

Inland Empire Collie Club

THE TAILWAGGER

SPRING 2022

EVENTS

Next IECC Meeting June 2, 7:30 PM place TBD



May 27 Spokane Kennel Club Obedience/Rally



May 28-29 Spokane Kennel Club All-Breed/Obedience/Rally

Superintendents: Onofrio Dog Shows



May 30-31 Coeur d'Alene Dog Fanciers All Breed/Obedience/Rally

Superintendents: BaRay Events



June 3-5 Greater Spokane Shetland Sheepdog Club - Agility Trials

Contact: Linda Ward sinkonacollies@gmail.com for more information



June 10-12 Inland Empire Kennel Club All Breed

Superintendents: BaRay Events



July 1-3 Spokane Agility Club - Agility Trials

Contact: Linda Ward sinkonacollies@gmail.com for more information



July 9-10 Spokane Dog Training Club - Agility Trials

Contact: Linda Ward sinkonacollies@gmail.com for more information

IECC 2022 Specialty Show Report

By Suzanne Schwab

After cancelling our specialty in 2020 and having a much smaller specialty scheduled for later in the year in 2021, it was really nice for IECC to get back to having our normal specialty on our normal mid-April date, at our normal Moses Lake site, with our normal (if you catch my drift) superintendent. Normalcy is nice! As always, lots of people contributed to making this big event happen. Linda Ward hired judges, hired replacement judges, hired replacements for the replacement judges, and I lost track at some point, but she probably hired replacements for the replacement replacements. As always, she coordinated with AKC, with our superintendent, and with the Grant County Fairgrounds and Moses Lake club to make sure all the application, premium list, and catalog information was correct, and that we had buildings reserved for hospitality, show rings, and grooming. Eileen White designed and ordered trophies, Suzanne Schwab



delivered the trophies to the show site, and Linda ordered ribbons and set up the trophy table. Along with putting in about 9 hours as

the conformation ring steward, Caroline Baines helped with setting up the trophy table before the show and ran the raffle after the show along with helping Ali Seeber with set up and clean up for the potluck dinner after the show. Sharon Holden brought lunches for the judges and ring stewards, and graciously provided Uber service between Spokane and Moses Lake for Bob Young and for Michael and Joan Meagher. Suzanne set up the refreshment table in the show building and did set-up and clean-up for the judges' and ring stewards' lunches. Suzanne and Eileen designed one of the



posters for the table set aside to honor Bonnie Young's memory, and Suzanne provided a list of Shadaglen collies, and copies of some of Bonnie's artwork for the poster made by Bonnie's daughter Kelly and granddaughter Katie. Sharen Hunley compiled several dozen photos of Bonnie and her collies from her own displayed on the table.



In the show ring, several of our members had some nice wins. Melinda Barber's rough male Caper has really been rockin' 'n' rollin' recently, and he continued his winning ways by going Best

of Breed for both the morning and afternoon shows, and he went on to win a Group 1 at the EMLKC all-breed show on Sunday.

In the classes at our morning show, Strider, a rough tri bred by Linda and Tanya Ward was Winners Dog and Best Bred by Exhibitor, Ali Seeber's rough sable Huck (littermate to Melinda's Caper) was Reserve WD, and Sandy Kirsch's rough blue bitch Zoey went Best of Opposite Sex from the Veteran's class. Linda and Tanya Ward's smooth tri-bitch Ebony shined in the ring in the afternoon shows to take WB and complete her championship. At the EMLKC shows over the weekend Sandy's rough blue bitch Pistol (Zoey's daughter) and Ali's Huck each picked up championship points as Best of Winners.



Congratulations, one and all!

Congratulations to Two Outstanding Good Sports

By Suzanne Schwab

Most years IECC recognizes our **Outstanding Member of the Year** at our December party and presents our Good Sportsmanship Award at our April specialty. Because our party was canceled this December both Awards were presented this year at the potluck dinner



after the specialty. This year's recipient of our Outstanding Member for 2021 is **Ali Seeber** who has been showing dogs for over a decade but is a relatively new member of our club. When Ali first inquired about joining IECC, we explained that one of the requirements to apply for membership was to attend two club meetings, and when she was undeterred by my warning that club meetings are really boring, I knew our newest recruit had potential. In the following few years, she has lived up to that potential. Within a couple years of joining the club Ali accepted the nomination to become club secretary, and she has broken all speed records in distributing minutes of the meetings, sometimes even the same evening as the meeting itself. Keeping the membership up to date on what has transpired at meetings has been especially important in these past couple years as we adapted to remote meetings, and her prompt and thorough meeting reports are much

appreciated. She has also been called upon to assist in collie rescue and has learned more than she probably ever wanted to about the backroads of parts of eastern Washington in the process of transporting rescue collies and checking out potential rescue situations.

Ali has been rewarded for her efforts with some impressive accomplishments in the show ring. This past May she garnered her first group placement with her Shiba Inu, and her young collie Huck earned group placements at all four shows at the International Dog Show in Spokane Valley this past summer, culminating in a Best in Show for the weekend. The adventure continues now into 2022, with a class win and Best Brace in Show at the recent CCA Nationals, and her first points toward Huck's AKC championship at the Moses Lake all-breed shows. Congratulations to Ali Seeber and we look forward to cheering you on through many more well-earned achievements.

The recipient of our **Good Sportsmanship Award**, **Sherry McCauley**, is another fairly new member. Sherry acquired a smooth tri-color bitch from Sharon Hunley a little over a year ago, and immediately started looking for activities that she and puppy Morven could participate in. In addition to training Morven to be a Canine Good Citizen, tracking really captivated both Sherry and Morven. One of them is so eager as they approach the start flag of a track that she will begin to drool and chatter her teeth. Finding people willing to spend a full weekend tromping around in the field laying tracks for tracking tests can often be a real challenge, and it has been tremendously helpful to have had Sherry join the ranks of willing track layers for both our IECC and Spokane Dog Training Club tracking tests. Apparently being a tracklayer generates good karma (and I suppose practicing really hard helps too), because this March Sherry and Morven were certified to be eligible to enter tracking tests, essentially completing the first of two legs necessary to earn an AKC Tracking Dog title. Along with tracking, herding has really captured Sherry's interest, and she has faithfully come out to herding practice sessions to watch and learn while we wait for Morven to mature enough to be ready to

boss some sheep around. Those of us in the club who work our dogs on sheep owe Sherry and her husband Jason a huge thank you for donating (and delivering and stacking!!) nearly a ton of hay for the small sheep flock we maintain. And, if you are enjoying reading about club activities, member achievements, and other collie related news, you have Sherry to thank for resurrecting our Tail Wagger Newsletter (with a shout out to Sherry's daughters Sky and Rain for giving their mom a few lessons in formatting and layout). Congratulations and thank you to the entire McCauley clan for all your contributions to our club.



Hmmm. Which one of these is the teeth chatterer?



*Though gone from sight to Memory Dear
Morven October 20, 2020 - May 1, 2022*



LIFETIME SERVICE AWARD

Two years ago, the Collie Club of America kicked off the "Lifetime Service" Award to honor Shining Star Ambassador collies who had passed away. Often, the Shining Star Ambassador team is recognized "mid-career." The Committee determined that the Ambassador team often continues their extraordinary work for many additional years.

This year the Collie Club of America formally recognized two Ambassador teams for the Lifetime Service award; the work of these recently deceased collies touched the lives of thousands of people and enhanced the reputation of the collie breed over their long careers.

The 2015 Ambassador team, Karen Hathaway and "Rio" Sinkona Silver Riverside THD, started as a therapy team with Pet Partners and visited schools (Reading Rover program), nursing homes, hospitals, and hospice patients. Karen and Rio later became certified as a HOPE Animal-Assisted Crisis Response dog team. As a HOPE team, Rio and Karen responded to a number of significant crises including the Oso, Washington landslide and the shootings at Seattle Pacific University. Karen and Rio also provided comfort and solace to patients at the Seattle/King County Medical Clinic, and as part of Operation Purple (Military Camp for children of deployed military parents.) In addition, Karen and Rio provided support and comfort to participants in Mental Health Court, Veterans Court, and Drug Court in Spokane County, Washington.

At the 2022 CCA National in Sandy, Utah, Linda Ward accepted the award for Karen Hathaway. Linda and her daughter Tanya own the Sinkona collie kennel and Rio came from the Sinkona breeding program.



BRAGS

Suzanne Schwab

For the past 15 years or so, the herding clubs in the Puget Sound area have held a St Paddy's Day Herding "Rally" - 3 days of trials, each day at a different location on different sheep with a different ranch-work style course. And for the past 15 years, I've missed out, first because of work commitments, and then just when I retired, there was this pesky virus going around that interfered with, among a few other things, my herding trial aspirations. So, I was quite eager to finally get my chance to participate this year. Torrey rose to the occasion and finished an American Herding Breeds Association novice level ranch dog title, with an extra qualifying score to spare. But the best part of the weekend took place within the first 60 seconds or so of our run on the first day. We were the second to last run of the day, so I'd had the chance to watch the sheep bolt out of control across the arena and through an open gate into the next field for all but one of the preceding 22 runs. The sheep were so determined to get to the next field that the judge basically instructed the handlers to just stay out of the sheeps' way and avoid getting anyone injured trying to stop a stampede. So, my plan was to do exactly that - send Torrey out to gather the sheep, and then hope I could convince him to just lie down while the sheep blitzed past us. Torrey had a different plan. When I sent him to gather his sheep, he took two steps, and as the sheep started their usual dash for the open gate, Torrey stopped, stood up on his toes and said to the sheep, "Yeah, no. We're going to politely pass through the gate at a walk in single file this time." And that's what he made them do. He placed himself between the sheep and the gate, and literally backed himself up across the arena and through the gate to hold the sheep from pushing past us. The rest of that run was decent, but not spectacular, and the same was true of his runs the next two days. But it was worth the 15 year wait to get to watch my slowly maturing little sheep dog rise to the occasion and tell a group of renegade ewes, "*Not today*"



BRAGS

Melinda Barber

Multi-Group Winning, Multi-Group Placing, BIS MBISS GCHB Moxie's RockNRolla- CCA WD '21, CCA AOM '22
"Caper"

(NrCh Moxie's Law of The Jungle TKA IT RN "Kipling" x Belfair A Ginger Sunrise "Ginger")

Melinda Barber Co-bred with Alene Becker Evans

"Caper" was awarded an AOM under Judge Nancy Anstruther at the 2022 CCA National! Exquisitely handled by Annie Oster.

"Caper" is in the top 20 of the Herding Dogs at this point in time.



BRAGS

Melinda Barber (Cont.)

Collie Club of WA and Overlake Collie Club Specialties

So proud of this young dog.

“**Memphis**” Moxie's Urban Jungle won a 4pt Major under *Judge Richard Lewis* and went Reserve to the Major under *Judge Pat Jung*.

Beautifully presented by Annie Oster and co-owned with Jennifer Carr.

NrCh Moxie's Law Of The Jungle RN IT "Kipling" x AmGChS.CanCh Tallywood Chandelier PT RN CGC "Noshi"

National Conformation

“**Memphis**” placed 4th in Am Bred (largest class) under *Judge Adria Weiner*. Handled by Annie Oster



Memphis

BRAGS

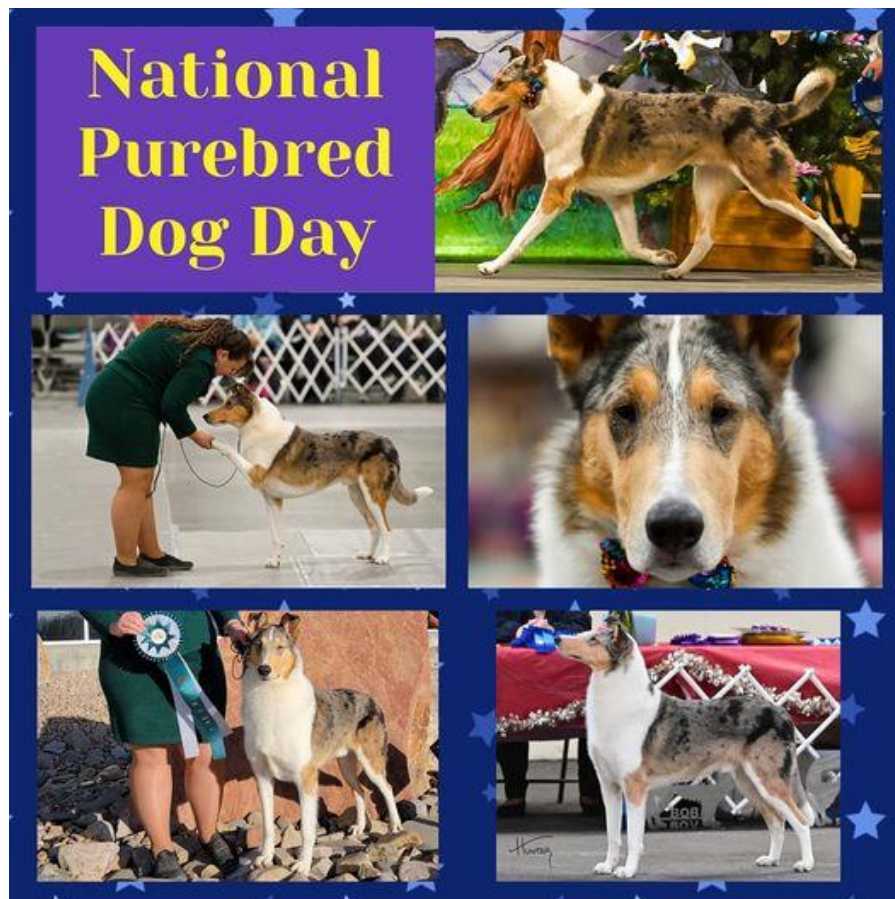
Melinda Barber (Cont.)

"Dax" BISS GChB Moxie Light Up The Sky RN IT TKA SIN SCN VSW- CCA AOM '22, #9 Smooth '21 (Hawkins)

(Moxie's Skyfall RN IT TKN "Bond" x Colebrae Moxie Skylark "Lark")

Melinda Barber Co-bred with Jennifer Laik and Alene Becker Evans

Co-owned with Paul Grossart



National Conformation Brags

BIS MBISS GChB Moxie's RockNRolla- CCA WD' 21 "Caper"- AOM under *Judge Nancy Anstruther*. Handled by Annie Oster.

BISS GChB Moxie's Light Up The Sky RN IT TKA SIN SCN VSWB "Dax"- participated in the Invitational as #9 Smooth for 2021 and was awarded AOM under *Judge Nancy Anstruther*. Handled by Annie Oster.

BRAGS

Melinda Barber - National Conformation (Cont.)

Moxie's Royal Nonesuch "**Huck**"

1st in Open Sable under J. Adria Weiner. Piloted by his co-owner, Ali Seeber

Moxie's Urban Jungle "**Memphis**"

(co-owned w/ Jennifer Carr) placed 4th in Am Bred (largest class) under *Judge Adria Weiner*. Handled by Annie Oster.

Moxie Enjoy That Journey "**Alexis**" placed 3rd in her large 9-12 class under *Judge Robette Johns*. Handled by Annie Oster.

Congratulations to Brinda and Edward Chavez of Cameo on our Co-Bred puppies!!

"**Zoom**" 1st in her class and "Geronimo" 3rd in 12-18 puppy dog

National Performance Brags-

Moxie's Spacedust SCN RN "**Sydney**" earned her Rally Novice title. Handled by Stuart Smith

March 26, 2022

"**Caper**" had the BEST Day at the Bremerton show over an entry of 1120! A Dream come true!!

BIS MBISS GChB Moxie's RockNRolla

My most sincere thanks to *Judge Debra Long Gschwender* for the Breed and Group wins and to *Judge Daniel Dowling* for the BEST IN SHOW! Presented beautifully by Annie Oster

March 27, 2022

BIS MBISS GChB Moxie's RockNRolla

Another fantastic day in Bremerton! My most sincere thanks to *Judge Sulie Greendale-Paveza* for the breed win and to *Judge Linda Reidel* for the huge GROUP win!

BRAGS

"Colter" Moxie Take Back Th' Night with his Specialty WD/BOW ribbons, 6-months-old



Colter



Ali Seeber and Melinda Barber

Litter brothers "**Huck**" and "**Caper**" were BEST ROUGH BRACE under *Judge Nancy Anstruther*. Handled by Ali Seeber at the National! <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=h11pNEA1IfE>



BRAGS

Barb Flaherty

“Louie” - CH Sinkona's Jazzman CDX BN RE PT FDC NAP NJP ACT1 SWA CGC

(co-owned with Linda and Tanya Ward)

at the National.

March 26th

Herding PT Sheep Q

March 27th

Herding PT Sheep Q

March 28th

Open Standard Preferred leg 1st Place

Open Jumpers Preferred Leg 1st Place

March 29th

Open Jumpers Preferred 1st place

Electric City Kennel Club

Scent Work:

Excellent Interior - only dog to Q in this class out of 10 dogs. Excellent Exterior 2nd Place

Excellent Buried 2nd Place.



Louie



BRAGS

Sandy Kirsch

April 15 IECC AM Specialty

"Zoe" CH Sinkona's Mardi Gras HT

(Bred by Linda and Tanya Ward and co-owned with Sandy)

Best Veteran, Best of Opposite Sex to Best of Variety



Zoe (Judge: Louise Palarik)



Pistol

April 16 EMLKC

"Pistol" San-Dee Sinkona's She's A Pistol

(Bred by Sandy, Linda and Tanya Ward and owned by all.)

Winners Bitch 2 pts.

BRAGS

Tanya and Linda Ward

Collie Club of America National - South Jordin, UT

"Elsa" GCH CH PACH Sinkona's Dream Catcher CDX BN GN HSAd HSAMs MXP4 MXPB MJP4 MJPB PAX MFP
T2BP CA BCAT CGC GV

March 26 - Herding:

Herding Started Course A Sheep - Q

Herding Started Course A Ducks - 2nd place, RHIT

March 26 - Herding:

Herding Started Course A Sheep - Q - MASTERS TITLE

Herding Started Course A Ducks - 2nd Place TITLE

March 27 - Masters Jumpers Preferred Q 2nd place.

March 30 - Herding Title Smooth Bitch Class - 2nd place

Most Versatile Collie Qualifier at National placed 9th out of 25

Received her "Grand Versatility" award.



Elsa

BRAGS

Tanya and Linda Ward (Cont.)

April 15 IECC AM Specialty

"Strider" - Winners Dog from the Bred By Exhibitor class 2 pts. Bred and co-owned by Linda and Tanya Ward.

April 15 IECC AM Specialty

"Ebony" CH Sinkona's Black Magic NAJ PT CGC - Winner's Bitch from the Bred by Exhibitor class 5 point major - Finished Championship



Ebony



Ebony

BRAGS

Tanya and Linda Ward (Cont.)

April 17 EMLKC

"Petra" Cairdean's Tsesit Stone (Belgian Malinois) Winners Bitch - Best Of Breed - 1 pt.

April 16 EMLKC - "Petra" (Belgian Malinois) Reserve Winners Bitch



Petra

Ephrata Moses Lake Agility:

Elsa - Masters Standard Friday - 3rd

"Isis" CH SnoValley Silva Sinkona VCD2 BN GN RE PT MX MXJ MJP OF T2B CA CGC - Masters Standard Preferred Friday -Q

Isis - Masters Jumpers Preferred- Saturday - 2nd

"Bree" MACH PACH Sinkona'S Sapphire Mountain Breeze UDX2 OMX BN GN GO VER RE MXB MJS MXP3 MXPB MJP3 MJPB PAX MXF T2B CA BCAT TKA

Bree - Masters Jumpers Preferred- Friday - 2nd

Bree - Masters Standard Preferred- Saturday - 1st

Bree - Masters Standard Preferred- Sunday - 1st

Columbia Basin Dog Training Club

Bree - Rally Masters Saturday - 90 4th

BRAGS

Tanya and Linda Ward (Cont.)

Bree - Rally Masters Sunday - 88 Q

Isis - Rally Excellent - Saturday - 94 Q

Isis - Rally Advanced - Saturday - 97 Q 1st RAE Leg

Isis - Rally Excellent - Sunday - 98 Q

Isis - Rally Advanced - Sunday - 99 Q 2nd RAE Leg

Boston Terrier Club of Western Washington:

Bree - Masters Standard Preferred - Saturday 1st

Bree - Masters Jumpers Preferred- Saturday 1st

Bree - High Scoring Non-Sporting - Saturday

Bree - Masters Standard Preferred- Sunday 1st

Bree - Masters Jumpers Preferred- Sunday 2nd

Isis - Masters Standard Preferred- Saturday 2nd



Bree

BRAGS

Tanya and Linda Ward (Cont.)

Inland Empire Collie Club

Friday April 15

Bree - Rally Masters - 88

Bree - Rally Excellent - 90

Bree - Rally Advanced - 99

Bree - 1st Triple Q

Ephrata Moses Lake Kennel Club

Saturday - April 16

Bree - Rally Masters - 93

Bree - Rally Excellent 97 2nd

Bree - Rally Advanced 99

2nd Triple Q

Sunday - April 17

Bree - Rally Masters 89

Bree - Rally Excellent 99 1st

Bree - Rally Advanced 97 2nd

3rd Triple Q



BRAGS

Tanya and Linda Ward (Cont.)

Puget Sound Poodle Club Agility (Argus Ranch)

Saturday, April 30

Bree: Masters Standard Preferred a Q - 1st place & Masters Jumpers Preferred a Q - 1st place for a Double Q leg

Isis: Masters Standard Preferred a Q - 1st place

Sunday, May 1

Bree: Masters Standard Preferred a Q - 1st place

Elsa: Masters Standard Preferred a Q - 2nd place

Isis: Masters Jumpers Preferred a Q - 1st place



Isis

BRAGS

Tanya and Linda Ward (Cont.)

“Strider” Sinkona's Helheim Bound Hero
(Co-Owned with Steven & Leslie Brost)

Feb 25 Reserve Winners Dog - Collie Club of Washington PM Specialty

Feb 27 Reserve Winners Dog - Collie Club of Washington AM Specialty

Winner's Dog for 2 points – Bred by Exhibitor Class - Collie Club of Washington PM Specialty



Strider



I'm a dogaholic on the road
to recovery.

.....just kidding. I'm on my
way to the next dog show.

THINGS DOG HANDLERS SAY

Collies Lost, Found, and Rescues

By Sharen Hunley

It's been almost 18 months since Hayden, a rough collie I co-own with JoLynn Ray, suddenly disappeared from his rural farm in Reardan. The search for Hayden led me to become increasingly involved in the area of collie rescue, the search for lost and stolen collies, and the temporary boarding and transportation of collies when the owner is unable to be located.

This year has gotten off to a particularly busy start with two collies lost (and returned), one abandoned, and three rehomed, each due to special circumstances.



Here is Beatrice. She was found on the streets of Spokane. She was turned in to SCRAPS and soon after released to Sharen and Michael Hunley for placement with Seattle Purebred Rescue. If anyone recognizes her, please contact us.

Due to the unusual uptick lately in lost and stolen dogs, I've posted a list of resources and preemptive measures we should all take to ensure the safety of our precious collies:

How Keep Your Collie Safe

The American Humane Association estimates over 10 million dogs and cats are lost or stolen every year. That's an average of one in three family pets that will become lost during their lifetime. Here are the precautions we should all be taking to keep our collies safe and increase the chances he or she is recovered should they become lost or stolen:

1. **PREPARATION:** Loud noises such as fireworks, squirrels, deer, or anything that's a distraction or something to chase can be an opportunity for your dog to run off or get stolen. Once they stop running what will they do? Knowing the possibility exists that they will run off means you can be better prepared.

2. **IDENTIFICATION TAG:** Tags should be kept with up-to-date information. If moving, use the number of a friend or relative. Also, you can use the AKC registration number or microchip number on the tag.
3. **GPS TRACKING COLLAR:** One of the best investments that can be made, especially when traveling or hiking.
4. **MARTINGALE COLLAR:** A flat collar is easy for a dog to back out of and slip off. A Martingale, especially the ones with a chain rather than fabric, is designed so the dog cannot get loose.
5. **MICROCHIPPING:** A responsible breeder will microchip puppies before they leave for their new home. Some companies require annual fees to be paid or information will not be released. If your collie is AKC registered, you can also register them with AKC ReUnite which has one low lifetime fee.

**Microchips that start with “900” share a “code” with overseas or unreachable manufacturers. Many of these microchips are sold by vet supply stores or on Amazon and information on who bought the microchip is not available. If the microchip number starts with 900 go to www.petmicrochiplookup.org to see if it is registered. If it doesn't show that it's registered, go to foundanimals.org and register it for free, or another microchip company (such as AKC ReUnite) if you choose, but make sure to register!

And have your vet check the chip at every visit!

6. **PHOTOS:** Clear, up-to-date photos are essential in identifying your collie should he or she go missing. Back and front, as well as both sides, can prove to be very important in identifying your pup. It is important to continue to update photos especially if you get your collie as a puppy.
7. **FENCING:** If a dog can get their head through a fence, it can get its body through. Check your fences regularly for weak spots. Electric or invisible fences are not a good idea as, when frightened, your dog can run through them and won't be able to get back. Also, other animals can get into the fenced areas which leaves your dog defenseless.
8. **BONDING:** Develop a bond with your dog so that even if he or she gets loose they don't run off. Dogs that have a strong bond will: keep tabs on your location – even when they are off-leash; make an effort to find you when playing hide-and-seek games; have a strong desire to be near you; once taught “come” responds even with distractions.

The Moment After: Surviving Pet Loss by Moira Anderson Allen, M.Ed

The world has just ended. Your pet—your friend, your confidante, the companion who was always there for you—has died. Dog, cat, horse, bird, hamster, ferret—species doesn't matter. Age doesn't matter. All that matters is the huge hole that has just entered your life. That, and the grief. Conventional wisdom suggests that I devote this column—call it “the moment after” column—to tips on how to start feeling better. But if your pet has died within the past few hours or days, you may not be able to even imagine feeling better. You may be wondering how you can even survive. You may also not want to feel better. Painful as it is, that ragged, miserable hole may seem all you have left of your pet, and you may not want to get rid of it just yet. The thought of “feeling better” too quickly may actually seem disrespectful. You may feel that you owe your pet a period of grief, of pain. “Feeling better” may seem a lot like “letting go,” and you may not be ready to do that yet. That's OK. Grief and mourning aren't some sort of awkward, embarrassing mental lapses that should be “gotten over” or “healed” as soon as possible. In reality, grief is our final expression of love, the last gift we have to offer. It isn't to be rushed. Instead of trying to “get over it,” we must find ways to “get through it”—and that can take a while. So, for this first column, I'm not going to talk about how to “heal.” I'm going to talk about how to survive. Ten Ways to Hang On When you face that huge emptiness inside, it's tempting to just give yourself over to grief. At the same time, a certain amount of survival instinct reminds you that you still need to do something to keep going. But what? Grief makes it hard to think, to

plan. What can you do to keep that hole from swallowing you?

1) Eat something. You may not feel hungry, but food is important. Grief burns a lot of energy; you need fuel. Eat something that makes you feel good—and if that happens to be a huge slice of chocolate cake, well, this is no time to worry about your diet. Me, I like tomato soup; it reminds me of sitting warm and snug by a fire while the rain beats on the windows. If you can't face a full meal, nibble. Eat now, whether you want to or not.

2) Cry. Cry as much as you want to, whenever you feel like it. Take the day off from work. If you can spend even one day crying whenever you need to, it will make it much, much easier to face the next day.



By Aja Trier

3) Find something to do. This may seem trite but focusing on a task really does help. Finding a project to complete, a task to accomplish, helps you focus on the world (and the “you”) that exists outside that hole. It’s not a distraction, and it won’t make your grief go away. It simply helps you adjust your perception, to recognize that while grief is part of your life, it isn’t the sum total of your life.

4) Count your blessings. When you lose a loved one, it’s hard to focus on anything positive. Unless your circumstances are truly dreadful, however, chances are that your pet was not the only good thing in your life. Remind yourself of some of the good things that you still have by deliberately reviewing a list of your “blessings”—such as your family, your remaining pets, your friends, your interests. Review them in your head or write them down. Again, these don’t fill the hole—but they do remind you that there is a world outside that hole, and that you are still part of it.

5) Reflect on things that don’t involve your pet. The loss of your pet may seem to touch every aspect of your life, but in reality, it hasn’t changed everything. Reflect on the things it hasn’t changed—the things that you did and enjoyed without your pet. When my cat died of cancer, I forced myself to remember that “The loss of my pet doesn’t take away my ability to enjoy long talks with my husband. It doesn’t take away my ability to write. It doesn’t take away my

ability to read a good book. It doesn’t take away my ability to create beautiful things. It doesn’t take away my ability to enjoy a long walk on the beach...” Focus on those things that your pet didn’t “touch” while it was alive—and you’ll be reminded of the things that haven’t really been “touched” by its death.

6) Cuddle something furry. If you have another pet, give it some extra cuddle time—even though part of your mind is thinking that this isn’t the pet you want to cuddle. It’s still warm, and furry, and may be very confused and concerned right now. If you don’t have another pet, consider cuddling a stuffed animal. Spouses are nice, but you need fur. Curl up in bed with a stuffed animal and a heating pad; it’s lots better than lying in the dark wishing you had something furry to touch.

7) Avoid irrevocable decisions. Don’t do anything you can’t undo. For example, if you can’t stand the sight of your pet’s toys, don’t throw them away — put them out of sight. A week or a month from now, you may wish you had them again, perhaps to incorporate into a memorial, and you’ll bitterly regret any hasty actions that can’t be undone. Similarly, don’t rush out and get a new pet until you’ve had time to think.

8) Replace negative imagery. The last moments of your pet’s life can become a powerful image—whether you witnessed them or not. Unless you want that image to overwhelm your positive memories, start working on replacing it with something more pleasant. If you believe that pets go on to an afterlife, for example, try replacing the image of the “last” moment of your pet’s life with the “next” moment: The moment it arrives, healthy and whole, on the other side. What happens then? Who greets it? What does it do? Fill your mind with “the moment after.” If you don’t believe in an



“Woodmansterne Derek” 1930’s painting by Lilian Cheviot

afterlife, concentrate on the special things you did for your pet to make this life a blessing for it.

9) Be honest with yourself. You've been wounded, and you hurt. You're not weak, crazy, or overly sentimental to feel this way. Even if you



By Lee Ann Shepard

have to put on a “brave face” for the rest of the world, don't try to fool yourself into thinking that you're not really in all that much pain. If you cut your hand off, it wouldn't help to get angry with yourself for bleeding—and losing your pet is a lot like losing a part of yourself. You will hurt, and it will take time to heal.

10) Make a decision to work through grief. You've heard the saying, “Time heals all wounds.” That isn't true. Time doesn't heal all physical wounds (try cutting off your hand and just ignoring it!) -- and it doesn't heal all emotional wounds either. I've met people whose grief has persisted for years: They're just as upset, just as angry, just as miserable over their loss as they were the day it happened. Such people tend to be consumed with bitterness, obsessing over their loss—and not only do they suffer, but they also bring suffering to everyone around them. Grief is normal, but it is also seductive. It's very tempting to let it “take over.” Before you do, think about how you feel today, and ask yourself if you want to feel exactly the same way in six months, or a year. Notice that I'm not asking you to decide how you want to feel today. Today, you may not have much choice—any more than you could choose not to

feel pain if you were physically injured. Your decision about how to manage that injury, however, would be crucial in determining whether, a year from now, you are healed—or crippled. The same is true of grief. You can't control whether or not you grieve. But you can decide whether or not to let that grief control you. And these ten “survival steps” are a good way to ensure that it doesn't!

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The bond with a dog is as lasting as the ties of this earth will ever be. - Konrad Lorenz

