

## Belgian Sheepdog Rescue Trust



### TOV'S STORY

By Gail O'Neil

*Belgian owner for 35 years and rescue volunteer*

This is the story of Tov, the senior Belgian Sheepdog, who was rescued from the Longmont Humane Society animal shelter in Longmont, Colorado on January 4, 2010. We do not know Tov's pedigree name or his breeder.

On this particular January day, I received a phone call from Sharon Roundy of Belgian Sheepdog Rescue Trust (BDSRT). She told me that she had received a phone call from the Longmont Humane Society. A lady named Kim thought she had a senior Belgian Sheepdog there. The story Kim told was that Tov's lady owner had passed away. The "relatives" had turned this 13 ½ year old male dog loose in the neighborhood. They apparently did not notice that hidden in his thick neck fur was a collar with tags that gave his name and address. He also had a Service Dog tag attached. Someone found him and brought him to the Humane Society.

Eventually Kim tracked down the relatives. They told her that they didn't want anything to do with the dog and to put him down. Because of Tov's happy attitude and loving spirit, she could not bring herself to do this. She took the time to look up Belgian Rescue on the Internet and contact Sharon. When Sharon called me, she said we had to verify that Tov was truly a Belgian Sheepdog—although pictures that Kim sent certainly seemed to show that he was. Enter my good friend, Alice Gordon, who lives in Longmont. Because it is an hour's drive for me to Longmont, I called Alice and asked her to go over to the Humane Society and have a look at Tov. Within 30 minutes she called me on her cell phone to tell me that he was MOST DEFINITELY a Belgian.

Then the debate came about what to do with him. It would have been a hardship for most of the Belgian people I know to try to foster him. Kim said she had kept him more than two weeks trying to sort it all out; and that his time at the Humane Society was almost up. By the time I got to Longmont, Alice had "fallen in love" with this grand old boy. She said that if he was okay with cats, she would foster him. He passed the resident "cat test" at the Humane Society.

So we had ourselves a large, overweight boy (about 74 pounds) whose rear end was very weak. His coat was VERY matted, and he BADLY needed major dental work.

For all that, he had the best, happiest attitude—tail wagging, mouth open in a huge Belgian smile. He could not have said any plainer, "Thank you, thank you, thank you for getting me out of there. I love you. I love everybody." I loaded him (with some difficulty) in my minivan and off we went to Alice's house. Her cat Baby was NOT impressed with her new roommate.

Thus began several trips to Longmont for me. It took several days to gently groom and cut all the mats out. My friend and fellow BSCA member, Vickie Marie, Alice, and I spent one afternoon at the local dog wash, bathing him and cutting his hair. We had been told that Tov was "intact." He was not. Instead, it turned out that solid "poop" balls were matted in his coat under his tail. He was SO uncomfortable and sore. When we finished that day, all four of us were exhausted.

A week or so later, Alice and I took him to a local vet for blood work and to make an appointment to have his teeth cleaned. The vet said that he also had a couple of small "growths" around his bottom that needed to be removed and biopsied. When all was said and done, Tov came through the dental with flying colors (no teeth had to be pulled), the growths were benign, and his blood work showed him to be in excellent health. He needs to be on some arthritis medication and to lose some weight. His hearing is not great, but he responds to lots of hand signals.

Alice and Tov have been adjusting nicely to this foster situation. Alice does not know how long Tov will have at 13 ½ years; but they are enjoying each other and taking long walks. It is very apparent that he was someone's Service Dog because Tov walks right at Alice's side ready to try to help her if she needs it. He does not want her out of his sight. Alice's kitty is slowly getting used to Tov and he ignores the kitty.

Alice has owned and loved many dogs. Her parents raised German Shepherds as Seeing Eye dogs in New Jersey many years ago. She has long enjoyed my Belgians. I am so grateful that she is willing to foster and love Tov. I am glad that we were able to help make Tov's story a happy ending.

