



## A Rescue Story x 3

by Linda Cochran

Let me tell you how it happened that I came to have three additional mouths with furry bodies in my home. I am certain if you are reading this then you yourself have been there before, too. Everyday we drive somewhere rushing here, rushing there when out of the corner of your eye you see that lone dog or maybe even several dogs traveling down the road. Some have collars, maybe even an id tag can be seen dangling, although most too often, not. I have been guiltier than not of turning my head the other way. For all the dogs that have been ignored by me, I apologize. This recollection is about one of those times that I did not.

It was Mid-September in Mississippi and I was late leaving work. This was making me late in picking up my daughter and a friend from cross-country practice. On my way there I crossed over the railroad tracks and to my left I noticed three black dogs running down the side of the road. Their pace was intent on getting them somewhere. I drove past them. My mind is reeling. What are those dogs doing there? Are those really Black German Shepherds? Are they lost? Did they have collars? Surely, their owners will be missing them...Oh man, I really need to go pick up the girls...oh wait, there's a spot I can turn around!

After getting the car turned around, I pulled the car off to the side of the road, turned on the hazard lights, jumped out of the car, and started calling to the dogs. The lead runner hears my calls, stops, and looks. All the while cars are passing and there

she is deciding whether or not to come to me. Crouching now, coaxing with earnest, I call them. Their leader starts coming back towards me. Her pack mates are confused. I continue to call her. She is within hands reach of me. I see wariness in her eyes. I open the back door, pat the back seat and call her to hop inside the car. She hops into the car but the other two are too fearful. When she sees that they are not coming, she moves to jump back out of the car. I shut the door. The two are terribly upset. They want their leader but want absolutely nothing to do with me. I see their fear and do not relish being bit. What am I to do? It is obvious they rely on her. I really need to go get my daughter. I am begging the dogs to hurry. Come on puppies, trust me. Let's go... The larger of the two comes within two feet of me. I lunge and grab him, praying that he does not bite me. Opening the back door, pushing their captive leader away from the open door, I struggle with the dog in my arms. I lift his front paws onto the seat, push, lift his hind legs into the car, and slam the door. Two down and one to go! She will not come near me. I begin to think "well at least I caught two of them" when she comes close enough toward me...I grab her and after a struggle similar to the previous passenger, I now have all three; two females and a male. Finally, I am able to turn the car around and go get my daughter.

I thought I would only have them for a day or two. I just knew these three dogs would have owners looking for them. I thought I would prevent them from being run over and fairing on their own until that time. I called the shelters, the dog pound, and the newspaper. No lost dogs had been reported. I gave them my information and waited. No phone calls ever came. Five days passed and I telephoned the no kill shelter again. The woman there told me to get them fixed as their owners were not going to be found. In good conscience I could not do that. What if they did not want their dogs fixed? Then three weeks went by and no owners so I called a low cost spay and neuter clinic. They were running a special in a few weeks. I signed the young male and female up for it. The mother dog now donned "Ella" was considered too old for them perform the surgery. She was at my estimate, well over the age of five and this clinic did not feel comfortable operating on dogs over the age of five.

Two months pass and by now I am quite attached to all three of them. The male, now called "Wolf", had claimed me as his own. Not too many years earlier, I experienced this same scenario with my present dog, Duke. I knew it would not be fair for them or me if I kept them all, but I did decide that Wolf had found his forever home with us.

Hoping to find Ella and her daughter "Misty" a good home I called the shelter. As they did not have space for them, I offered to foster them at my home. I brought the two girls up there for pictures. Weeks went by and I did not see their pictures posted. I called them again. They told me they were having an on-site adoption at Pet Smart that Saturday and I could bring them up there. I did. There was no one there from the shelter. I asked the other volunteers there for a person that I had adopted a "give up" from years ago. They gave me her number. As I was leaving, I saw a woman that had been a school friend of my sister. She asked me about my dogs. I told her about them and she replied that they were not German Shepherds. She thought

*Ella*



they were Belgian Sheepdogs. She had a few friends that owned Belgian Sheepdogs and offered to contact them for me.

When I arrived home that evening, I searched the internet for Belgian Sheepdogs. The photographs of Belgians confirmed to me that I was likely wrong in my belief that they were black German Shepherds. I also found the Belgian Sheepdog Rescue Trust website that night and sent an email to the South Central Region Coordinator, Lisa Leffingwell.

About a week later, I met my friend, Dena, at her vet clinic for a friend of hers to see the dogs. Her friend confirmed that she thought they were in fact Belgian Sheepdogs and not German Shepherds. Dena offered to assist me with my foster dogs by having them tested for heartworms and aged. She also took some good quality photographs of them as well.

The following weekend I got another phone call from Dena. She was at Pet Smart and saw the other person she knew who had a Belgian Sheepdog. Her friend offered to look at them also. We talked on the phone and Donna agreed to drive to my house to see the dogs. Donna has a male BSD that has his CGC, TDI, Rally Novice title and one leg toward CD. She had gotten him from a woman named Lisa in Texas several years past. Donna brought Chief with her that day. What a beautiful, well-mannered boy he was. She took many photographs of Ella and Misty and offered to send this information to the person from whom she had acquired Chief.

A short time later, I got a follow up email from BSDRT South Central coordinator, Lisa, explaining to me that Mississippi does not have a state contact and she was having difficulty in locating someone to ID the dogs. At this time, I concluded that this Lisa and Donna's Lisa are one in the same person. I replied to her, telling her about Donna having seen the dogs. Our emails must have crossed before we were all aware of the situation. Lisa tells me that she submitted the photos and descriptions of the dogs to the BSDRT for review and admittance into their program.

In the meantime, Ella and Bella (my female GSD) are getting into tiffs. Bella suffers from German Shepherd Degenerative Myelopathy and I feared these tiffs were not good for her. When Donna visited that day, she had mentioned the irony of

the situation. Not too long ago she had mentioned to several of her friends that she desired getting another Belgian Sheepdog as a companion for Chief as she is at work all day and thought another Belgian could give him companionship. She had even stated that an older more settled Belgian would be the best fit for him. I asked her if she would consider being Ella's forever home. She was open and honest replying that two dogs may be too much of a commitment for her. I respected her for her honesty. In the course of our conversation, I explained to her the situation with Bella and Ella. She said that she would consider fostering Ella for the BRSRT if she was approved by the Trust for fostering and if Chief and Ella were compatible.

The woman that I had gotten Bella from a few years earlier telephoned me and said she had someone that I had to meet. This person came to the Mississippi Animal Rescue League looking for a GSD and she thought he would be perfect for one of the dogs. I called him. I described both of the dogs to him and he was insistent that Misty was the dog for him. I brought her to his house and he was determined it would work. I explained to him that of the three, she is the most fearful and it would take a lot of time and patience to pull her through her caution. This man was WWII war hero whose primary function during the war was training and handling U.S. messenger war dogs. His companion during the war was a Belgian Sheepdog named Teddy. He coined Misty with the honorary heritage of being his Teddy's great-great granddaughter. It was a match in heaven.

I sent an email to Lisa telling her that Misty would not be placed with the BSDRT for adoption as an unbelievable home was found here in Mississippi. I thanked her for her assistance and went on to write that I hoped that Ella would be accepted by the Trust. Lisa replied that Ella had been accepted and that a foster home would be found as soon as possible.

One Sunday, Donna and I met at a tennis court and let Ella and Chief loose together to see how they got along. It was apparent that both were indifferent towards each other or should I say they "ignored" each other. Once Donna was approved by the Trust as a foster home she came back to my house to get Ella and start fostering her.

I thought my "rescue" story, which had spanned months, was finally over. Then I got a telephone call from the man that had taken Misty. The news was sad, as Misty was not going to work out for him. I drove back out there and got her. I sent an email to Lisa relaying the sad news of Misty's outcome. Shortly after, I received the news that the BSDRT agreed to accept Misty as well. Lisa coordinated a transport for Misty with the intent of finding her a foster home in Texas. I telephoned Lisa as I was bringing Misty to a woman that was willing to drive Misty. I asked her about Misty's immediate future. How many times would she be transferred before her forever home was found? I was concerned for Misty. Her life up until now had evidently been rough on her and although it had not done permanent scarring to personality, I was afraid for her well-being. A change of plans was made and happily I was allowed to continue fostering Misty. Having completed the paperwork for fostering I have the privilege to be Misty's foster home until her forever home is found.

*P.S. I am happy to hear that Ella has stolen the heart of her foster mom, Donna, and she will soon be adopted by Donna, her forever home. Chief, Ella, and Donna are what pulling the car over is all about. As I am writing this recollection, there is also an excellent prospective home in the works for Misty. Not all strays have a happy-ending. For these three, their ending is happy.*



**Here is an update on Ella from her new Mom...**

Ella likes to go along when we train, but at age 8, I'm not pushing her to do anything but very basic sit, stay, down, heeling. Good news is that overall she's in great health -- after being treated for UTI, we did finally find a low-cost spay/neuter provider who would accept a 'senior' dog. They found a cyst on one of her ovaries during surgery -- between the UTI, being in heat and the cyst, it is amazing how sweet and even-tempered she was during so much transition. Today, she's much better and her energy level has improved - has even begun to play and run some with Chief in the yard.

All in all, it's been great. Chief sleeps on the floor at the side of my bed or in front of the bedroom door, while Ella has set up post on the floor at the foot of the bed. Chief continues his perimeter 'checks' at night. Ella has taken the role of back-up alarm clock, walking up to the edge of the bed and peering at me should I try to sleep beyond 6 a.m. Given the fact they have an automatic dog door and free range, it's not like she wants nor needs anything --

the Belgian preference for order, consistency and rules means that regardless of the day, I am supposed to stay on schedule. They both get miffed when I get rolling at times they deem too early (3:30-4:00 a.m. on days when I have to travel/fly out). Belgians....sheesh:)

Again, please let me thank you for the opportunity to help, for all you've done to encourage me and help me learn more about the breed and to hopefully be of assistance.

It's all good.  
Best, Donna



**Misty Gets Her Forever Home**

*By Sharon Roundy, BSDRT Co-chair*

Sometimes it takes a little time to find the right forever home for a rescue like Misty who is on the shy side but I am happy to report that Misty was adopted recently. A wonderful family applied to adopt her and after the interview and all fact checking was completed they came through with our seal of approval. So now the three dogs that Linda rescued off the street in Mississippi all have homes. Wolf with rescuer Linda, Ella was adopted by her foster mom Donna and Misty, now called Rose, by the Lemmon family in Oklahoma.

As always, when a new dog is adopted, we encourage the family to take their rescue dog to their vet for an examination. After having her seen by their vet her blood test indicated she was positive for Heartworm despite testing negative and put on HW preventative while in foster care. Co-chair Susan S. and I discussed different options to offer the family as BSDRT stands behind every rescue we place. Regional Coordinator Lisa Leffingwell then spoke to the family to tell them that BSDRT was offering to pay for Rose's treatment. The family graciously declined our offer and paid for her treatment themselves.

I recently had the pleasure of talking with Rose's family and as of the second HW treatment she was doing great and they expect no problems with the final treatment. They sent a photo of Rose running thru a field just prior to her treatment. She looks like one happy dog to me. Thanks to all involved for their commitment to helping three dogs in need. BSDRT volunteers are the best!