



New England Border Collie Rescue, Inc. Newsletter & Journal

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Please send your content and pictures to us at carole@woolgather.org.
Deadline for next issue: April 3rd, 2023



Above, Mo Clark’s dogs, Rhys and Tripp (photo Kathy Chittenden)

MEET THE TREASURER OF NEBCR MO CLARK

Growing up in Germany a long time ago, my family already had “second-hand” pets: My sister brought home a dog found dumped on the side of the road (possibly a BC mix?), and somehow we acquired a “hand-me-down” rabbit (which proceeded to gnaw away all the wallpaper it could reach).

After college, once I had settled in the US with a growing family, we adopted a dog from a local shelter. *Andy* had been listed as a BC mix, though he did not display many of the typical traits. But when I looked for a second dog a few years later, it led me to NEBCR, and we ended up adding *Tag* to our family, a pure-bred BC who was fostered at Sugar Bush Farm. The rest, as they say, is history.

Hope you all had a Happy Valentine’s Day ❤️

If you’ve got a dog for a pal
 You’ve more than the world can tell;
 He can mean more than a sweetheart,
 Be faithful, and love you well;
 He wants no rings or fancy things
 To keep his affection stirred,
 No passionate kiss, but only this:
 The sound of a kindly word.

—Derwent Pickering



**SAVE THE DATE:
 Saturday August 12, 2023
 for the
 NEBCR REUNION**

I became a volunteer, and I’ve adopted another 3 NEBCR dogs since. Somehow, I ended up on the Board as treasurer (I work in non-profit accounting and HR). My dogs and I have dabbled in agility, rally and nose work. Currently, I live outside of Boston with two NEBCR alumni, 12-year-old *Rhys* and 6-year-old *Tripp* (who’s probably an Aussie).

When a daughter moved to Iceland, it prompted me to start riding Icelandic horses again (something I adored doing as a teenager). I’ve now visited Iceland and ridden there twice. It is an amazing experience which I hope to do again.

THE VET'S CORNER
by Dr Sarah Hepburn

EPILEPSY, A NEUROLOGIC DISORDER

Epilepsy is a common neurologic disorder in dogs. Unfortunately Border Collies are genetically predisposed to epilepsy and are at least 2-3 times more likely than other breeds to have seizures. A seizure is a fit of abnormal neuromuscular activity caused by abnormal electrical activity in the brain. Seizure episodes may range in severity from moments of mental blankness to minor muscle twitching/convulsion, to full "grand mal" episodes characterized by recumbency, paddling, drooling, urination, defecation and altered consciousness.

Dogs whose seizures begin between the ages of 6 months and 6 years often have idiopathic epilepsy, meaning that no cause can be found. Blood work and other testing is recommended to evaluate for causes outside of the brain, and an MRI of the brain is recommended to determine if a brain abnormality present. If all testing is normal, then epilepsy is diagnosed.

Irrespective of the cause of seizures, there are some general truths about seizure conditions. The first is that each seizure episode tends to predispose to more episodes, as the abnormal brain cells tend to recruit surrounding cells to behave abnormally and prolonged seizures can be life-threatening. The second truth is that epileptic seizures can not be cured, so the aim in treatment is to decrease the severity and frequency of the seizures. Treatment generally consists of anti-convulsant medications and as the disease progresses, escalating doses and the addition of other anti-convulsant medications are often required.

Anti-convulsant medications all work by depressing the excitability of brain cells; hence, their side effects include sedation, and the animal commonly experiences a phase of wobbly gait and weakness for the first 2-3 weeks on the medication. The decision to begin anticonvulsant medication requires an evaluation of risks and benefits. Commencement of anti-convulsants is often postponed until the animal has had recurrent seizures and demonstrated a trend of increased frequency and severity of episodes.

During a seizure, protect the pet from injuring herself. Keep her from falling from a height and especially keep away from water. Remove other pets from the area as some pets become aggressive after a seizure. Protect yourself and others

from being bitten. And DO NOT place your hands near the pet's mouth.

Conditions requiring emergency treatment:

- More than 3 seizures in a 24-hour period.
- "Cluster Seizures"; sequential seizures without return to normal consciousness between episodes.
- Any seizure that lasts for more than 3 minutes.



Woolgather Moss 1984-1999

THE HEARTBREAK OF EPILEPSY by Carole Presberg

Moss was supposed to be my dream dog. He was a red tricolor, with a beautiful rough coat, more laid back than his siblings and very affectionate. He showed promise as a sheepdog

When he was 2 ½ he had his first seizure, and was diagnosed with epilepsy. Phe-nobarbital worked for a while, but he had frequent cluster seizures and was becoming ataxic from the medication.

(Heartbreak, continued p. 4.)

**TRAINER'S CORNER:
REAL LIFE TRAINING & BEHAVIOR SOLUTIONS:
INTEGRATING FOSTER DOGS INTO THE FOSTER
FAMILY/PACK**

**by Elise Gouge, CPDT, CABC
Certified Behavior Consultant & Trainer**

Imagine you are shuttled into a bus with no idea of where you are going, the bus is loud and smells disgusting. After a long, bumpy ride you are shoved into a car with strangers. You are exhausted, hungry, and completely confused. Next thing you remember is going into a house.

Suddenly, three dogs rush over and sniff you intensely. One jams his snout between your legs, one is right in your face and one is slapping his paw on your shoulders. These dogs are all clearly friends with one another and you stand frozen, hoping you won't offend them. Maybe, you are so freaked out that you snap and insist on needing some space after such a hectic experience.

This is often the experience of dogs coming into foster care from rescue or shelters. They have been through unspeakable amounts of stressful transition before finally arriving at their foster home. They desperately need time to decompress and allow their system to return to baseline. It takes at least a week to settle. This is assuming that the baseline was normal and, for many foster dogs, they are coming from stressed settings so their baseline is already jacked up.

In our efforts to be great foster parents, we often inadvertently contribute to stress. We think they need friends so we encourage dog integration sooner rather than later. For a stressed dog, this is no different than dropping you into a room of strangers who don't speak your language. It's scary, it's potentially re-traumatizing, and can even be dangerous.

When your foster dog arrives, treat them like a foreign exchange student. Be gentle, be calm. Show them around, help them understand the routines and how to get their needs met (here's the yard to potty in, here's your crate, here's your water dish). Give them time to explore and decompress. Don't rush banter, affection, or greetings with dogs and people. Allow them enough time to form a connection with you before involving other people or dogs.

When it's time to bring in others, take walks together in neutral settings and make sure neither party is being overwhelming and invasive.

Your goal is that both sides show mild curiosity and interest but no intensity. From there, go inside and see if the energy can remain steady. Make sure no valuable resources like bones or toys are out. If you have a green light with hanging out inside, begin taking small steps towards complete integration by incorporating toys and food, spending more time together as a group, and allowing the energy to go up through play.

Always follow high-energy with a period of decompression and relaxation. Sniff walks, food scatters, and massage with a trusted person can all help.

Set the environment up for success by having baby gates and exercise pens in place before your foster dog arrives.

Your resident dogs will be destabilized when a new dog enters the home and you need to be sensitive to that. Getting everything set ahead of time will help everyone adjust faster.

Ultimately, going slowly at first can be part of what makes fostering successful and fun. It's much easier to do things right by initially going slow instead of going fast, making errors and then back-tracking to fix them.

NEBCR 2022 YEAR IN REVIEW VIDEO

Each year NEBCR is proud to release a video to celebrate the dogs we have accepted into rescue the previous year. The video tells the story of all the dogs that become a part of the NEBCR family through our wonderful network of foster homes (<https://www.nebcr.org/2022-year-in-review/>).

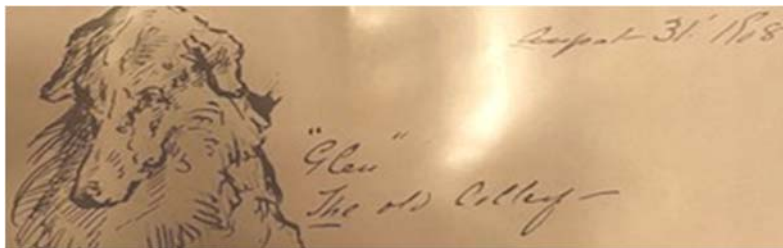
The dogs in the video have a special place in our hearts. It's extremely rewarding to see a dog come into rescue insecure build their confidence in their foster home and once placed to get reports back of their achievements. It's amazing how far love and patience can take these dogs.

I hope you enjoy this years 2022 Year in Review video! It tells you a lot about NEBCR. But see below what it doesn't tell you.

WHAT GOES ON AT NEBCR ABOVE & BEYOND TAKING IN BORDER COLLIES, FOSTERING & PLACING THEM

What the Year in Review doesn't tell is the dozens upon dozens of inquiries our intake team skillfully maneuvers through each year. They field calls for dogs that are out of our coverage area, referring them to a rescue that covers their area. Other calls may be about non-Border Collies, which they also try to redirect to the proper rescue. NEBCR also takes a number of inquiries each year from owners looking for ways to keep their dogs, asking about trainers or behaviorists in their area, something the intake team answers.

As you can see NEBCR's reach each year is well beyond the dogs on the Year in Review video. We take pride in each facet of assistance we are able to offer. □



Above, "Glen, The old colley" by Edwin Douglas, 1908.

Heartbreak, continued.

I started keeping a chart of Moss' seizures, hoping to find some pattern, but in that I was to be disappointed. There was no pattern. Sometimes he would go for months without a seizure, and then have several clusters three or four days in a row. The only thing we could count on was that he always had his seizures while at rest.

He was put on Potassium Bromide (KBr), which helped a bit, but he was becoming more and more ataxic. He fell down frequently, especially during the "post ictal" stage when a dog staggers around bumping into things. He became shy, hid behind me at the vet's, became hungry all the time, and even tried to eat spoons and dog-food cans. He lost feeling in his feet and legs, the falling dislocated one hip, and he walked like a drunkard. But he wasn't unhappy. He went for walks with us and seemed to enjoy life otherwise.

When Moss was ten he went into status and had to be hospitalized, and on the way home he went into status again. The vets said they could do nothing more for him. But one vet told me that sometimes Vitamin E worked for humans with epilepsy. I put him on Vitamin E, and he never had another seizure in his life, and he lived to 14.



LOVE and CONNECTION by Paige Keller

Gracie came into our lives a little over a year ago. She was assumed to be one of the puppies that were also hoarded as well as sold from a puppy mill. Chances are this girl also lived most of her life outside. The senior pups always pull at my heartstrings, so I was eager to help when I saw that she was in need of a foster placement.

Me and one of our great rescue volunteers coordinated Gracie's trip to bring her to our home. During the pass off I could tell (on top of desperately needing a good bath) that this little girl had a heart of gold. She was very scared as one can only imagine. She was pulled from the only home she knew regardless of the conditions, housed temporarily at a local shelter where she knew no one and now was relocating again. Despite all that, she was very eager to trust and throughout our trip back home was always checking in with me to see what I was all about. It was a longer drive and given that this sweet girl did not have a name I took that time to come up with the name Gracie (original I know) due to her sweet and trusting temperament.

After a quick detour to give her a bath, I brought her home. She was very hesitant about coming into the house but once she saw Daisy (my senior border collie), she became a lot more comfortable.

After roaming the house, she found her spot next to Daisy in front of the fireplace. Admittedly it was then that I knew this girl had already found her home.

Gracie still struggles with new people. With that being considered (in addition to the fact that we adored her) and given her age (15) we decided that hospice care with us would be the best plan for Gracie. I was extremely grateful that this rescue had this opportunity as an option and that Gracie will spend what time she has left loved and doted on.



- *Painting by Richard Ansdell R.A.*