



New England
Border Collie Rescue, Inc.
Newsletter & Journal

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SEASONS GREETINGS & A VERY HAPPY NEW YEAR



Please send your content
and pictures to us at
carole@woolgather.org.

**Deadline for next
issue:** February 6th,
2023

**MEET THE EDITOR
OF NEBCR'S
NEWSLETTER &
JOURNAL,
CAROLE**

PRESBERG

A handspinner and feltmaker, I was contemplating getting sheep to support my fleece habit in 1978. I went to a Sheep & Wool Festival to see what sheep were available in the area, and saw the sheepdog trials. From that moment, I was hooked on Border Collies. Subsequent journeys to Scotland sealed my zeal.

I had never even had a dog before, but that September I became the owner of a 9-week-old BC puppy, Willy. To make a long story short, I raised sheep for wool for 25 years, and have been writing about Border Collies ever since.

My husband and I have lived in New England for most of our 50+ years of married life, but for a short time, we owned a 40-acre farm in Candor, New York, and it was there that I first became acquainted with Border Collie rescue. I started fostering Border Collies that came into the Candor dog pound, and placing them, and subsequently I founded North American Border Collie Rescue because at that time there were very few Border Collie rescues and none in the Northeast. When Border Collie rescue groups began to become established throughout the USA, we disbanded.

(MEET the EDITOR, continued on last page.)

**TILLIE: NO GIFT IS MORE
PRECIOUS THAN THE
HEART OF AN OLD DOG
by Anja Schlageter Poole**

Tillie was nearing her 17th birthday when I first met her. Her last remaining family member could no longer care for her. To say that I was instantly smitten with this sassy blue merle lady would be an understatement. While she was severely underweight, she appeared bright. Her owner stated that "she eats really well", so there had to be an underlying health issue. NEBCR took Tillie under their wing and I became her foster mom.

I was hoping for the best, but preparing for the worst. This transition was not going to be easy for an old lady who had never been away from her home of almost 17 years.

(TILLIE, 'continued on next page.)



TILLIE, continued.

It turned out that she wasn't eating "really well", neither her previous diet nor home-cooked. A trip to the Vet revealed that Tillie suffered from Kidney Disease. She developed massive diarrhea and over the next couple of weeks many adjustments were made. Tillie did not care for any of the RX diets, so eventually we settled on home-cooked meals developed by a nutritionist.

It was a rollercoaster ride, kidney disease is a beast! However, Tillie wasn't done living and I was committed to being her nurse, cheering squad and...Mom. She gained about 4 pounds and mentally she handled the transition better than I expected. She had her own opinions about how our household ought to be run.

Tillie always rallied from the occasional downs, but the last time was different. Her sass became more anxious, the spark had left her eyes. With the heaviest of hearts, I made the decision to help my old friend over the rainbow bridge.

While Tillie's story didn't have a happy ending and she didn't live to be 19 or 20 years old, it is one full of opportunities, learning, love, empathy and compassion! In 3 months, we shared a lifetime of love and connection, and she gathered quite the fan-club in such a short time! She was a favorite at the Vets office and in my posts about her on social media. Visitors loved meeting her, my roommate enjoyed her spunky personality and I fell head over heels in love with Tillie. Yes, I opened my heart and home to her, but she did the same and started a new life and family with me. I feel incredibly fortunate to have had this opportunity and would do it again in a heartbeat. The memories of Tillie will warm my heart until we meet again.

None of this would have been possible without NEBCR and those who support them both financially and by volunteering. What a wonderful community to be a part of!

ASK THE VET by Dr Sarah Hepburn

Welcome to the veterinary column! I'm Dr Sarah and I will be spending some time every newsletter answering questions or discussing relevant veterinary topics. I graduated from the University of Glasgow Veterinary School in 2014 and moved home to the US shortly after. Since graduation I have worked at multiple veterinary emergency and specialty centers in New Hampshire, and then opened my own urgent care veterinary clinic in northern New Hampshire a year and a half ago. I have a strong interest in canine sports medicine, and in developing and maintaining a strong healthy competitive canine athlete. Though Border Collies will always be my favorite breed, I now also have Eurohounds which are Alaskan Husky, Pointer, Greyhound mixes bred to be sprint racing sled dogs. I am very involved in the training, teaching and racing of dog powered sports, especially bikejoring and skijoring.

I was heavily involved in 2 Border Collie rescues while living in Scotland, and my own Border Collie had epilepsy and was part of a UK based epilepsy study. Epilepsy is an awful and tragic disease which seems to manifest in more obscure and severe forms in Border Collies. My dog had 15-20 partial seizures a day for the 2 weeks between diagnosis successful stabilization of his seizures.

(ASK THE VET, continued on next page.)

ASK THE VET, continued.

During this time, we spent a lot of time with the neurologist at the University of Glasgow and his words about how Border Collies get weird and severe epilepsy have always stuck with me.

We were extremely lucky that my dog was able to be stabilized, and though he required multiple medications and numerous medication adjustments throughout his life, he lived a very happy and joyful life. In future columns I will elaborate further on epilepsy, other pertinent veterinary topics and questions or suggested topics that you may have.

Please email the editor (carole@woolgather.org) with any questions you would like me to answer or topics that you would like covered and they will be forwarded to me. I look forward to our time together each newsletter and sharing bits of my life and my dogs antics with you.

Below, Dr. Sarah skjoring with one of her Eurohounds



**BIRCH SUGAR A.K.A. XYLITOL
(extremely toxic to dogs)**

FOODS THAT COMMONLY CONTAIN IT

Chewing gum & Candy

Ice Cream

Peanut butter

Sugar-free desserts & chewing gum

Dietary supplements particularly chewies or gummies

Mouthwash & breath mints

Liquid compounded medicines

CHECK INGREDIENTS CAREFULLY



**LIL AND THE MITTEN
by Donna Ciarlante**

Lil was a very shy and nervous girl when she first came to live with us. Offering her something to carry around in her mouth when out and about seemed to be a comfort to her. The first winter, my husband would give her his hat or one of his leather mittens to carry on the trails through the woods. She would happily trot along the trails carrying her prize until we came upon an open field where she would trade for a game of fetch with a tennis ball.

While out walking one winter day, Lil excitedly ran ahead and stopped under a tree branch. She stood up on her hind legs and was attempting to retrieve an object hanging from the branch. I was too far away to discern the object and fearing it might be a critter in distress, I rushed to catch up. As the shape became recognizable, my fears melted into laughter. Hanging from that branch was one of my husband's leather mittens! Lil recognized that mitten long before I did and this time she made sure we brought it home.

The mitten is still intact and well loved. But the hat..... that got destroyed in a tug o' war between Lil and her friend, Luca.

TRAINER'S CORNER: REAL LIFE TRAINING & BEHAVIOR SOLUTIONS: DO DOGS GRIEVE?

by Elise Gouge, CPDT, CABG

Certified Behavior Consultant & Trainer

Recently, I lost my beloved NEBCR alum Leelah to heart issues. I was asked if my other dogs were acting differently. Did they miss her? This is a common question I am asked as a pet behaviorist.

Grief is a difficult process for anyone, human or canine. It manifests and is handled differently by everyone. For dogs, there is no automatic "pack" or hierarchy and the loss of a resident dog can impact everything...or nothing.

Surprisingly, people still question whether dogs have emotions. If this is a topic that interests you, you can read articles and books by Stanley Coren, Trish McConnell and Marc Bekoff ([link 1](#)). In a study done in 2016, how dogs recognized human emotions was examined and of course results indicated that dogs are highly sensitive and adjust behavior based on their human ([link 2](#)). Grief, specifically, has been studied and results showed that whether or not a dog was grieving was closely connected to the owner's grief and perception of grief ([link 3](#)).

In short, grief in dogs is a combination of what the owner is going through, as well as an individual, separate experience for the dog. There are dogs that will look for the dog who has passed, will be depressed or lethargic, and will have difficulty functioning as they did before. There are also dogs that are not as deeply affected, but are sensitive to their owner's grief and therefore seem affected.

How to handle this can be confusing. It's challenging because you are also dealing with grief. That can include sadness or depression, resentment towards your other dogs for being there when that dog is not, anger, guilt, and regret. Depending on how your dog died, you might also be dealing with trauma symptoms such as insomnia, hypervigilance, inability to concentrate and more. It takes time and emotional healing to get over the death of someone we've loved.

For your dog, try to look at their behavior separate from yours. Are they eating as well? Are they listless or refusing to engage in connected activities like fetch or snuggling with you? These can be indications that your dog is struggling with the change of losing a resident dog.

Solutions vary. Some dogs need a period of time on a medication such as an SSRI like fluoxetine to help manage their grief. Others do well with the company of other dogs so they can form new bonds. Most dogs will benefit from keeping routines as predictable as possible. If you see your dog struggling and it causes you distress, then your dog will also become more worried. This is how dogs have evolved to respond to our emotions. You don't need to fake it, but understanding that grief is normal and not worrying excessively about your dog will be helpful. Attending a grief support group can be helpful and we have many resources here throughout New England ([link 4](#)).

Most importantly, don't overly focus on the grief but rather the joy of each day we have with them. We all know that our dogs will pass before we do. In many ways, it helps us become better at handling the grief that life brings with the death of human loved ones. As always, our dogs can teach us so much. While we need to notice and honor any grief they may be experiencing as real, it's also important to appreciate how

present they are, how consistent they are in loving unconditionally and how much they have to teach us.

References:

Link 1 - https://www.amazon.com/Intelligence-Dogs-Thoughts-Emotions-Companions/dp/0743280873/ref=sr_1_2

Link 2 - <https://royalsocietypublishing.org/doi/full/10.1098/rsbl.2015.0883>

Link 3 - <https://www.ingentaconnect.com/content/ufaw/aw/2014/00000023/00000001/art00008;jsessionid=1o8cisj7ng5tg.x-ic-live-01>

Link 4 - <https://www.pet-loss.net/resources/MA.shtml>





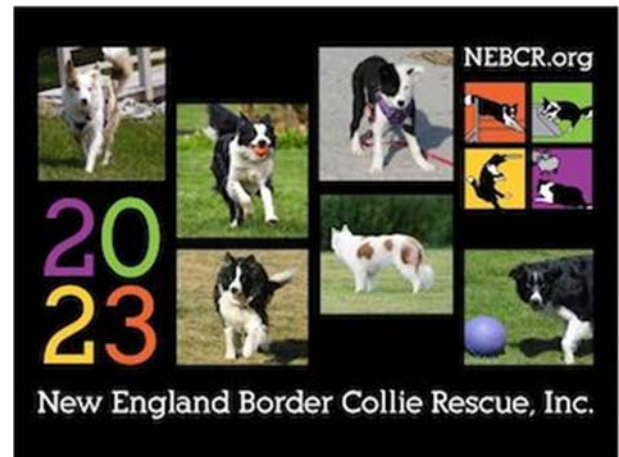
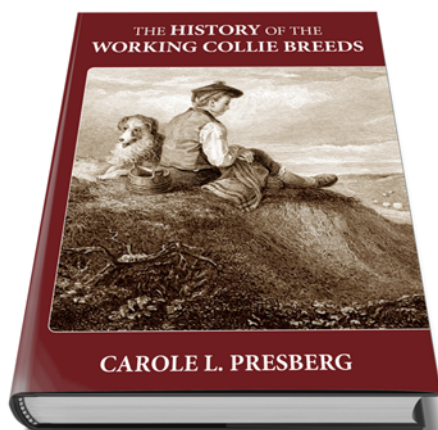
Left, Reny, 12-years-old; right, Seumas, 13-years-old.

MEET THE EDITOR, continued.

In 1997, when my husband and I moved back to Massachusetts, we bought a much smaller farm (7 acres) in the Merrimack Valley (where we live now) and I founded NEBCR with several friends in New England. I fostered dogs and was President of NEBCR from then until 1996 when I retired from sheep farming and from volunteering with NEBCR.

I currently have a rescue Border Collie, Seumas, and another mixed herding breed Reny. Reny was 7-years-old when I got her and she is now 12. Seumas was 9-years-old when I got him and he is now 13. He has Canine Cognitive Disorder and hip dysplasia, and is on expensive food and expensive meds, and we have a Help'em-up Harness for him.

Recently I wrote a book, *The History of the Working Collie Breeds*, which was published by Rowe Publishing this past summer. **It can be purchased on Amazon.** Having finished the book, I decided I needed something else to do, so I volunteered to edit this Newsletter and Journal for NEBCR.



Each year NEBCR publishes a calendar. The process is quite detailed taking most of a year to completion. Adopters and foster homes submit photos throughout the year being encouraged to represent the 4 seasons. Once submissions are complete an album is posted to vote on the submission with the top 12 securing a spot in the calendar. These 12 are contacted and asked to write bios. Once we have the content proofed this is sent to a volunteer that fortunately is a graphic designer by trade. Next proofed files are sent to the publisher, once complete they are transported by 2 volunteers to the person handling the sales.

This entire process turns into a labor of love as we see the finished product come to life. We love getting a glimpse into the lives of the dogs we have placed in previous years, young and old. Some speak of the challenges they have overcome, others their adventures together but all have a common thread the love they now share. If you would like to order a calendar you will find the order form on our website www.nebcr.org (Bea Hamm).