

Riley Blue Donahue

We rescued Riley in January 2007, flying him up from Florida where he was fostered. A mini-Australian Shephard, Riley was a true Blue with the most amazing silky coat which billowed when he ran.



Mark picked him up from the airport in Hartford and made a rest stop in Marlborough as Riley was barking constantly in his travel container. Being a Southern dog, though, Riley was baffled by the white stuff on the ground and could only look around – obviously wondering what had happened to the Floridian landscape. But through 10 years with us, Riley had plenty of opportunity to become well acquainted with snow in Connecticut.

Riley had plenty of quirks, seems to come with the territory of a rescue dog. He was a serious dog, but he had lots of love to share. We learned about the “slow-eye”, the herd dog technique

of watching you out of the corner of their eye before making a move – usually on a squeaky toy. There were the endless chases around the living room coffee table playing “catch me if you can”. And lots of walks and treats, of course.



When the little dog, Maddy, joined us the following year, Riley became the big brother. And to show he was the top dog, he took Maddy and herded her through the house when she first arrived. But ever after that, he was consistently the long-suffering big brother, as Maddy would body slam him in competition for getting petted.



Riley had a strong herding and prey instinct, as well as sharp eyesight. So, people walking down the street a block over would set him off to the border of the invisible fence, barking and bouncing on his front legs. Until the threat had subsided, and he had successfully protected the homestead. He would track and chase geese flying overhead, and often track aircraft high above. And woe to any chipmunks who might be scooting around the yard – though he never caught any. It was enough to just remind them who was the boss of the yard.



Riley was a counter surfer, too. Something we learned after he had absconded with and consumed a whole chocolate cake. Amazingly without any health ramifications. Fortunately, a Kong fully loaded with peanut butter or treats would keep him busy and his mind off the kitchen counter.

And Riley took to monitoring the life activities in the house. When Mark would be working late in the home office, Riley would come to the door and huskily exhale several times, telling Mark it was time for bed and to put the work away.

While we both had older children of our own, we did not have children together, so Riley was our boy. And we missed him dearly when he had to leave. Hoping Robbin has met him at the Rainbow Bridge.