



Pirate

The "Pirate" Story - Part I

By Robin Barfoot

The message was on my machine when I got home one Sunday night was - "I have a Belgian Sheepdog that I have to place RIGHT AWAY or he goes to the pound because I'm moving tomorrow!" Doesn't it always seem to that a rescue happens on a Sunday or holiday.

I made contact with the woman and we made arrangements to meet. Pictures by email were not an option and I warned her that if he was not a Belgian Sheepdog I could not take him. "Oh he's a Belgian." She said. "I have papers but they are packed away in storage." How many times have I heard similar stories and then seen the dog and it is not even close!

I meet her at a gas station just off the highway and he IS a Belgian. He is gorgeous! The owner tells me her story of losing her business, her health, and now, her home. She is moving into a rental and Pirate can't come. I feel bad for her. Then she mentions that she IS taking her younger dog. I don't feel quite as bad for her any more. (Why doesn't anyone EVER give up the younger dog, which, would probably be easier to find a new home for?)

She cries into his ruff and I leave with Pirate - a beautiful, 6 year old, intact male that has not had any shots or heart worm treatment for two years. I didn't have a lot of sympathy for the previous owner then, but I have a lot for Pirate. He's lost the only home he's ever known and I'm about to cut his nuts off, give him a bunch of shots and, and, maybe, have him treated for heart worms.

Pirate goes to the vet's first thing and, miracles of miracles, he is heart worm negative. I get all his shots and I schedule him for neutering. He has had some kind of skin condition problems and a lot of hair fell out or was scratched off his legs and they have a distinct pink look about them. His previous collar had been a very heavy chain choke that had broken off his ruff hairs making him look sort of tatty. He's thin. I start to work on him.

After about a week of being depressed, Pirate starts coming around. He warms up to me and my Corgi becomes his buddy. He gets along with my 3 year old male Malinois and my young female foster Malinois. He is quiet and well behaved in the house. He runs and plays in the back yard but comes INSTANTLY when I call his name. This dog has an amazing recall. He ignores my cats and chickens. He sits, downs and shakes hands. He is a fabulous dog. This dog could go to ANYONE at all, even someone who had never had a dog before. He's that nice.

As his appetite picks a bit, he starts to gain some weight. His coat starts growing back in. His depression fades and he fits into our household well. We really like Pirate, but it's time for him to find his forever home. I let Sharon and Sue know that Pirate is healthy and ready to place.

I know that relinquishing Pirate to a new home is going to be hard. He has wormed his way into my heart. But if I start keeping the dogs I foster, pretty soon I won't have room to foster any more. So if they can find a home for Pirate, I will give him up. But for this dog, I'm sort of hoping they don't find a home for him so I can keep him.

... *Pirate, continued* ...

But they do find a match for Pirate: Pam, who doesn't care that he is 6 years old and wants him because he is a beautiful Belgian who needs a home. It is a good match. Pam has lots of time and love for a new dog. She has a female Malinois and Pirate LOVES to play chase with my female foster Mal. It was meant to be. I drive to Benton Harbor and meet Susan Spinhirne who takes Pirate on the rest of his journey to meet his new mom. I cry as I drive out of the parking lot.

Within a day I get pictures of Pirate playing with his new "sister". He looks happy. I feel good about the match. I'll miss Pirate, but there will be more foster dogs that I love but send on their way. That's the way it has to be if I want to keep helping them.

A couple days later, Pirate's papers come in the mail. His previous owner found them in storage. Now I do feel sorry for her – she lost the best dog but she didn't realize it or she never would have let him go.

Pirate's in Moline - Part II

By Pam Clark

Pirate came to live with me on January 10, 2010. He and Sasha, my 3-4 year old Belgian Malinois/German Shepherd mix who is also a rescue, took to each other right away. Pirate has adjusted to life here pretty well. At feeding time, a house rule is that each dog must sit before getting their food. Just to make it fun, whoever sits first gets their food first. It didn't take long for Pirate to catch on and enjoy a little competition. He continues to work on greeting other dogs and people calmly. This is a work in progress.

Pirate enjoys our walks around the neighborhood and the other places we have gone. It was a blast to watch both his and Sasha's reaction to the flock of ducks that were swimming in the icy Mississippi River. A couple of the ducks realized they were being watched and quacked to alert the flock. All dog noses, eyes and ears were VERY engaged. The desire to go for a swim with the ducks was written in both of their eyes. Of course, we didn't do that. No one at this house belongs to a Polar Bear Club.

I decided to take both of them to a basic obedience class at a local dog club. Both dogs are more advanced than that level, but it is good to start with the basics and reinforces what I have been doing at home. I mix basic obedience things into our walks, and have some fun time with it in the evening when it is too cold or too dark to work outdoors. We will continue on with other classes.

At the end of the day, it's grooming time. I use that time to further develop trust and "OOOH that feels so good!" attention. It's taken a little bit, but each of the dogs waits patiently for their turn. We continue to grow together as a pack.

I would like to thank the Belgian Sheepdog Rescue Trust for all their work collectively and individually in the care and placement of Mr. Pirate. I know that Robin worked with him quite a bit before he came to live with me and it shows.



BSCA Calendar of Events

Raritan Belgian Sheepdog Club Fall Specialty

September 11, 2010

Somerset Hills Kennel Club

North Branch Park, Bridgewater, NJ

Superintendent: MB-F

Sweeps judge: Ms. Denise Garber

Breed Judge: Mrs. Marie Anne Falconer

Halloween in Dixon, California

Supported entry shows, October 29, 30, 31, 2010

Friday: Northern California Herding Group Association
Entries close Wed., Oct 7th

Saturday: Sacramento Valley Dog Fancier's Assn.
Entry supported by BSCA and friends of Ellen and Richard Haro. Closes 10/13/10.

Sunday: Sacramento Valley Dog Fancier's Assn.
Entry supported by the Barbary Coast Belgian Sheepdog Club and friends of Ellen and Richard Haro.
Entries close 10/13/10.

Superintendent: MB-F Inc. <http://www.infodog.com>

2011 BSCA National Specialty

April 4 thru 9, 2011

Hilton, Orange County/Costa Mesa, Southern California
www.BSCA2011NationalSpecialty.info

2012 BSCA National Specialty

April 15-22, 2012

Best Western Lehigh Valley Hotel, Bethlehem, PA
Host club: Raritan Belgian Sheepdog Club