. Claus have a big holiday job ... and two Shelties!!

By Martha Heisel



Have you ever wondered what our volunteers do when they're not taking care of their Shelties? Here's the story of two of them who have found a holiday "vocation." Anna Thoreson has been an NVSR volunteer for many years and when she married Fenton Simpson, part of the "bargain" was Anna's Shelties. At holiday time, Anna and Fenton take on alternate personalities – Santa and Mrs. Claus.

Fenton brought that role to the marriage, having been a Santa for 30 years, starting at a day care center. He was so good at it that people encouraged him to do more – and he did. Before they were married, Anna accompanied Fenton to help out; only later did she take on the Mrs. Claus role – and loved it!

Together, Santa and Mrs. Claus, who live in Round Hill – when they're not at the North Pole – are a hit at their town's holiday tree lighting. Then, they go to various fire halls for "Santa dinners," country clubs, day care centers, the local diner and even parties at private homes. Last year, Leesburg Village invited Santa to their holiday celebration and brought him in by horse-drawn carriage.

The real excitement for Anna and Fenton is seeing the children crowd in to meet Santa and his "Mrs." The adults are just as excited as the children. Santa's lap is the goal for the children, of course, and he listens carefully to each child's instructions for Christmas gifts, wisely never promising to bring everything. And a myriad of photos are taken.



What about the "trappings" necessary for this effort? Santa wears a beautiful "professional" outfit complete with boots and belt. Although in his early years he had no natural beard, Santa has a beautiful one now. He starts his beard in July and carefully trims it until Christmas, then off it comes in January. (Mrs. Claus prefers a beardless husband the rest of the year.) Mrs. Claus has two beautiful costumes. Her first one, worn regularly, was sewn by NVSR volunteer, Nancy Bender, a talented seamstress.

Here's what Anna says: "We love seeing the excitement in the children's eyes and we love making so many people happy! We get so much enjoyment out of doing this that at the end of the day, our faces hurt from smiling but our hearts are full of happiness.

"Children give Santa their wish lists and most of them ask for items for their siblings and parents rather than for themselves. It's heartwarming to know how unselfish these little ones are! One child asked for a new mirror and a



new hair brush for his mom. Another child asked for nothing for himself but to please give his mom some new clothes and new shoes.”



Anna and Fenton really get into the holiday season by decorating their house each year outside and in. Neighbors begin asking about the decorations as soon as Thanksgiving is over, so the pressure is on! Anna says it is addicting to plan and install each year's display and add new items to it. They have to move their living room furniture to allow enough space for all the decorations in the front windows. Dancing figurines, garlands of lights, greenery, bows, lots of Santas, reindeer and so much more are part of the annual decorations.



And what do their Shelties do while Santa and Mrs. Claus are out spreading cheer? Matty and Rosie do lots of sleeping and dreaming of sugar plums. (We made that last one up – we hope they were dreaming of some delicious holiday doggie treats.)



Happy Sheltie Holidays to all our adopters, volunteers and friends!

We're very proud to send you this holiday and winter issue of our Sheltie Spin. Please enjoy the articles about adopted Shelties and what they're doing, a lovely tribute to a Sheltie no longer with her family, and advice for caring for and loving your Sheltie. We are hoping to have some in-person events in 2023, including a picnic. It's been much too long since we've seen you and your Shelties.

NVSR has been fulfilling its mission since 1999. Over those 23 years, we have helped more than 1,400 Shelties find wonderful homes. Please keep in touch with us through our Facebook page, our website and our newsletters. Our shepherd team also loves to hear your news (shepherd@nvsr.org).

All the NVSR volunteers wish you Happy Holidays and a wonderful Sheltie New Year!!



A Letter from Peyton



Hi, everyone! We haven't met, but my name is Peyton. I'm 16 years old. I'm not much of a talker but it's time to tell my story ... so here goes ...

My life really changed for the better when I met Martha from NVSR. She found me tied up and living in a kennel. My original family ignored me most of the time, so I hadn't had a bath in ages, and my coat was red and crunchy from the sun. I tried to be a really good dog and please them, but I was lonely and bored, so I chased their chickens. The family did NOT like that and they yelled at me a lot – they forgot I'm a herding dog! They were glad to see me drive away with Martha. Me, too.

When Martha took me to her house to foster, she took great care of me. I got to make friends with her other Shelties – Skip, Skye and Dulcie! I hadn't had friends before and didn't know their dog games, and I got stronger and healthier. I was 6 years old, had hookworm, Lyme and Ehrlichia - so Martha treated me with help from the vet and I felt much better. She also had me neutered – I forgive her for that! Most of all, she didn't yell at me and gave me lots of good food. Who knew green beans were so tasty?

When Martha introduced me to my new mom, Carol, she said to go slow. My new mom never had a pet before and most animal shelters would not let her adopt, so she is ever so grateful to NVSR for taking a chance with me. At first, I was afraid of my new mom, but she took me on lots of walks on a leash and played games with some cool toys. (I like the furry tiger and the kong with peanut butter the best!) I quickly learned to use the dog door so I could go into the house or outside in our big, fenced-in backyard whenever I wanted.



I never give Mom any trouble – well, except for once when I ran away from the dog walker. Mom was worried sick, searching for me all over the neighborhood with her friends. She left the gate open, and I let myself into the house in time for dinner. She should have known that I knew my way home! She hugged me and cried even more – and then I got chicken for dinner!

Mom and I have been together more than a decade now and my world is a lot bigger! I know lots of walks – in the local parks and neighborhoods. If my mom is daydreaming, I always remind her we missed a turn, so we don't go home too quickly! All our neighbors know me and tell Mom how beautiful I am. I get lots of pets from the kids who run to meet me, and I keep up with my dog friends in person and through “pee-mail.”

I am older now – a bit hard of hearing and certainly not as fast as I once was – but I love to explore. Mom and I had a great visit with Martha last month. We went for a walk with her and her new dog friends, Skylar and Max, and I showed them.



They had to walk fast to keep up with me so I could sniff all the new smells!!

Best of all, Mom loves me and thanks me for rescuing her every day – can you imagine that?! We changed each other's lives for the better!

Happy holidays –
with hugs to all,

Peyton





Daisy and Mattie: Together Again – and Forever

By Elaine Taylor



*Daisy first day
in foster home*

We all love a good story: rags to riches, a perilous journey, disaster narrowly averted, true love found at last. Our work with Northern Virginia Sheltie Rescue gets us involved in many stories – the ones “our” dogs would tell if they could speak! The story of Daisy and Mattie, two “large Shelties” who came to us last spring, is one of these. Sit back and enjoy their tale.

Two 2-year-old female littermates were surrendered to a shelter near Lynchburg. Their Animal Control reached out to NVSR (perhaps she had kept our brochure we send to all shelters) and asked if we could take the dogs. They were good dogs who shouldn't stay at the understaffed, underfunded shelter. This note from Lisa Fox, NVSR foster coordinator, went to volunteers.

Many thanks to Elaine Taylor and Anna Thoreson. They will foster the two incoming sisters. They have no names, so

foster moms will name them. Beautiful coats; one sable merle, one tri.

A huge thank you to Sharon and David, who responded to my urgent plea to pick up the girls from the shelter. The two-year-old littermates were filthy, smelly, flea- and tick-infested, and very anxious to get out of a shelter built for 20, yet stuffed with 100 dogs.

After hours bathing the dogs, Sharon and David finally could invite the dogs into their home. Sharon took both to the vet clinic where she works to get them ready for their foster homes. They both need to be spayed. We believe the tri is in heat. Fortunately, Sharon reports that both girls are sweet, friendly and anxious to please.

Watch for more news about these two big girls (each about 45 lbs; not overweight – just big). They might be big Shelties or small Collies. Either way, they will be wonderful companions.

Friday, transport day, I was to pick up the girls and meet Louise Kenny north of Charlottesville. Louise would take the tri on the journey's next leg to meet Anna Thoreson, foster mom. The sable would come home with me. That morning Kathy Kelly offered to do the transport leg from Lynchburg to Charlottesville. I was grateful; that saved me two extra hours on the road.

As we shifted the dogs from car to car, Kathy and I agreed these were not large Shelties, but small Collies! I don't know what they felt or if they noticed that only one of them left to go on with Louise. The crates, the car rides, and all the changes over the last few days left my foster dog, the sable, very nervous and carsick. However, by the end of that day, both dogs were safely in their foster homes and welcomed by the resident dogs. Anna and I each sent our first report to Lisa and expressed how good both these dogs were. And, we had chosen names for them. I had Mattie and Anna had Daisy. Both of them were already shaping up to be fun foster dogs.

Mattie was spayed and ready to go on the NVSR website for adoption first. As you might imagine, several people were eager to adopt her. But none of the homes was quite the right match for this energetic young girl. Meanwhile, Daisy was still awaiting her spay surgery. An over-enthusiastic groomer had clipped off most of her coat in order to remove all those mats. Daisy looked much like an overgrown puppy, but we knew she'd look “normal” soon. Eventually, she was also spayed and ready for placement. These are really nice dogs, and both Anna and I were sorely tempted to foster-fail! However, we made a “heart deal” that if Lisa found a family for each dog that was better than staying with us, we'd be all in ... but only if!



*Mattie first day in
foster home*



Then Lisa sent Anna and me a young family's application. The parents were experienced dog people who had worked with rescue groups, and at their wedding, their two Shelties were flower bearers. Now they had two lovely daughters at the right age to want an active dog, but their beloved old Sheltie just couldn't keep up with them! Lisa set the wheels in motion, and volunteer Janie Robertson did the home visit. Janie has decades of Sheltie experience and found this home perfect for a sweet young Collie.

The prospective adopters came to my home the next day to meet Mattie and check out the chemistry. "Miss Mattie" was one happy dog!!! She bounded after the little girls as they explored my house and yard and was the perfect height for them to pat her each time she passed them. She stuck her nose into their games just like a third playmate.

The parents teased each other about for whom they were **really** getting this dog (themselves!). Mattie couldn't keep from kissing Mom. Dad asked if Mattie minded being picked up. I said, "Not at all," and he scooped her into his lap. She leaned her head on his shoulder, and he announced that this was how they would watch TV. I knew this was the family for Mattie.

The best part of this story is in one last – and most important – detail. We were looking for the same kind of home for both Mattie and Daisy, so Lisa asked if they might be interested in adopting both girls. Yes! The adopters were going on vacation, so we waited until their return to do the adoption. Mattie sent the daughters pictures of herself while they waited. One day she sneaked onto my computer to send them a note about herself. Here's part of what Mattie said:

"I lyk ta eat. And I have a reely gud noze so I kin smell gud. Foster ma, she has lernt not ta leaf a plate where I kin reech it. I will need yu to hep me be gud and don leaf yur plate where I kin git it or I may not be able ta help myself not eet yur stuff. I wanna be the very best dog... but sometimes I know I ain't. Yu ever do bad stuff like that? I hope you understand, mi a dog, Mattie.

PS Maybee I kin go ta skool wiff yu an lern ta spel more better."

So, two Collie sisters were placed in a family where all four "sisters" will grow up together. What a great ending to a story that started with two dirty, unwanted dogs in a county shelter! The phrase "it takes a village" applies to finding Mattie and Daisy the perfect home.





Enrichment Activities for Your Sheltie

By Lisa Fox & Martha Heisel

Good parents read to their children from a young age, enroll them in dance classes or piano lessons, sign them up for soccer, play math games at home, and share other activities to expand their horizons and teach them new skills. Should we “dog parents” be similarly trying to stimulate and engage our Shelties?

We at NVSR feel there are high returns to both dog and caregivers from investing time and effort in enrichment activities to enjoy together – beyond daily walks. One of the important things to remember as you embark on this is to fit the enrichment to your dog and her interests. These can keep an older dog active and younger dogs challenged. Enrichment activities also lead to better behavior. Here are some ideas:



1. Take your dog to a “tricks” class or teach your dog at home using a book like Kay and Perondi’s **The Big Book of Tricks for the Best Dog Ever**. Shelties love to learn, and you will have fun watching your dog master simple tricks that you can show off to friends.

2. Check out a dog sport class like agility, nose work or rally. Dogs of any age can learn these sports that can be adjusted to age and skill level. No need to compete, and you don’t even have to join a class. Set up simple agility combinations of obstacles. Nosework and rally are even easier to work on at home.

3. Consider doing Pet Therapy with your dog at nursing homes, assisted living facilities and hospitals. Hospitals require certification (not onerous) by an organization like Alliance for Therapy Dogs, but most nursing homes and assisted living facilities welcome well-behaved dogs that like people. You will be amazed at a Sheltie lifting the spirits of ill or depressed patients. Staff also greatly enjoy the visits.

4. Buy your dog some puzzles and treat dispensing toys. Start with simple ones that he can master quickly like the IQ Treat Ball. Use some mealtime kibble to fill the toys. As his skills improve, get some more challenging puzzles, like those by Nina Ottosson, that may require some help from you at first.



5. If your dog likes young children, consider participating in a “Read to the Dog” program at your local school or public library. If the school doesn’t already have such a program, offer to begin one with your Sheltie. Teachers love having volunteers work with problem readers who need some one-on-one help. Patting the dog while reading to her is a strong motivator.

6. Assist with a “How to Care for Your Pet” badge at local scout troops. Teaching basic pet safety, proper nutrition, needs for exercise, etc., goes over especially well if the kids get to take turns walking your dog and asking her to do tricks.





7. Teach your dog some new fun games to play. Fetch and tug and soccer are popular with some dogs. A game that nearly all dogs love is “Find It.” You need some Kongs or other stufferable hard rubber toys in which you can stick kibble, bits of cheese or unsalted popcorn. With dog closed in one room, hide these toys around the house and then open the door and call, “Find it!” Start with one room and easy “finds.” This game is especially fun with several dogs who compete to find the goodies.
8. Invent some problem-solving games. These can be simple, like rolling treats in a yoga mat and asking the dog to unroll it to find them. Another might be hiding treats in a “messed-up” bath towel. While he’s searching through the first towel, get another one ready across the room.
9. Work on basic behavior cues during these enrichment sessions. Get eye contact and wait for your dog to sit before you start one of the activities. Soon, he will automatically sit. This will become “Sit to say please,” and is a great way to incorporate manners into play.
10. For puppies and seniors, put tiny treats in every section of a muffin tin, then cover each with a tennis ball and watch the dog enjoy finding the treats. How about a snuffle mat? (We sell those at shop@nvsr.org.)



An important thing to remember is that herding dogs (Shelties, of course!) love to be with their person when they are doing activities. They enjoy mental games and they love to use their body. Watch what interests your dog, so you can make the enrichment match his or her instincts. For many more ideas, check out the What Dogs Want Academy at wdwacademy.org.



GAM Printers of Sterling, Virginia, and the Grant Family dedicate the printing of the Sheltie Spin in memory of their Shelties and Honorary Shelties: Cady, Cody, Cookie, D.O.G., Dutchess, Duncan, Heidi, Hunny, Lynus, Maddie, Rose, Rocky, Sassy, Spirit, Shelby, & Tigger and in honor of Ace, Joe, Music & Quincy



Miles & Santa



Our Wonderful Bridget

By Mary Beth Jackson



A year after we said goodbye to the first dog I'd had for 15 years, we started looking for a new dog. Checking PetFinder, my husband grouched that everything was some kind of bulldog. He was speeding through when I said, "Back up!" "What?" he said, annoyed. "Scroll back," I said. "That's my dog!"

Bridget had the sweetest face, one that said "family dog." Mary and Everett Mounts were fostering her about 30 minutes away. We worried if having three kids would be a problem. But Bridget became ours.

Bridget was a wonderful companion, a reassuring shadow. In the kitchen, she was a loyal companion as I baked and listened to NPR. We shared popcorn and Bollywood movies. She got her own bite-size "sundae" of frozen blueberries and plain yogurt when I made one for myself.

She went on weekends to the beach. Visiting in-laws in Indiana, I sat on their porch with Bridget, my father-in-law and his beloved Aussie, listening to family stories – one of my favorite memories. She helped us hunt for "fairystones" at Fairy Stone State Park. We panicked and called the vet when she ate giant crayons dropped on the floor. (It wasn't an emergency). On walks, folks often said how pretty Bridget was. I called her a "dog mullet": Sheltie in front, German Shepherd in back. Guys would stop and roll down their windows to compliment my *dog*.

Eventually we learned that Bridget was older than anyone knew, that her hips were toast and her hind muscles had atrophied. But she made the best of it, always excited to walk and even run though her hind end was only pantaloon fluff. It was hard to make the decision of what day to say goodbye. Bridget seemed "with it" enough to want to live, despite dementia and difficulty getting around. For a couple of weeks, we carried her 46 pounds nearly everywhere, trying to anticipate when she needed an out or a drink. She had a spirit that was outliving the rest of her.

You wonder whether you'll love a new dog as much as your last one, and my first dog was pretty exceptional. I determined that it would not be fair to compare, that I would love Bridget for being Bridget. And I did. I was surprised how hard it was to let her go.

She left our family important gifts. Looking after our senior friend taught us all how to be more patient and gentle. The kids didn't complain about cleaning up accidents. I was extra gentle as I picked up and set down her aging bones. My husband didn't grouse much when she needed outs two or three times a night, forgetting she'd been out at all.





Bridget had a harder time than some getting a forever home, being a mix and at least five (but more like 7+ in hindsight). The Mounts' friend helped with Bridget's adoption fee because she liked Bridget and hoped it would help her have a home. In Bridget's memory, we will pay forward that kindness.

Our daughter, though crushed to lose Bridget, says she'd like us to take more seniors, even though it means saying goodbye sooner. So, please consider that dog you might pass up. Another "Bridget" is waiting and deserves every bit of love you can give.

*Show your Support of
Northern Virginia Sheltie Rescue
with these items from the Sheltie Shop
email shop@nvsr to order any of these items.
See website for more Sheltie items.*



NVSR Sheltie Magnets ... for your car, for your fridge or any place you can "stick 'em". \$5.00 each and only \$1.00 to mail them, not matter how many you want.

Snuffle mats!!

Made by hand by dedicated NVSR volunteers. Shelties love 'em. Made of strands of brightly colored fleece firmly tied to a sturdy frame, each 12" x 12" mat is a mini nose-work game. Hide a handful of kibble or tiny treats deep among the strands and then watch the fun as your Sheltie sniffs out the hidden treats one by one. Snuffle mats are machine washable, hang to dry, and work well for dogs who gobble their food or pups with separation anxiety who need distraction while their caregivers depart.





Nearly 60% of US Dogs are Overweight—Is Your Sheltie One of These?

By Lisa Fox

Many of us are unwittingly killing our dogs with kindness by allowing them to become overweight or even obese. Most Shelties have mastered the skill of wheedling a few more treats from their humans and gradually packing on pounds. And those long fluffy coats conceal excess pounds very easily. But excess weight dramatically shortens lifespans in our beloved dogs, causing diabetes, osteoarthritis, cardiopulmonary disease, decreased liver function and hypertension. Overweight dogs are more susceptible to various cancers and to skin and hair coat problems. Their immune systems are weaker, they suffer heat and exercise intolerance, and all surgeries are higher risk for them. Here are questions you might have:



(1) **Is my Sheltie concealing excess weight under that luxuriant coat?** Wet him down and check:

- ✓ His ribs should be slightly prominent, easily felt, and have only a thin fat cover.
- ✓ Viewed from above, you should see a very obvious lumbar waist.
- ✓ Viewed from the side, dog should exhibit a sharp abdominal tuck.
- ✓ Viewed from behind, dog should show clear muscle definition.
- ✓ His tail base bones should be slightly prominent and easily felt.
- ✓ The tail base should be covered with only a thin fat cover.

(2) **I feed my dog what the dog food package suggests. Why is she overweight?** Dog food labels overstate the amount of food needed. Feed the amount needed to maintain the right weight. Include all treats and table scraps. Weigh her once a month to make sure she is on target to meet her ideal weight goal.

(3) **How many calories a day does my dog need?** This depends on age, activity level and metabolic rate, and vary from dog to dog. A 25# middle-aged Sheltie at ideal weight might need only about 550 calories a day.

(4) **Should I buy reduced fat or weight-loss dog food for my overweight dog?** Probably not. We believe it's better to feed very high quality food but in smaller amounts. Supplement with lots of cooked veggies: no-salt green beans, pure pumpkin, winter squash, steamed broccoli, carrots. A tablespoon of plain non-fat yogurt, a little cooked ground turkey or some egg cooked (no butter) in microwave can be added.

(5) **my dog is ALWAYS hungry. He gives me imploring looks any time I eat something.** Most dogs will beg constantly if encouraged. Don't give in. Remember, our small bite of steak is like a big hamburger for a Sheltie. Take him for a walk instead. That helps you keep your weight down, too.



(6) **What about treats?** Many of us go wrong here. There are lots of calories in each of those little treats. Save the high value treats for difficult training sessions. For routine treats, try baby carrots, frozen green peas or beans, a slice of apple, or a few pieces of unbuttered, unsalted homemade popcorn.



- (7) **My dog inhales his food. How can I slow him down?** He will feel fuller if he eats more slowly. Try putting his kibble in a dispensing toy like the Contempo Tessa or the IQ Treat Ball. In his food bowl, put only a little chopped chicken or a spoonful of reconstituted dehydrated food like Honest Kitchen, plus lots of veggies. Meals may then last 30-40 minutes. Or try one of the “slow bowls.”



- (8) **Can exercise alone slim down my dog?** Probably not, but it can sure help. Several good walks each day plus active play sessions will burn more calories and give your dog something besides food to think about. And those walks will be good for you, too. You still need to keep an eye on her food intake and limit treats.

Obesity is the fastest growing canine health problem today. But it can be easy to solve. After all, you completely control his calorie intake. Help your dog enjoy a longer, healthier life by keeping her slim and trim. You'll minimize your vet bills, too.



Ruffy & Tazley are anxiously awaiting the arrival of St. Nick, so they can get these silly hats off!



Dangerous Holiday Snow Globes

We learned recently that two dogs died after they ingested the liquid/water from a broken snow globe. Some snow globes contain antifreeze (or perhaps another dangerous liquid). Only a few licks can be fatal to a small dog and Shelties would fall into that category. Some of the snow globes with antifreeze may be from abroad; but there may not be a way to know. The dogs that licked the liquid went immediately to the animal emergency room and vomiting was induced, along with other procedures. However, it was too late and both dogs died (one after a few days). Please be very careful handling any snow globes you may have.



Rigby's Story

By Kathy Kelly – and Rigby



Here I am with Farrah, Kayley and Dakota in my foster home

Shelties come to NVSR from many different circumstances, sometimes with unknown pasts, with histories of neglect or owner disinterest, or often because of a family's very painful decision to find a new home for their beloved family member. Rigby came with both an unknown past and a sad relinquishment. His family rescued him two years ago when they found him wandering in a parking lot, much of his skin bare. As they began restoring him to health, including heartworm treatment, he enjoyed playing with their six-year-old daughter. However, Rigby drew the line at having their toddler invade his space. After the first nip and some clear body language, rather than keep him isolated, they searched for a rescue group to find him the best home possible.

When they needed help, all the Sheltie and Collie rescue groups in the Midwest were full after taking in 198 Collies rescued from a Mercer County, Illinois, animal cruelty case. Rigby's family's search took them farther and farther from their home in Oklahoma until they found NVSR. After talking to our adoption coordinator, Lisa, they knew they had found a group that would appreciate their funny, playful, affectionate, opinionated Rigby.

Rigby was a lovely foster dog, happy to offer me subdued tail wags and frequent games of tug-and-grrr with his favorite stuffed bear brought from Oklahoma. Though unable and unwilling to walk very far when he first arrived because of a few undiagnosed health conditions, after six weeks he began to feel better. Initial blood chemistry tests showed that he needed thyroid supplementation, which helped him enjoy his walks more, build muscle and lose extra weight. When he was ready for adoption, he was striding along at three miles per hour, happily greeting neighbors and tracking smells.

The next step was finding Rigby's new home. As luck would have it, his future adopters applied at the same time Rigby's bio went on our website. Rigby got to do the home visit himself with us, his foster family. He explored the entire house and yard and decided that the views and smells across fields and woods promised many good explorations.

YOU CAN'T BUY
LOVE
 BUT YOU CAN
RESCUE IT



These are my new peeps, the fuzzy-faced one and the long-haired one



Here's Rigby's report about his life since he found his forever home.

Dear NVSR friends,

Rigby here. I'm very thankful for the way Kathy and Jim, my NVSR host family, helped me find my forever home. They helped me get over some health struggles and took me to visit some people they thought needed a Sheltie's unique caring and attention. It turns out the new people are both of Scottish ancestry and live in a place called Dhuinrag (I know, not the Shetland Islands, but still promising), so I said I'd stay.

Although other Shelties had cared for them for many years, my new peeps had been orphaned for the last two, so I've been busy re-training them. The tall fuzzy-faced one is attentive about meal times. The pretty, long-haired one keeps my coat brushed and me looking smart. Both are quiet and affectionate and give great tummy rubs. They are getting more playful, enjoying games of tug-and-toss with my favorite bear. They're reasonably well leash-trained, and we enjoy long walks every day. They've learned that when I stop during a walk, I'm not being stubborn; I'm pondering the most interesting route to pursue. We've learned how to agree on the best choice.

I'm introducing different aspects of my personality incrementally. I was quiet at first but have begun talking with them more and more. They are getting better at understanding what I say to them, although they seem to have selective hearing. No matter what I say, or how often I ask, they're never willing to share their meals and snacks with me. (I think someone told them I need to lose some weight.) I don't get that, but then, I don't share my meals and snacks either. Because of their hearing deficits, I've begun giving a little bark to let them know when someone comes to the door – like an automatic door bell, only smarter. I'm happy to say my training program is showing positive results with each passing day and that these two are keepers.

Cheers and happy holidays to all my Sheltie-loving friends,

Rigby



*Here are my buddies, Farrah and Dakota,
from my foster days –
all dressed up for the holidays.*



*This is my first Christmas in my new home.
How about those tartan angels?*



Ellen and Bayle Face a “Mold Adventure” after Hurricane Ian in Florida

By Ellen Lamm

I’ve been experiencing many “firsts” in my life during the past few years. Now, I’m confronted with another first. My condo’s ceiling almost caved in during Florida’s Hurricane Ian last summer. Since then, the mold in my condo has been growing and getting worse.

While I’m packing and contemplating next steps, I feel my health adversely affected by the mold. My Sheltie-mix Bayle is acting fine, thank God, but I am also concerned for his immune system during this ordeal. I have learned that protecting our dogs from mold inhalation is much the same as protecting their general immune system. This, of course, is the next best thing to putting a mask on our dog. As I’m sure we’d all agree, we’ll do anything for our fur family; I just know my dog would draw the line at wearing a mask!

Short of this, I’m paying extra attention to his diet. While I feed raw or freeze-dried food on a consistent basis, I top off with Dr. Harvey’s Raw Vibrance. This contains additional fruits and vegetables that he may not get. Additionally, I have been learning about the benefit of feeding Sous Vide, which is cooked at low temperatures for long periods of time, a method that retains most of the nutrients. While I have been alternating with brands including Small Batch and Open Farm, one of my goals this year is learn to prepare his food myself.

Additionally, I called Dr. Harvey’s customer service to gather additional suggestions. The representative shared that she had been through this with her dog and reminded me that most of their immune system is in their gut. Because Bayle already eats well, I added Prime Raw Goat Milk. (I tried adding a few cranberries for additional nutrients and probiotics. This did not go over well.) The representative also suggested milk thistle; however, because he’s on the goat milk I decided not to overdo.

During this time, another part of Bayle’s personality revealed itself. In addition to calming me, he does love an adventure! Here he is in front of the industrial size fan used to dry my carpet. He was loving it!

My advice to anyone out there ... listen to your dog! Bayle showed me when we needed to go back to bed during the night of the storm, and every day he shows me how to make the best of an unhealthy situation. And most of all ... keep looking forward!





Holiday Dog Cookies

2 c. whole wheat flour	Oven at 350°. Combine all ingredients in
2 c. rolled oat flour	food processor or stand mixer.
2 eggs	Roll out about ¼” and cut out with cutters.
2 tbsp. melted coconut oil	Bake 20 minutes.
1 c. unsweetened applesauce	
1 tsp. vanilla extract	



Bonnie the Collie says ... So you want to take your Sheltie boating ...

By Wes Marks



Here in Delaware where Bonnie lives, as in most states, children are required to wear life jackets, or (their official name) Personal Flotation Devices (PFDs) any time they are on a boat away from the dock. Adults should wear them as well for safety and to set an example for children. But what about our 4-legged boating buddies? Yep, they should have them on, not only aboard the boat, but along the dock – and especially when boarding the boat. Life jackets for dogs not only keep them float so they don't tire so quickly, but also provide a safe strong handle for grabbing the pup and bringing him on board the boat or dock if he falls in. If he's on only a leash, you certainly can't yank your dog out of the water by the collar. If he's near a dock, marine growth can inflict cuts and scrapes that are easily infected, not to

mention the scratches you'll incur trying to get your dog situated so you can grab him. Those dog-paddling paws go a mile a minute when he's scared.

There are several styles of pet PFDs; look for a good one! It should have a good-sized handle on the back (top of the dog) and several connection points, either snaps, buckles or full-length zippers to keep the PFD snug. You do not want your dog to slide out of it while swimming or when you're trying to pick him up! And comfort is a must. PFDs are good only when they are worn. If the dog is uncomfortable, his boating time is miserable, and he'll make your life miserable, too. My canine crew loved boating, and they had PFDs with their names and the boat name on them. We also put extra reflective tape on the jackets so we could find them if they fell overboard at night. Remember, your dog is probably going to snooze after the departure excitement; take along something soft so he can be comfortable on deck wearing his PFD.

The links below will help you select the right PFD for your canine crew.

A rescue story from May 2022:

<https://www.military.com/daily-news/2022/05/17/pup-overboard-coast-guard-rescues-dog-pamlico-sound.html>

Dog PFD reviews:

<https://www.akc.org/expert-advice/lifestyle/why-your-dog-needs-a-dog-life-jacket/>

<https://www.whole-dog-journal.com/lifestyle/dog-life-jacket-review/>

<https://www.veterinarians.org/dog-life-jacket/>



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