



The Sheltie Spin

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

Winter 2025



Christmas Comes All Year for NVSR Shelties...

These Shelties were rescued in 2025

<i>Espo</i>	<i>Nala</i>
<i>Tin</i>	<i>Max</i>
<i>Sandy</i>	<i>Mindy</i>
<i>Max</i>	<i>Daisy</i>
<i>Russ</i>	<i>Dexter</i>
<i>Luna</i>	<i>Shiloh</i>
<i>Izzy</i>	<i>Rex</i>
<i>Edison</i>	<i>Logan</i>
<i>Bart</i>	<i>Crystal</i>
<i>Sheldon</i>	<i>Danny</i>
<i>Rocket</i>	<i>Kayla</i>
<i>Diamond</i>	<i>Sassy</i>
<i>Sky</i>	<i>Willow</i>
<i>Striker</i>	<i>Taffy</i>
<i>Aurora</i>	<i>Findley</i>
<i>Sadie</i>	<i>Lola</i>
<i>Bentley</i>	

Thank you!

Our Shelties (and Board of Directors) are grateful to our volunteers for transporting, fostering, visiting potential adopters, and helping with a myriad of other tasks. Your dedication over the past 25 years has given NVSR a national reputation that we are very proud of! And we are thankful for our generous donors. Your gift may have been large or small, or you helped by purchasing an NVSR calendar. Every gift matters, and we want you to know that together we changed the lives of each of these dogs.

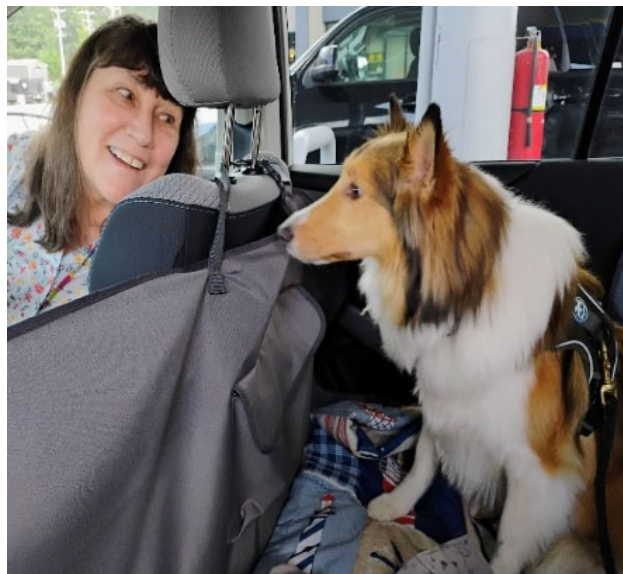


Travels with Max- International Travel Tips

By Wes Marks

Max certainly got more than he bargained for when he was shopping for his new parents. He's a homebody by nature; a laid-back kinda guy that is happy just to lounge around all day and go on several walks in his neighborhood each day. Well, he was in for a surprise when we met and decided to rescue each other. Besides becoming a boat dog, hitting most every brewery, restaurant, and store that welcomes pets along the shores of Delaware and Maryland, Max became an international traveler this fall.

Max's secret for travelling is just to be ready for anything. He rides in a back seat hammock, lined with his favorite blanket, and he gets the whole back seat to stretch out as needed. He always has his harness and restraint on when in the car. His water bowl and bottled water are nearby, and he gets a chance to drink and a walk every time we stop for gas or our own potty breaks. We try not to feed him much on travel days, and frequent small treats seem to keep him happy until dinner time. Max is a good traveler and sleeps most of the time while we are driving. The only time we are reminded he's with us is when he occasionally gets up, stretches, looks around, and then falls off to snooze land again.



Max's safe place in the car. Seatbelt harness, hammock pet guard, and of course, his favorite blanket – he gets the whole back seat to himself.

Most of our travels have been fairly local, but in September, we took Max on a 2-week adventure to Canada, the Adirondacks, and Connecticut. This trip required a bit more planning than simply jumping in the Jeep and heading to the beach. Besides being safe, there are, of course, legal things you need to do to cross borders with a dog. The notes below are specific to taking a dog across the land border to Canada, but they should also work just as well when traveling south to Mexico or even flying.

About 30 days before you travel, go to <https://www.cdc.gov/importation/dogs/rabies-free-low-risk-countries.html> and <https://www.cdc.gov/importation/dogs/dog-import-form-instructions.html> and apply for your CDC Dog Import Form. This is a new requirement effective Aug 1, 2025, and replaces the old USDA Dog Import Form.

Once you get to the border, crossing over to Canada is pretty simple; you need a current rabies certificate signed by a vet (the rabies tag won't suffice as proof of the vaccination for crossing the



border), and the dog must appear healthy. Its travel accommodations must meet humane transportation requirements.



*Guarding the cabin,
Big Moose Lake in the Adirondacks*

A note from the Canadian border authority: *“A hard copy of all required original documentation may be requested during the inspection, and the importer must be able to provide such records if asked. As such, it is strongly recommended to travel with a physical original copy of all required documentation. The owner must be the importer of the dog and be able to provide documentation that clearly demonstrates they own the dog and obtained ownership prior to it entering Canada upon request.* I used my adoption contract to prove ownership, and it worked fine.

Visit <https://inspection.canada.ca/en/importing-food-plants-animals/pets> for specifics.

Returning to the US, things are a bit different, and, as noted above, a bit more paperwork is required.

As long as you have the rabies certificate, CDC Import Form, Microchip documentation, and proof of ownership ready, the process will go smoothly. We just handed everything to the border agent along with our passports.

With all the prep work we did, we were really disappointed to clear customs so easily going north. The Canadian border guard asked one question: Did we have anything with us that we were going to leave in Canada? Our answer was no, and we were sent on our way.

Coming back to the US, we were sure we'd need to show all of the new paperwork. Still, nope, the crossing guard asked about booze, vegetables, cash, and other purchases, and waved us through easily. We called her attention to Max, who was snoozing in the back seat, and she just said "That's fine", and sent us on our way.

We all had a good time, and it was nice to spend time with Max in the great outdoors – certainly worth the effort. Don't assume you'll get the two very pleasant border guards we did, and make sure you have everything you need handy.



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



Five Little Kennel Dogs Find Warm Welcomes in NVSR

Lisa Fox

In early August of 2025, NVSR was part of another multi-state Sheltie Rescue effort, which took in 22 dogs from a seriously ill breeder who could no longer care for them. NVSR accepted five of the small, mostly Sheltie-Papillon mixes. Each dog was placed with foster parents responsible for housetraining, leash training, and crate training the dog and getting the pup neutered, caught up on tests, and properly vaccinated. For four of the five dogs, socialization was a serious challenge since they had experienced very little human contact. Here are their stories:

Mindy--The tiniest and only well-socialized dog of the group, this little tri quickly endeared herself to everyone who met her. She was adopted by a friend of her foster parents. Yea, Mindy!

Shiloh--At the other end of the socialization spectrum is beautiful sable Shiloh, who, after nearly four months, has warmed only modestly to her foster parents and still resists leash training and all handling. She does, however, love her foster home's large fenced yard and will interact with the resident Shelties. Only the humans are scary.

Daisy--Adorable little reddish sable Daisy quickly claimed her foster mom's heart, but she caused her endless worry with her refusals to eat and her severe separation anxiety. When foster mom had to depart to deal with a family matter, Daisy moved to a new foster mom. After regressing a bit, progress on eating, housetraining, and leash training is slowly improving once again.

Rex—Likely a littermate of Daisy's, Rex was a little braver than his sister and adapted faster to the idea of becoming a house dog. Once his vetting and housetraining were complete, Rex became the first of the five to get adopted to a family with a well-socialized Sheltie who serves as a model for Rex.

Dexter—A rare color-headed white arrived at his foster home completely shut down and unwilling to leave his crate. His very patient foster parents and their 16-year old senior Sheltie managed to gradually turn Dexter into an affectionate little dog who learned that humans are not as scary as he thought. He was adopted by a loving family who will keep helping his best little self shine forth in the world.



Mindy



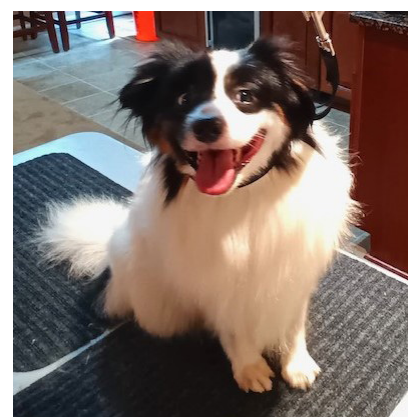
Shiloh



Rex



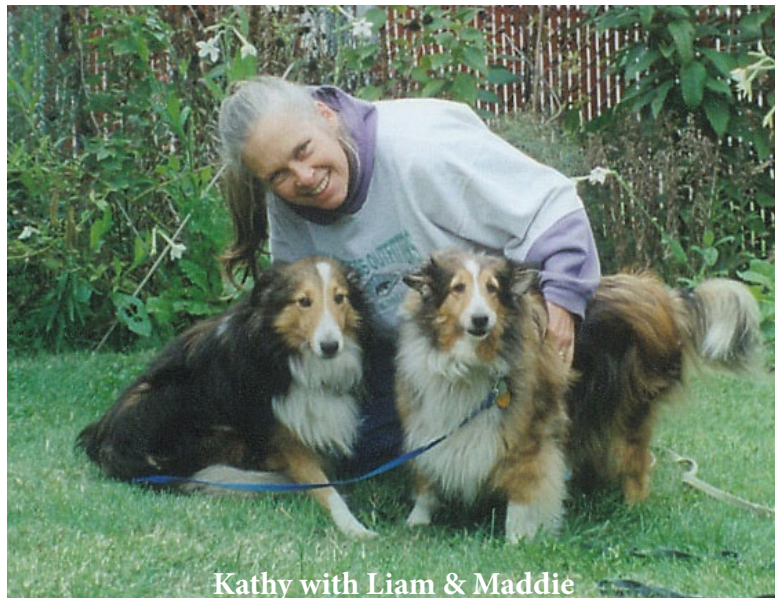
Daisy



Dexter



An Interview with Volunteer Kathy Kelly



Kathy with Liam & Maddie

How long have you been with NVSR? I can't remember, it's been so long. However, we got our first foster dog in January 2002, and I believe we had a home visit at the end of 2001 with Pat Wilson, one of the early volunteers. I have so many memories of all the people who have worked so hard and dedicated so much of their lives to helping all the Shelties we've helped.

What inspired you to become involved with the organization? I had lost my third Sheltie in 2001 and went looking for a Sheltie rescue group and found NVSR. My family got our first Sheltie, Feather, around

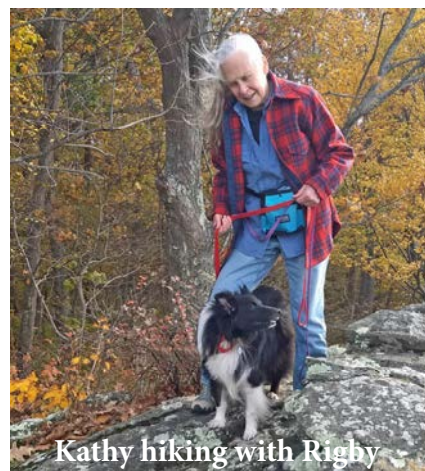
1970, and before that was Corky, a very smart taffy-colored collie mix who started it all when I was two.

What is your role? I was just fostering and transporting at the start. Liam, our sixth foster and the first one I couldn't part with, had been a backyard stud dog, living in a small pen with his son, who also came to NVSR. Since our first five fosters had each found their new homes within a few weeks, this was the first time I got to see how a dog could come from such poverty of experience and grow into their new lives. **Has your role changed over time?** Sometime in the mid-00s I started helping set up an NVSR table at adoption events and pet fairs throughout Northern Virginia. I always thought I was too shy to talk to people, but it was easy to talk about Shelties and about our Sheltie rescue. When Jean and Cary McCarty started their family and needed someone to take over, I inherited the Events Coordinator badge.

What do you enjoy most about your affiliation with NVSR? Working with such organized, dedicated, and capable people, especially our directors, has been inspiring. I knew when I started that it would be a calling for the rest of my life, because I can see and feel the need, both of the dogs who need homes and the people who adopt them, as well as those who are brokenhearted when they have to give up a member of their family.

How many dogs have you fostered or adopted in your lifetime? Aurora, our 73rd foster, was our most recent, in 2025, when NVSR received five of the Minnesota rescues. She was very fearful and withdrawn, but as she gained confidence, this smart, independent girl is enjoying life for the first time in her new home.

Any "tough" ones or uniquely rewarding stories to tell about them? Yes, we had a few challenging dogs and some faulty decisions on my part. But in the end, every dog had a happy beginning. We all have stories of a dog we thought would miss us, only to see them sitting up



Kathy hiking with Rigby

continues on page 6



in the back seat of their adopter's car, just grinning as they drive away, looking forward to the next phase. Sometimes it would take months to find the right home for a dog, but NVSR's leaders made sure the foster family was doing okay. If a foster dog just doesn't work out, they find another foster home.

How has your experience with NVSR influenced you as a dog owner today? Having so many dog people around—sharing their experiences, knowledge, happiness and heartbreaks—is worth a lot. I became a much better dog partner and caregiver because I had a chance to learn far more about veterinary care than vets ever tell you and about positive training methods. Creative, force-free training that teaches dogs to learn to think made a difference with the dogs who were making the hard transition from a life of insecurity and fear.



On a personal note...tell us something about yourself.- When I got my own first Sheltie, Halley Comet, I was building houses in NE Florida near the beach, so Halley, joined by Nimbus, came to work with me and got to spend lots of time playing while I worked. It was a good life. They both moved to Virginia with me, and life got even better when we started hiking across our beautiful landscapes together.

Kathy introducing some young Sheltie lovers to our sweet dogs at an event. Kathy shows up at each event early with our tent, banners, chairs, display boards, rug, water bowls (and treats!) stuffed into the back of her SUV. Then she does her magic as she talks to visitors of all ages.

Our Volunteers had a great time at the Alexandria Scottish Christmas Parade on December 6

Spectators at the Alexandria Scottish Christmas Parade were excited to see our NVSR volunteers and their Shelties at the Scottish Christmas Walk on December 6. We were accompanied by bagpipes and drums, many Scottish clans, lots of Scottish dogs, and much more. The Scottish Walk is a fun way to get in the holiday spirit and to enjoy the historic setting of Old Town. We walked with Potomac Valley Shetland Sheepdog Club as we showed off our Shelties to the crowds lining the sidewalks. Our Shelties, in Scottish or Christmas accents, are the most beautiful, of course, and the crowd loves them! See VisitAlexandria.com for more details and to come see us next year.





TICK-BORNE ILLNESS IN DOGS

Nancy Tisdale, NVSR President



Some of us may recall when veterinary protocols only recommended administering medication for tick prevention during the warm summer months. What happened? Did vets realize that recommending year-round administration would increase their income? No, it was the discovery that ticks can be active any time the temperature is above freezing, including mild winter days. Adult ticks are most active in the early Spring (March to mid-May) and again in the Fall (mid-August to November). Many ticks can become dormant when the temperature is below freezing, but they can flourish in your house on clothes and carpets.

Ticks are parasitic arachnids that can transmit various diseases to dogs (and humans!), including Lyme disease, Ehrlichiosis, Anaplasmosis, Rocky Mountain Spotted Fever, and Babesiosis. Less commonly known tick-borne diseases include Tularemia, Bartonellosis, and Powassan virus.

Ticks become infected by feeding on an infected host, such as a deer, bird, or rodent. They ingest the bacteria, virus, or parasite, and these pathogens multiply and accumulate in the tick's salivary glands. When a tick bites a host, it injects the saliva, which contains the pathogens. For some diseases, such as Powassan virus, the tick only needs to be attached for 15 minutes to transmit disease. Anaplasmosis and Babesiosis can be transmitted in 24-36 hours. For diseases such as Lyme and Rocky Mountain Spotted Fever, the minimum attachment time is longer. Although some ticks are associated with certain diseases, such as the black legged (deer tick) and Lyme disease, it's possible that one species of tick can carry multiple pathogens.



Symptoms of tick-borne illnesses vary with the specific disease, but common symptoms include fever, lethargy, and loss of appetite. More serious symptoms can include rash, bleeding problems, anemia, joint pain and stiffness, and kidney damage. Treatment usually involves antibiotics or antiparasitic medications.

Prevention is the key to protecting your dog and yourself from tick-borne illness. Humans can contract Alpha-Gal Syndrome, an allergy or intolerance of all red meat and some other mammalian products that results from the bite of a lone-star tick and has spread quickly along the East Coast in recent years. Conduct regular tick checks, keeping in mind the nymph form of some ticks can be smaller than this "o". Remove ticks carefully with fine-tipped tweezers, gently pulling upwards with even steady pressure, being careful not to twist or jerk, which could cause the mouth parts to break off. Avoid wooded and brushy areas with high grass and leaf litter, and try to stay in the center of wooded trails to minimize contact with vegetation. Administer monthly tick preventative year-round, not just in the warm winter months. Monitor your dog for changes in behavior, such as lethargy and joint pain, and report any changes to your vet. Have your dog tested yearly with the SNAPDx4, which tests for the most common tick-borne illnesses and heartworm disease, which is transmitted by mosquitoes.



In Memory of Bentley

Susan Hendrix



Words don't come easily to describe our boy Bentley. My husband and I adopted him in February 2009 when he was just 1.5 years old. He was a beautiful Sheltie, but so wild.

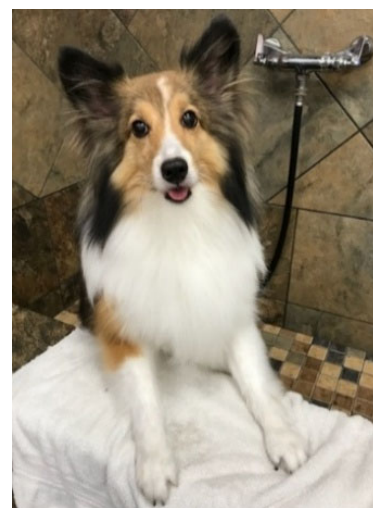
It was love at first sight, and our little Sheltie Sassafras eagerly welcomed him into our home.

Bentley spent the first six months sleeping inside his crate in our bedroom until he decided one night that our bed was much more comfortable. After that, he always had his favorite spot.

Bentley never met another dog or person he didn't like. He sailed through basic obedience, achieved his Canine Good Citizen title, became a great therapy dog, and even dabbled in agility.

In the 16 years he was with us, he shared our home with two other rescue Shelties and one crazy blue merle.

Every day was a blessing with this boy, but sadly, Bentley's health took a turn for the worse, and in March 2025, just shy of what would have been his 18th birthday, we made the painful decision to let him go. There will never be another Bentley, but we will adopt again when the time is right. See you on the other side, sweet boy.



In Memoriam

Did you know there is a page on our website called "In Memoriam"? If you would like to create a lasting tribute to one of your beloved rescued Shelties, send us a written tribute, about the length of Bentley's (or shorter) and one or two of your favorite photos, to shepherd@nvsr.org. If you've not read those already posted there, they are heartwarming, to say the least. : If you read the tributes on the memoriam page on our website and have a Sheltie you would like to include, send whatever you would like us to post about him/her and a photo to shepherd@nvsr.org. We'll make sure your tribute is added to those already there.



Order your 2026 Calendars now. Each calendar is \$22 (postage included) and will be shipped in time for Christmas. Order by emailing us at shop@nvsr.org. Each purchase supports our work and includes photos of beautiful Shelties to enjoy all year long!



Combating Dog Obesity at NVSR

Lisa Fox and Joan McGregor

About 60% of the Shelties that NVSR takes in are overweight or obese. This problem is more common among owner turn-ins than among shelter dogs, since the latter are more likely to have been strays that were on the run for a while before they found their way to NVSR. An important responsibility for our foster parents involves slimming down these overweight dogs through a good diet and exercise regimen before they are adopted.

Why is obesity such a critical problem for dogs? Excess weight dramatically shortens the life spans of our beloved dogs by causing diabetes, osteoarthritis, cardiopulmonary disease, decreased liver function, and hypertension. Overweight dogs are also more susceptible to various cancers and to an assortment of skin and hair coat problems. Their immune systems are weaker, they suffer from heat and exercise intolerance, and all surgeries are higher risk for them.

Here are some of the strategies we at NVSR use to help our foster dogs shed those extra pounds:

1. We cut back on wet or dry food and add plenty of steamed veggies to the food bowl. Some will resist the veggies at first, but just like with human toddlers, frequent exposure helps a dog acquire a taste.
2. We never free-fed our foster dogs. They get two carefully measured meals a day with only healthy treats like apple slices, baby carrots, and unbuttered unsalted popcorn. Most commercial dog treats are full of fat, sugar, and unhealthy ingredients.
3. We introduce kibble dispensers like the Magic Mushroom, IQ Treat Ball, and the Busy Buddy Kibble Nibble to encourage the foster dog to work for his food. Slow Bowls and Snuffle Mats also slow down food consumption and promote a sense of satiety.
4. We make sure our foster dogs get plenty of exercise. Exercise not only burns calories but it also turns fat into muscle and improves quality of life in many ways.

Handsome Bentley is a very recent example of a foster dog who came to NVSR with lots of extra pounds that made him seem slow-moving and lacking in energy. Here he is when he came to NVSR at 55 pounds. Here's how his foster parents turned Bentley into a playful, happy dog that appeared many years younger after just a few weeks in their care.



Bentley's Big Comeback

When Bentley arrived at NVSR, he tipped the scale at 55.6 pounds. Even accounting for his taller-than-average Sheltie frame, he was carrying far too much extra weight. Every step looked like an effort. He would waddle rather than trot, and he became winded after just a few stairs, and even the simple act of scratching an itch was nearly impossible because of the thick padding of fat around his ribs and neck.

As his foster mom, I put NVSR's standard weight-loss plan into action right away: carefully measured meals, veggie add-ins, and gentle walks that slowly lengthened as his stamina improved. Week by week, something remarkable happened. His eyes brightened. His energy



returned. His gait smoothed into a joyful trot. He rediscovered the fun of toys, yard zoomies, and climbing onto the couch for snuggles. Bentley even has new favorite games. He loves “flashlight tag” at night and proudly chases after the perfect stick he found in the woods. At NVSR’s recent Volunteer Day, he zoomed into the room to show everyone just how playful he has become.

During his first few weeks with me, I also noticed something that didn’t quite add up. Despite regular grooming every six weeks, his skin was extremely dry. It formed thick buildup along his back that I spent hours gently combing out, layer by layer. That clue, combined with his weight, led us to suspect there might be more going on than overeating.

A thorough veterinary exam gave us the answer. Bentley was diagnosed with hypothyroidism, a condition that slows metabolism and causes coat and skin issues, along with rapid weight gain. He now takes Levothyroxine 300 mcg twice daily, along with Cosequin to support his joints. We also learned that the skin and coat issues he had arrived with were not allergies after all, so he no longer needs Apoquel.

Bentley’s former family loved him and ensured he received regular veterinary care. His weight was not the result of neglect, just an underlying condition that had been difficult to detect. Now at a healthy 41 pounds, Bentley is eight years old and truly living his best life. He is proof that with the right care and a bit of detective work, a dog can reclaim both their health and their happiness.

How to Spot Hypothyroidism in Dogs

Hypothyroidism is a common but often overlooked condition in middle-aged dogs that slows metabolism and affects many systems in the body. If you notice several of these symptoms together, it’s worth discussing with your veterinarian:

- Unexplained weight gain despite a normal or reduced diet
- Low energy or reluctance to exercise
- Dry, flaky, or thickened skin
- Recurrent skin or ear infections
- Hair thinning, especially along the trunk and tail
- Sensitivity to cold or frequent seeking of warm spots
- Behavioral changes such as lethargy, irritability, or depression



“Yesterday I watched as he scratched his ears, then threw himself down in the grass and wiggled around for a good back massage. When he first came, he could not even reach his ears or any part of his body. He is his playful self again.” Joan



Interview with Volunteers Mike and Ginny O'Shea



Heather/Dobby Celeste/Lightning Ginny Moira/Mr McDougal Mike/Indie
October 2023

Mike, How long have you been with NVSR? We joined in 2002, so it's been 23 years. Our first Foster was Dugan, who bit the first possible adopter, so he was our first foster failure also. He was with us until 2010.

What inspired you to become involved with the organization? We were members of the Potomac Valley Shetland Sheepdog Club and owners of Shelties since April of 1970. Our first Sheltie was O'Shea's Irish Rogue, who was with us from 1970 to 1986. We wanted to help out the left-out Shelties and provide a path for them to forever homes.

What is your role? Has it changed over time?

We have been foster providers for the whole time, with 40 Shelties coming through our doors. We failed on 6 of those attempts over the years and would have kept all of the 40 if they didn't find homes. We provided and demonstrated agility at the NVSR picnic for 14 years.

What do you enjoy most about your affiliation with NVSR? The interactions with fellow Sheltie lovers. **How many dogs have you fostered or adopted in your lifetime?** 40 Fostering attempts with 6 failures. One of the failures was Dixie Doodle (2008-043), who became an AKC Grand Agility Champion and competed in 5 National Agility Trials, placing 8th in the nation in 2017.

Any "tough" ones or uniquely rewarding stories to tell about them? Dugan was the tough one with a condition that caused him to lose control of himself and then come out of it biting. We kept him until his death in 2010. We were the go-to for problem dogs in the early years, but found that most of the problems were the owners and handling methods rather than a dog problem.

How has your experience with NVSR influenced you as a dog owner today? We are still Sheltie owners with our last foster failure, Willow. Age is slowing us down, but we're not out yet. **On a personal note...tell me something about yourselves beyond NVSR?** Ginny was a registered dietician and worked in school food service for Fairfax County for 25 years. Her 2nd job was as a receptionist at a veterinary clinic, which helped with our vet bills, for 28 years, retiring this year in August. Hobbies: Tailoring, sewing garments
Mike was a Naval Academy graduate, with 27 years of service, retiring as a commander in 1992. Mike worked as a cowboy, silver miner, and auto mechanic in his life. He also worked for General Electric Space Systems as a systems engineer for 15 years and was with various other companies until retiring in 2011. Hobbies: leather working, artist (sold 13 paintings), and music (accordion, percussion, piano).





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Special thanks to the many volunteers who foster, transport, and contribute their time and talents 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

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I would like to make a donation to the Northern Virginia Sheltie Rescue

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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.