

## *Thelma & Louise*

*by Marion Heise*

**H**opefully, this story of Thelma & Louise will have a happier ending than the one most people are familiar with. It was a typical work week, with my schedule filled with meetings & deadlines. It was unusual that in a particular meeting, my cell phone kept buzzing me. I returned to my office to find a flurry of emails from Sharon Roundy, with BSD rescue, providing me with a link to two BSD girls in the Genesee County Animal Shelter and the contact information for the Officer on Duty.

These were excellent photos and there was no question that they did indeed have two purebred BSD's. I called Officer Taylor to find that the shelter was only open for a two hour window daily. So, I arranged to be there the next day, collect the girls, made arrangements with my vet for boarding and complete vetting and to give me some time to get the house set up to double my dog population.

The details the Officer's were able to provide me were indeed scary. Both girls had been seen running together for about a week in the Batavia area of Western New York. Batavia is a small town in the middle of farm country with lots of open fields and wooded areas. Having black dogs with pointy ears running around loose with bow & musket season in full swing, open gun season to start soon and coyote season to open as well truly put these girls in a perilous situation. Many hunters in the area will shoot at loose dogs as they believe they chase the deer or other game and make it more difficult for the hunters. Some just use them as target practice.

The land owner was a personal friend of one of the Animal Control Officers, and called her to come collect them as she was unsuccessful in capturing them. Thelma was friendly and eager for



attention. Louise was having none of it and they finally resorted to using a net to capture her. Both girls were covered in burrs and mats, although their body condition was surprisingly good. Neither had any form of ID, permanent or temporary. It appeared they were dumped, as so often happens.

The shelter volunteers cleaned them up as best they could, but they still had some of the worst mats, down to the skin, as evidence of their adventure when I collected them. Imagine my shock when I opened the crate doors at the back of my van and both girls jumped right in. They are both beautifully crated trained and were very much relieved to be out of the noisy shelter.

The vet estimates Thelma to be about 6 or 7 years old. She weighs all of 35 pounds and is very close to the bottom of the standard. Louise he estimates to be about 11-12 years old. She's bigger than Thelma in every way, bone, height and weighs 45 pounds. Unfortunately, the rest of the news from the vet was not good. Both girls are heartworm positive. Thelma has an enlarged left atria, which indicates about an average infestation. Louise appeared to have two spots on her lungs, which would indicate a heavier infestation. Thelma needs to be spayed and Louise has now developed an eye infection.

The girls have been at my house for almost a week, and Thelma is settling in quite nicely. She loves everyone, gives kisses frequently, but is insecure. Louise has completely lost her trust in humans, no wonder. She has started warming up a little to me and will at least let Doug pet her now, but she will have a long road to recover both her physical and her mental health. They both learned how to go up & down stairs after only two tries and both display the typical intelligence of Belgians.

The trust never hesitated to help these girls and attend to their medical needs. All their expenses will be covered by the Trust without question. However, treating two dogs for heartworms and other problems is quite expensive. If you would like to help offset the high costs of their treatment, please consider making a donation to the Belgian Sheepdog Rescue Trust, a 501(c)3 charitable organization, specifying it is for Thelma & Louise. Thelma & Louise say "Thank You". The belgian community is all these girls have left in the world. Thanks to all of you for helping us be there for them when they needed us most. Thank you so very much for all the very generous donations which make the work of the BSDRT possible.

Donations may be sent to the BSDRT Treasurer, c/o Marion Heise, 200 River Street, Avon, NY 14414-1112.

