



The Sheltie Spin

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

Winter 2013



Happy Holidays from all your NVSR Sheltie friends, especially the Robertsons' Kayla, Murphy (NVSR 2009), Gracie, Bella (NVSR 2013), Misty (NVSR 2008), Savannah, Petey (NVSR 2011), and 15 year old Skyler in front.

The Miracle World of Therapy Dogs

By Janie Robertson

This is the time of year when gift-giving is on everyone's mind. Let me tell you about a gift that keeps on giving – not only to others, but the blessings of the gift come back to you many times over. What is this magic gift you are wondering? It is the gift of sharing your wonderful Shelties through therapy dog visits.

Imagine this: You are a mom sitting in a hospital room by the bedside of your sick child who is frightened, crying, and wanting to go home. Then you hear a light “tap, tap, tap” on the door and a voice asks, “May we come in to visit for a few minutes?” In walks someone you don't know, but as you glance down, you see a little Sheltie trotting into the room at the end of a leash. All of a sudden your child stops crying and with big eyes and a happy smile says, “Mommy, look! A doggie has come to see me!”

Or, imagine that you are sitting by the bedside of a loved one in hospice care who is nearing the end of life. Your heart is aching. Then you hear a “tap, tap, tap” on the door and in walks a smiling stranger who asks, “Would you like some company for a few minutes?” As you start to look up, something closer to the floor catches your attention and, glancing down, you find yourself looking into the beautiful, sweet eyes of a Sheltie. And for just a little while, as you hold this warm bundle in your arms, you are comforted and your pain is lightened.

Or, imagine you are in a nursing home, alone and afraid. You have no family nearby and each day seems like an eternity. But, you know that today is when the therapy dog comes to visit and her owner always lets her curl up beside you on the bed while the three of you visit. And just then you hear the welcome “tap, tap, tap” on the door. They are here!



Or, imagine that your child comes home from school every day, crying because she is afraid of reading in front of her classmates. Sometimes they laugh at her when she stumbles over a word. Then one day she brings a permission slip from her teacher asking if she can participate in a program called, “Read to Rover” and you see the excitement in your child’s eyes as she wants so much to do this. A few days later you visit her classroom to see what has made such a difference in her attitude about school. As you step quietly into the room, you see her sitting on a mat on the floor with a Sheltie (and the dog’s owner is nearby). The Sheltie’s head is in your child’s lap as she reads to him. She is smiling as she reads and stops to show pictures in the book to him. Now the mom understands.

These are all real examples of how therapy dogs affect the lives of people in need of a special touch. My husband Al and I have eight shelties – six are nationally registered therapy dogs and two more are in training. This has become our passion in life, and we have experienced miracles as we have visited in hospitals, nursing homes, assisted living facilities, and wherever we are invited. Let me share a few experiences with you. (For confidentiality and HIPPA laws, no names of persons or facilities are given.)

Al was visiting in a palliative care department with Savannah (our only tri-color Sheltie) and asked the supervisor if there was any particular patient who would like to see a therapy dog. She immediately gave a room number to him and explained that the patient was in the end stage of life and that her young son (early 20’s) was sitting by his mom’s bed, along with a hospice nurse. Al tapped on the door, asked if he and Savannah could come in, and as he walked in, the young man looked down and, with tears in his eyes, told Al the following story. He said, “When I was growing up, my family raised Shelties. My mom had a favorite Sheltie and everyone knew that she was Mom’s dog. She was a tri-color and her name was Savannah.” By then, Al and the hospice nurse were crying as well. Al asked if he could put Savannah on the bed with his mom, and the son wanted that very much. So, while Al and the young man watched,

Savannah curled up close to his mom.

On another visit to a palliative care department, we were asked to visit a room where the son (in his 40’s) had been taken off of life support and was expected to pass away momentarily. His mom was sitting by his bedside, waiting and watching. As we came into the room, we greeted her, talked for a moment, and then I asked her if she would like for the Shelties to be in the bed with her son. She replied that she would really appreciate that. I placed Gracie by his right side. She sniffed his arm and then placed her little head on his shoulder and eventually went to sleep in that position. Al placed Murphy (NVSR alum) at the son’s feet, and Murphy stretched out over his ankles. The supervisor came in, saw this scene, and asked the mom if she would like for her to



Murphy

take a photo of the Shelties for her. She and I both took photos with our cell phones of Gracie and Murphy on the bed with her son and emailed mine to her. She had her laptop computer with her in the room and immediately pulled it up on the larger screen. She said, “Thank you so much for doing this. His children will be so happy that the dogs came to see their dad.”

We were invited to a memorial service of a lady we had visited while she was in the hospital. Her daughter told me that the memorial was a celebration of her mom’s life and that Gracie and Misty (another



Misty

NVSR alum) would help to make it a joyous occasion. Gracie and Misty went with us to the memorial service (wearing their therapy dog vests), and many people came

up to us afterwards and expressed how much the therapy dog visit to the hospital had meant to the family. One lady said with a laugh that we had better not take our eyes off of Gracie and Misty because she would sneak them out and keep them.

We have dozens of similar experiences. Many leave us in tears, but all of them also bring joy. Often it is the family of a patient that needs the therapy dog



visit. Sometimes it is the staff that works in such a stressful job. We are continually amazed at how the Shelties seem to know who needs to see them. People stop us in hallways of hospitals and tell us how much they appreciate what we are doing. We always tell them that the blessing we experience when we see how much the dogs mean to others is all the thanks we could ever want.

There are many studies that have been done showing the benefits of therapy dog visits. Blood pressure is lowered, respiration rates are lowered, and stress levels drop. We often have medical students shadow our visits to experience for themselves the miracles these dogs bring into a room. Therapy dogs are now being invited to come to airports to calm nervous flyers, to visit the military in VA hospitals, for stress days during exams at universities, after disasters to comfort the victims, and the list goes on and on. Unfortunately, there are more requests than there are therapy dog teams to fulfill the requests.

Lest you think that all of the visits involve sad situations, we have just as many fun visits. We have participated in fashion shows (the dogs, not us), Halloween costume parades, Christmas parades, events like Pet Expo, Strawberry Faire, luncheons (without the four legged ones), and get-togethers with other therapy dog teams. Belonging to a local group of therapy dog teams gives you the opportunity to meet many other people and dogs who love doing therapy visits. Our therapy dog friends and our NVSR friends are so similar in their kindness, compassion, and love for giving of themselves for others' benefits (human or furry.) When our Shelties see us getting together leashes, therapy dog vests, and identification cards, they all crowd around, barking and leaping, anxious to see which ones will be going on today's visit.

I encourage you to consider becoming involved in therapy dog visits. Information about how to do this is readily available on the internet or I would be happy to answer any questions you might have. Al and I are testers/observers with a national registry and recently had



Ruffy

the pleasure of testing and observing Brian Marks, NVSR Treasurer, with his Sheltie, Ruffy. They both did a great job and Brian is looking forward to visiting some facilities in his town.



Brian & Ruffy

Keep in mind, however, that this isn't for everyone or everyone's Sheltie. It can be very heart-wrenching, emotional, and difficult at times. You may be seeing people on a day that they have received bad news about themselves or their loved ones. You may see staff that is dealing with an extremely stressful day. You may be the one ray of sunshine they have seen all day. For some that is a heavy burden. Only you can determine if this is the right thing for you and your dog. If you decide "yes," the rewards are immeasurable. But, there is no shame in deciding "no." You are blessed either way – just to have this beautiful creature in your life.

If you'd like more information about how your Sheltie can become a therapy and/or reading assistance dog, please contact Janie at sheltiefamily@comcast.net or look at the Therapy Dogs International website: www.tdi-dog.org.



Gracie, Murphy, Kayla, and Misty wear their Halloween costumes to visit the hospital.



The Saga of Sweet Sadie Mae

By Mary Klein



This September, I was asked to foster an almost 8-year-old dog named Sadie - Sparky's mom. (He's a deaf puppy taken in by NVSR in the spring.) The breeder was now breeding smaller Shelties and didn't want Sadie or male Charlie, which

NVSR also took. Little did I know the adventure that would follow.

When we arrived to meet Sadie, our car was laden with our dog Joey and our vacation stuff. Both Charlie and Sadie were extremely frightened dogs, looking for places to hide. We couldn't coax Sadie out of her corner and finally had to carry her shaking to the car. She was car sick before we got home. I learned that her full name is Sadie Mae, and her birthday is in October. I also learned she had never eaten from a bowl, preferring food thrown on the floor, never wore a collar or walked on a leash, shied from toys, had never seen steps, and just wanted to hide in a corner of her crate. She was not housetrained, and she went into survival mode and refused to eliminate. It took days before she would function even a bit normally.

On the way to the vet ... car sick again! We carried her in - she was too terrified to walk. We were shocked to learn that several of Sadie Mae's mammary glands were most likely cancerous. Not only did she need a hysterectomy but also a mastectomy. This was super shocking to me, since I had just finished recuperating from my breast cancer. We shared a common bond.

The vet did the total mastectomy and spay in one surgery, but Sadie Mae did not have enough skin to allow for adequate drainage. She had to stay at the clinic through the weekend. We went to see her and realized why: she had 50 incisions in her abdomen and was not a pretty sight. When she came home, she needed plenty of care, rest, wearing her "collar of shame," and weeks for recovery. She also developed an area of skin that died and peeled off. When she finally had a fecal test, we learned she also had hookworms. I thought, "what next?" and then some good news. The lab report on her surgical tissue showed she did have cancer, but it was caught early, and Sadie Mae had a good prognosis!



Sadie recovering from surgery

Over the following weeks, we worked on socializing Sadie Mae. The kitchen corner became her favorite spot and she watched EVERYTHING. She had three "safe" spots set up in our house. She started to follow hand signals and move from one spot to another. When our friends visited, she got used to seeing other people and accepting treats from them. She learned to eat from a bowl with people in the room but she still remained very timid.

Outdoors, NVSR volunteers helped with Sadie Mae's leash training. It took two people, one to try to walk her and one to prevent her from bolting back to the house. At first she cowered and shook, and we would carry her back (we called it "resetting") to have her try walking. She eventually learned to walk with no "resets!"

After recovering from her major surgery, Sadie Mae then needed to get her teeth cleaned. We figured out how to conquer her car sickness, and she actually appeared to enjoy her car rides. More good news was that even though she had bad gums and worn down teeth, her mouth was okay. Once she recovered from her teeth cleaning and her strength was back, we realized that our house, tiny yard, and 17-year-old Sheltie weren't the best for her now. She needed to move to another foster home so she could continue to blossom. She's with a new foster home now, learning even more about how to be a "normal" dog.

Sadie Mae's adventure took her through life threatening hurdles and many new people and surroundings. I am proud to be an NVSR volunteer, having fostered and learned from sweet Sadie Mae. NVSR helped with funding all her medical expenses which were over \$1000, but it gave her a new life. Over her 10 weeks in foster care with us, she lost several pounds to become a svelte girl, she learned to respond to her name, to begin walking on a leash, to walk up and down stairs, to eat out of a bowl, to like car rides, and to begin to trust humans. She is indeed a Sheltie; a quick learner and survivor.



Ode to Sadie Mae

*Sweet Sadie Mae with your big brown eyes;
We were so blessed to have you enter our lives.
You've been through so much, we are so glad
NVSR rescued you from a kennel that was bad.
Hoping you'll find a forever home soon;
With a good companion, and yard with lots of room!*



Volunteer Spotlight: The Trice Family

By Cindy Foreso

Karin Trice adopted Player from NVSR in 2005. Six years later, she signed up as a volunteer. The following year she and husband Holt saw a plea for a foster home for incoming 11-year-old Cody, who had serious knee issues and needed a single level foster home. Both of Cody's knees often "popped" out, got stuck in that painful position, and rubbed painfully bone on bone. They decided to try fostering. Cody arrived at the Trice house on the same day that Karin found out that she was expecting their first child - a happy day for all.



Cody

Karen and Holt, Homer the house rabbit, and Player, now diagnosed with liver cancer, all welcomed Cody. NVSR funded physical therapy for Cody at the Veterinary Referral & Critical Care Clinic in Richmond. Twice a week, Cody walked on an underwater treadmill and got cold laser treatments to reduce joint inflammation and pain. Medication helped build and maintain cartilage in his knees. At home, Karin and Holt helped him do exercises. All of this took a great deal of time – Karin and Holt drove 30 minutes to drop off Cody at the clinic, then over an hour in the opposite direction to their offices; the evening was the reverse!



Cody & Karin

In fall 2012, Cody "graduated" from physical therapy and was able to walk ½ mile slowly with Karin. This was a big accomplishment; prior to physical therapy, Cody could hobble only a short way.

Before long his condition deteriorated; in February 2013, it was back to therapy. By this time we knew that Cody could never be adopted so he was placed in NVSR's Permanent Foster Program. The Trices became his permanent foster family so he could stay where he enjoyed so much love. This was a huge undertaking for a couple with a baby on the way!

By June 2013, physical therapy became too difficult for Cody. He could no longer take his walks; he couldn't control his back legs due to spinal cord degeneration. Karin or Holt had to hold him up while he relieved himself, then clean him. Cody continued

to be alert, upbeat and loving. At the same time, he needed to be with Karin as much as possible. But his body was giving out. He still liked to sit by the door



Player & Cody

watching people walk by and barking at the squirrels and birds. He continued to try to play with Player. When his quality of life continued to deteriorate, Cody went to the Rainbow Bridge on November 3, 2013.

The Trices never complained about Cody's therapy and care – in fact, they plan to foster again but want to concentrate on Player and Holt Jr. for now. (They also lost Homer, their 13-year-old rabbit earlier this year.) When they think of Cody, they remember Cody walking smoothly or stiffly, depending on the day, into the front room to greet his family - tail wagging like crazy - and he would kiss Karin's nose gently about 100 times. They remember the day they brought home their newborn Holt Jr. Cody immediately sniffed him and wagged his tail – Cody designated himself guardian for the baby, sitting at the nursery door while he napped. They loved pulling Cody around the neighborhood on his wooden cart (made by volunteers Mary and Everett Mounts) holding his head high, barking at squirrels, and loving all the attention.

Here's what Karin said after Cody passed away: "He had so much perseverance, happiness, thankfulness, and joy in life given his ailments. He was truly a gentle spirit and a fighter at the same time. I went for a run this morning and he "ran" with me in my head - his legs straight and pain free. I talked to him and pictured him on his blue NVSR leash next to me. This is how I want to remember him."

Because of the selfless dedication, love and care of the Trice family, Cody's life was extended by nearly two years. And Cody gave as he received: he provided the Trices with lots of love and kisses. Thank you, Karin, Holt, Holt Jr., and Player for loving Cody and making his last years his best years!



The Trice Family



Sally's Journey to Health

By Donna Martin



Sally at Intake

Sally came to NVSR at the end of August in very bad shape having been hit by a car. She had been found by a kind person and taken to a vet clinic in Southwest Virginia.

Rescue volunteers there contacted NVSR, and we agreed to take her. Sally had a concussion with blindness and hearing loss, a result of the swelling in her brain. Her right eye had a detached retina. She also had damage to her left rear leg, a torn CCL along with bumps and bruises. She had been out in the wild for quite some time - skinny, matted and covered in fleas and ticks. When I met her, my heart sank with the thought of not being able to save her. She could barely walk on her own and she trembled with pain even while she slept. Once we got Sally home, we realized she was a lot older than we originally thought, meaning that if we pulled her through she would be in long term foster care probably for the rest of her life.

It took us several days to get Sally to eat and take her meds willingly. I used all my tricks plus some borrowed ones before we hit on the right item to hide her meds in. She was taking so many meds spaced out during the day that she just spit them out or would not eat if she thought they were hidden in her food. Canned pink salmon is her favorite now!

Once Sally started eating and taking her meds, she started to feel more alive and aware. Each day we noticed tiny improvements that indicated she was healing from the concussion. First was when she actually held her head up in her crate and took in her surroundings. Then she started to change her position - rather than flat on her side she could curl up, which we all know is comforting. And then one day we saw her grooming herself! This was the best improvement yet, since Sally was so weak she could not make it out of her crate to pee; her hind quarter muscles were severely atrophied. She would try ... it's just that the effort and time it took her to stand made her lose her urine. Sally is a very tough lady. After three weeks, she was pretty well over the concussion. She had regained some sight in her right eye and was able to hear us say her name. She was now ready to have the surgery on her knee that was causing her so much pain.

Sally had repair work done on her knee and is now able to walk again without so much pain. Her weight has slowly crept up, and her coat is



coming in nicely. Sally had some of her coat shaved for x-rays early on and then more taken off for the surgery. After many weeks of TLC she no longer trembles when she walks, and she is now able to be off leash in the back yard; free to explore again. However, she still needs supervision since she cannot see out of her right eye and the left has limited (shades) vision.

Last week I knew just how far she had come when we heard a strange rustling sound coming from where she was exploring in the house. Sally had gotten into a rubbish can and had found a small chocolate candy wrapper. It was a wonderful moment for her and us.



Sally at Present

Sally has come a long way. She has very simple needs and each one I fulfill brings a smile to my face. She is truly a life saved by NVSR. We need a permanent foster home for Sally where she can live out her life in a quiet, safe place. If you're interested in giving Sally a home, please let us know at foster@nvsr.org.

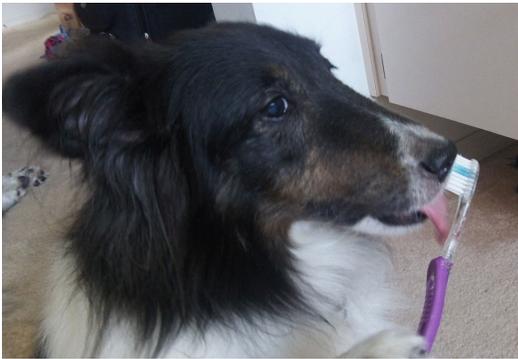
Why is your donation important? Average basic medical expenses for ONE SHELTY RESCUED:

Physical Examination	\$35-\$50
Spay or Neuter	\$225-\$325
Heartworm, Lyme, etc., blood Tests	\$50-\$100
Fecal Test	\$17-\$30
Vaccinations	\$17-\$75 or more
TOTAL COST	\$344-\$580

The above total does not include treatment for heartworm-positive dogs (average cost can be \$800) or kennel cough treatment (average cost \$100). Unless a dog comes in with vet records showing current vaccinations and no apparent problems, he or she gets a complete physical exam with appropriate vaccines and tests. Poor dental health is common and often must be treated with a minimum dental cleaning and scaling plus extractions, if needed (average cost is \$300).

Some of our senior and/or ill dogs never leave us, but are kept in our hospice program where they receive all appropriate treatment and loving care until they pass away. In addition, we may get younger dogs that need extraordinary care, and the cost for surgery or treatment can be \$4,000 or more.

Average vet cost per Sheltie rescued so far in 2013 is \$714. The average adoption fee collected so far this year is \$266. We have to make up the difference with your generosity. Thank you very much for helping.



Do I Really Need to Brush My Dog's Teeth?

By Lisa Fox

Q: Why do I need to brush my dog's teeth?

A: Failure to brush a dog's teeth daily will result in more frequent need for expensive professional dental cleanings and possibly extractions. A few minutes each night spent on brushing can greatly prolong the time between cleanings. Once or twice a week doesn't do it—plaque forms in 24 hours.

Q: Can't I give the dog some bones or hard chews instead of brushing his teeth?

A: No, sorry. Natural bones, nylon bones, cow hooves, antlers, bully sticks, and ice cubes are the most frequent causes of broken chewing teeth. Non-toxic plastic or rubber chews can satisfy chewing urges, massage gums, and chip away a bit of plaque. But neither hard nor soft chews are substitutes for brushing teeth. (Buy chews made in the U.S. and avoid questionable products made in China.)

Q: Can I use impregnated fabric swabs to clean his teeth instead of a brush?

A: Fabric swabs (e.g., Dr. Foster & Smith Dental Clens Pads) and finger brushes do not clean teeth nearly as effectively as a toothbrush. But dogs that resist brushes will often tolerate the pads and finger brushes.

Q: Do I have to use doggie toothpaste? Why not human toothpaste?

A: Never use human toothpaste on a dog; it contains chemicals that shouldn't be swallowed. Dogs like chicken-flavored or mint-flavored doggie paste, but it's the brushing that does the work, not the paste. You can use a baking soda paste. Be sure to push the paste down in the bristles before you brush.

Q Why do dogs need professional dental cleanings done by a vet?

A: Plaque and tartar buildup at and under the gum line enables growth of bacteria under the gums. Most dogs that have bad breath also have gingivitis – swollen and

inflamed gums, usually bright red or purple, that bleed easily. Unchecked, these bacterial infections in the gums slowly destroy the ligament and bony structures that support the teeth (periodontitis). Because of the ample blood supply to the gums, infections in the mouth can also poison the dog systemically, potentially causing disease of the heart, kidneys, and/or liver.

Q: I hate having my dog put under anesthesia for dental cleanings by my vet. Is this really necessary?

A: Dental cleanings done without anesthesia are incomplete, inadequate, cosmetic only, potentially dangerous, and provide little real benefit. The critical area under the dog's gums is cleaned at the vet's office with sterile instruments and a fine mist of water, which washes the bacteria out of the dog's mouth. Ultrasonic tools available to the technician are fast and accurate but wouldn't be tolerated by a conscious dog. There is tremendous variation in the rate at which different Shelties form plaque and tartar, so some dogs need cleanings much more often than others.

Q: My groomer offers to use a scaler on my dog's teeth instead. Does this work?

A: No. While there are many groomers who may be capable of removing some dental calculus from a dog's teeth, this scaling doesn't get to the area under the gums that causes more serious problems. Only a veterinarian can recognize, diagnose, and treat conditions like fractured teeth or oral cancer. If periodontal disease is advanced, x-rays will be needed to evaluate the supporting structures of the teeth.

Q: Are there any good dental chews on the market that are safe and effective in reducing plaque?

A: Dental treats that have the registered Seal of the Veterinary Oral Health Council (VOHC) are OK. Costco carries VOHC dental bones called "Check Ups." Give only ½ bone per day. Sorry, these are not a substitute for brushing. But they do help.

Q: How about additives to a dog's drinking water? Do they work?

A: Additives like "Biotene Veterinarian Drinking Water Additive" or "Dog Essential Healthymouth Antiplaque Water Additive" (VOHC seal) may help reduce plaque. These two are considered to be safe, but there are other additives on the market that aren't so safe. Avoid any that contain xylitol. Even the best ones aren't a substitute for brushing or dental cleanings. They may, however, prolong intervals between cleanings somewhat when used in conjunction with brushing. If you decide to try the additives, remember to add some each time you refill the water bowl to maintain the right ratio of additive to water.



Keep Your Pets Safe During the Holidays

By Sharon Daussin

Don't let Lassie or Laddie fall prey to the special holiday hazards. You're busy with extra duties, travel, guests, and it's easy to overlook dangers that may be very serious for your pets. Keep handy the phone number of your vet, the closest 24 hour emergency vet, and the Poison Control Center. Here are some tips to help ensure you and your pets have a Happy Holiday Season:

Christmas Trees

Oh, Christmas Tree, Oh, Christmas Tree, How much you tempt my puppy!

- Make sure your pet cannot get to the water in the tree stand. The stagnant water is a breeding ground for bacteria, and pine sap can be lethal if ingested.
- Some decorations can be choking hazards or cause gastrointestinal blockages, so hang these out of reach of your pet.
- The tree's needles, tinsel, ribbon, angel hair, ornament hooks, edible decorations (strung popcorn, candy canes in wrappers) also pose risks which can be life threatening.
- Keep glass ornaments out of reach; if they break they can cut pets' feet and mouth.
- Keep electrical cords out of reach; unplug tree lights and electric candles when you're not around.

Holiday Food Risks

- Tell your guests not to feed anything to your pets. Put out small bowls of kibble to be given as treats.
- Keep pets away from unattended plates of food; secure lids of garbage cans inside and outside.
- Chocolate can cause vomiting, diarrhea, hyperactivity, increased heart rate, and seizures.
- Candy and gum containing the sweetener xylitol can cause serious organ failure and even death.
- Alcohol can produce coma in a pet, which may result in respiratory failure.
- Bones from meat or poultry can splinter and cause blockages.
- Fatty, spicy, and greasy foods can cause pancreatitis, which can be a serious medical emergency.
- Raw bread dough, if eaten, produces abdominal pain and bloating as it rises in the stomach, sometimes requiring emergency surgery.
- Grapes, raisins, and macadamia nuts can cause digestive upset, organ failure, and even death.

Human Medications

- Topping ASPCA's Top Pet Toxins of 2012 is prescription human medication. Pills are dropped and, before anyone knows it, they are eaten.
- Many over-the-counter human medications can also be life threatening if ingested.
- Keep all medications out of reach of your pets. And, insist your guests do the same.

Holiday plants

- Holiday plants such as poinsettias, holly, and mistletoe berries can cause vomiting, nausea, and diarrhea.
- For cats, one of the most toxic plants is the common lily. Eating even a small amount can cause kidney and/or liver failure.

Treats and Pet Toys

- Reject toys with small parts that can be chewed off.
- Check for questionable ingredients, artificial colors, and empty calories in commercial pet treats.
- Never feed jerky treats (or any treats) made in China.
- Consider homemade treats using simple, nutritious recipes provided in *The Sheltie Spin*.

Precautions When Welcoming Guests

- Keep your pet on a leash or in a separate room until all guests have arrived. Many pets just aren't party animals.
- White noise machines can mask the sounds of loud parties and firecrackers that frighten some pets.

Holiday Travel with Your Pet

- Always secure your pet in a sturdy crate or use a tested pet car harness.
- Make sure pet's tags have correct contact info including your cell phone number.
- Note local animal control, vet and emergency vet phone numbers at your final destination.



*Zoey and Bentley Hendrix
wish you a happy
and safe holiday.
Santa does, too!*



Pancreatitis: a Serious and Life-Threatening Illness

By Jessica Frost-Ballas and Merlin



Merlin

I adopted my first foster Sheltie, Merlin, in 2006. He's always been a quirky dog with a huge appetite and an iron stomach. Before being diagnosed with hypothyroidism in early 2007, he ate anything he could get his paws on. We learned the typical "new-dog owner" lessons...lids on trash cans, no food on the coffee table...but he took it to new heights. A favorite snack was a brand new paper towel or napkin, fresh right off the roll. Quirky dog...

Merlin went on thyroid supplementation, and his insatiable appetite decreased. However, he would still eat just about anything that he found, so we always made sure he didn't get into anything in the yard or around the house. In 2009 we adopted Archimedes. He was even faster at finding food, and we couldn't unload groceries and leave bags on the floor while we made a second trip. He'd rip open a bag and devour half a package of something before we got back. We had yet to find out that the combination of their behaviors could be devastatingly dangerous.



Archimedes & Merlin

In September 2009 I came home on a Friday afternoon and realized that Archimedes had found a block of suet in my bird food supplies. Merlin had never gone near these supplies, so I was sure Archimedes was the culprit. Later that evening Archimedes vomited so I thought the mystery was solved. Over the weekend Merlin seemed to be having some constipation issues but he wasn't always regular so we didn't think too much of it. Monday evening, Merlin vomited. He seemed fine afterwards so we cleaned up and went to sleep. Then he vomited again and seemed normal afterward so we decided to see the vet in the morning. Overnight he vomited twice more. In the morning, he was lethargic and his eyes were dull. We were at

the vet in minutes.

Our vet asked if Merlin had gotten into anything. I had forgotten about the suet so it wasn't mentioned. She ran tests and then asked if he had eaten anything rich or fatty Sunday or Monday. I remembered the suet and mentioned that our other dog had found it on Friday but vomited shortly after, so I thought that Merlin hadn't gotten any. It turns out that they had drawn blood and it was full of fat (hyperlipidemia); they immediately suspected acute pancreatitis caused by a sudden intake of a very fatty substance...the block of bird suet. Archimedes probably found it, ripped open the packaging, got a few bites, but Merlin stole it and ate the rest. The vet is still not sure how Merlin went over 36 hours without showing any signs of distress.

I will never forget the look on the vet's face...it's one I never want to see again. I could tell in that moment that she was thinking that there was a strong possibility that he might not make it. Unfortunately, there is no miracle cure for pancreatitis. The immediate concern was to keep him hydrated and control his pain. Everything else was up to him. They immediately began giving Merlin fluids and pain medication intravenously. He spent all day Tuesday at the vet. They wouldn't release him to



Merlin receiving IV fluids

come home overnight, but I didn't want him staying in the clinic alone overnight so we transferred him to the emergency vet for supervised overnight care. (This is a good thing to do if your dog needs overnight monitoring.) On Wednesday morning we took him back to the vet for eight more hours. By evening he was well enough to come home for the night, but he went back to the vet Thursday. He finally came home for good Thursday evening. For the next few days he ate very small, bland meals (chicken and rice) and went back to the vet twice more to confirm that everything was getting back to normal. Now, four years later, Merlin is settling into his golden years and seems to have no lasting side effects, but this could have ended very differently.



While we would have paid anything to help him, it's also important to note that this wasn't a cheap adventure. Over the 48 hours we spent almost \$1500 with an additional \$350 in testing afterwards.

Our experience was obviously extreme, as you wouldn't give your dog an entire block of bird suet; however, the vet told us that acute pancreatitis can be brought on by only a tablespoon of suet or something equally fatty. Merlin's iron stomach obviously kept him from getting sick earlier in the weekend (and getting treatment sooner!) but it also must have saved him because that was a lot of rendered fat for a 24 pound Sheltie! Also, once a dog has had pancreatitis, he or she is prone to recurring attacks.

So, during this holiday season – or whenever - if your dog begs for that piece of bacon or leftover turkey, remember Merlin's story and give him a green bean or carrot instead! And in case you're wondering, you can substitute gelatin-based bird seed cakes for suet blocks...the birds don't seem to care and it may give you a little more peace of mind.

You can learn more about preventing and treating pancreatitis online: www.marvistavet.com.



**GAM Printers of Sterling, Virginia,
and the Grant Family dedicate this
issue of the Sheltie Spin
in memory of
Cookie, Spirit and Lynus
and the other Shelties who have
passed away.**



A Prayer for Dogs

By Janice Wolf

Dear Lord, as we start each day,
There's just one gift for which I pray.
Please watch over all dogs everywhere
And bless them with someone to care.
Watch over the pups with plenty to eat
And hungry strays out on the street,
Those getting treats each time they yap
And those that struggle for every scrap.
Those that sleep on a nice soft bed,
Those with hard ground under their head,
Those who play with girls and boys,
And those that never had any toys.
Those kept clipped and brushed and clean
And scruffy ones that don't smell too keen.
Those who get to ride in cars
And those that sit behind cage bars.
Those that flunk obedience school,
Dig up the yard, snore and drool,
Chew up your stuff, chase the cat,
And still they're loved in spite of that.
And those that are as good as gold
But left out to shiver in the cold,
Chained up and forgotten there
They long for a warm home to share.
Please God, as we end each night,
Help more people do what's right
For each dog they meet, to do their best
And send your comfort to all the rest.



Holiday Shopping for the Shelties!

Here are some great ideas for holiday gifts that will also help NVSR.



The 2014 NVSR Calendar, of course! 12 months of gorgeous Shelties. We still have them available. \$18 plus \$1.50 for postage.



Beautiful Sheltie angel ornaments. Lots of sweats, shirts, totebags – and our new Sheltie blanket!

Purchase on the NVSR website www.nvsr.org or write to shop@nvsr.org.

Do your holiday online shopping through the iGive.com or GoodSearch.com portals and help NVSR that way. Just designate NVSR as your charity when you sign in. No cost to you!!

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**Thanks also to the many volunteers who help transport,
 foster, and contribute their time to help the Shelties
 who are brought to or found by NVSR.**

Newsletter submissions to sheltiespin@nvsr.org

Website www.nvsr.org • E-Mail: shelties@nvsr.org

Note our new address

Northern Virginia Sheltie Rescue
 977 Seminole Trail, PMB 314
 Charlottesville VA 22901
 703-912-4002

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 977 Seminole Trail, PMB 314
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I would like to make a donation to the Northern Virginia Sheltie Rescue

Name _____

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\$25 \$50 \$75 \$100 Other \$ _____

Make checks payable to Northern Virginia Sheltie Rescue. Mail to Treasurer, NVSR, 977 Seminole Trail, PMB 314, Charlottesville VA 22901

Northern Virginia Sheltie Rescue, Inc., is a nonprofit, 501(c)(3), tax-exempt corporation. A financial statement is available upon request from the Commonwealth of Virginia Division of Consumer Affairs, P.O. Box 1163, Richmond, VA 23218-1163.

NVSR MISSION STATEMENT

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.