

# SHEDDER'S CORNER

Fall 2025

Healy Pack  
Senior GSD Sanctuary  
HONORING LINDA'S LEGACY



Photo  
Contest Entries  
2025  
SEE PAGE 3





## Spotlight on Training

BY SANDY VOGEL, PRESIDENT, HEALY PACK

When you become a dog parent, you are so happy to have this loving creature in your life. You want everything to be wonderful for your dog, whether a brand new puppy or a shelter rescue. Providing your dog with training is one of the best things you can do for him. With no training or structure, your dog will just do just exactly what he wants — which is unlikely to be what you, the pet parent, desire. As a dog foster mom for years, I found the overwhelming majority of my fosters had little or no training.

I mention all this because untrained dogs can end up with frustrated owners who then give up on them. In order to give your dog and you the best chance for a happy life together, ground rules are essential. Training is how those rules get established. I am not by any means a trainer. I can teach my dogs to sit, stay, down and heel, but that is about the extent of my abilities. For most of my many dogs, that has been adequate.



When handsome Mufasa arrived at my house this summer from St. Petersburg, I knew I was going to need professional help to enable him to become the dog he is meant to be. At under three years old, I felt he would benefit from us working with an experienced trainer. Friends and followers of Linda will recall that she absolutely adored Mufasa, but that Mufasa was not without his issues.

I was fortunate enough to be referred to an excellent trainer/behaviorist, Cindy Sanford, who has been working with Mufasa and me, as well as another of my Healy Pack rescues, Shadow. Mufasa has made tremendous progress. When he first arrived, he would lunge at the fence when anyone new came by, barking ferociously. Since he has been in training, he now comes up to the fence calmly and licks the hands of his visitors through the fence. He is beginning to understand they are not out to get him.

If you have been on the Healy Pack Facebook page, you will have seen some of his training videos from a while back. Due to the heat, we did the sessions in my barn for the shade and fans. Mufasa had to learn to walk past the horses on one side and his nemesis the cat on the other. His initial response to both had been to try to get them. At our most recent session we worked on loose leash and recall. Mufasa is very smart and learns quickly.

Mufasa is close to ready for his own forever home. His ideal home will be one where his training can continue, as he is still learning. We still sometimes have to exit or enter a building multiple times before he will not try to be first in or out, but even that has improved. He is becoming a dog who is adoptable which is fantastic, because this boy has so much love to give. He is smart, funny and playful, and as a young dog he has lots of energy.

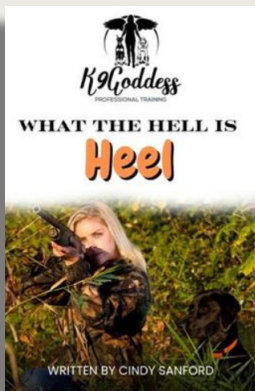
Since he began training, Mufasa's confidence has grown and his attitude has changed. This is what the right trainer can do for your dog and you. I have long been a believer in the importance of training for dogs and their people, and this most recent experience has only strengthened that belief.

Please, give your dog the structure they need; you'll both be happy you did.

- Does your dog jump on guests or bark like crazy when someone walks in the door?
- Or maybe they pull and lunge when greeting people on the street?

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In her latest book, "What the Hell is Heel", professional dog trainer Cindy Sanford takes you beyond basic obedience to reveal the power of trust, leadership, and respect in dog training.

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Whether you're a first-time dog owner or a seasoned pro, "What the Hell is Heel" offers valuable insights to help your dog follow your lead — not just on walks, but in life.

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# It Really Does Take a Village

As this second issue of our newsletter makes its way to you, we are again filled with overwhelming gratitude for everyone who helps to support Linda's vision — both during her life and in the time since her passing.

At Healy Pack, we are committed to carrying on her incredible legacy. But truthfully, none of it would be possible without you.

Your support — whether through fostering, adopting, donating, or simply cheering us on — has made all the difference. From the bottom of our hearts, we thank you.

## Honoring Linda's Legacy, One Paw at a Time

It hasn't been easy since we lost our dear friend — someone who had a magical way of bringing people together and inspiring action. We miss Linda every single day, and we work hard to make sure her beloved pack continues to receive the love, care and attention that she gave so freely.

Here's how some of the Healy Pack members are doing today:

### Pack Updates

- **Luna** is doing fabulously well and continues to shine.
- **Gigi** is being fostered by **Claudia** as we continue to search for her perfect forever home. She's as sweet as they come.
- **Nola Grace** is still her goofy self — and still waiting for someone to see the gem she is. We recently learned she's around 11 or 12 years old.
- **Chloe** is absolutely glued to **Sam's** side. It's clear she's already found her forever in him.
- **Roman** is being fostered by **Donna**. He's doing great though he is also still looking for a forever person or family to call his own.
- **Mufasa** has made fantastic progress with his training. He's ready for a loving and committed home.
- **Kimbo** was adopted by Bill. At 8-years-old, this dapper gentleman is still winning hearts.

### In Closing

We all feel honored to be able to continue this work in Linda's name, and even more grateful to do it with your help. Every step forward is a reflection of the community she built — and the one we're building together.

Thank you for being a part of the Healy Pack family.

With gratitude,

*The Healy Pack Team*

## Shedder's Corner



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a 501(c)(3) non-profit organization, honoring Linda's legacy

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## Photo Contest Entries 2025

The judging panel has officially filed a complaint. Reason? "Too much talent. Impossible working conditions." Honestly, trying to pick one winner out of this lineup of German Shepherds is like asking someone to choose their favorite pizza—technically possible, but highly unfair.

Some actual\* judges' notes:

- "10/10, would let them steal my couch."
- "This dog has better hair than I do."
- "Is it just me, or is this one actually smiling for the camera?"

Therefore, we decided to feature them all. Because really, how could we not? May the best doggo win (or, let's be real, they already did).

(\*Not actual quotes, but they might as well be.)

### From top left, clockwise:

"It takes two to tango" by Tara Zimmerman

"Marco in action" by Paul Gandolfi

"Roman enjoying the sun" by Donna Dion Schambach (*foster mom*)

"Crush, fluffy sweet boy" by Jennifer Chapman  
(*photo by Yamile Haibi*)

"Riding out the storm" by Tara Zimmerman

"Piper poses pretty" by Joan Short

"The trio is out for a walk" by Jefferson Morgan

"A contemplative Honey" by Alan Moses

"Wayne in his favorite spot" by Myra Tuchman Kaplan

"Chief, attached at the hip boy" by Jennifer Chapman  
(*photo by Yamile Haibi*)

"Callan in the kitchen" by Christine Davignon

Center page: "Lily the tripod with mini Tink" by Barbara Sargeant

### A big shoutout to everyone who sent in photos.

Please keep sending us your news, updates, snippets and other useful information for inclusion in our upcoming issue of *Shedder's Corner*.



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# Paws and Reflect

BY SHARON BOND, EDITOR



## Are We in the Midst of a National Foster Freeze?

Lately, it seems that rescues everywhere are facing a heart-breaking problem: German Shepherds are being overlooked for foster homes. While smaller dogs and “easy” breeds get picked up quickly, shepherds are too often left behind. The result is what we’re calling a foster freeze—kennels are full, rescues can’t take in more dogs, and incredible shepherds are stuck waiting.

Why does this happen?

- Many people assume shepherds are “too much dog.”
- Their size and energy intimidate potential fosters.
- The breed carries an unfair reputation that doesn’t reflect the reality: most are loyal, affectionate, and highly trainable.

Here’s the truth: German Shepherds thrive in foster homes. They are intelligent, eager to please, and bond deeply with their people. In a stable home, even just for a few weeks, they decompress, learn routines, and blossom into the companions they were meant to be.

### But none of that can happen without you

Fostering doesn’t require a farm, years of training experience or endless free time. What it does require is patience, consistency and love. Even a short-term foster saves lives by freeing up space for another shepherd in need.

Every empty crate in a rescue means another dog left behind at the shelter. Every “yes” from a foster means hope.

If you’ve ever admired the courage, loyalty, and heart of this breed, now is the time to act.

If you’ve been waiting for the right moment, this is it.

Please don’t let this foster freeze continue. Open your home, even temporarily, and give a German Shepherd the second chance they deserve.

## Healy Pack Senior GSD Sanctuary Honoring Linda's Legacy

\*\*\***FOSTERS NEEDED**\*\*\*



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3. One of our members will contact you ASAP

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# Kathy's Guide to Giving & Growth

BY KATHY FLYNN, PhD  
FINANCE EDITOR

## You Can Help Healy Pack and Help Yourself Too!

A rescue like Healy Pack relies on donations from kind people like you. There are several ways you can donate. The reason for including this article at the end of the year is for you to think about what taxes or RMDs you will need to pay. A QCD, for instance, can reduce your taxable income.

One example is Kate's need to lower her taxes. Kate just turned 70 and was discussing her upcoming taxes with her financial advisor. She was shocked to discover that she was going to owe \$30,000 on her non-Roth IRAs! Her advisor suggested that she donate some money to her favorite charity via a QCD and reduce her taxes at the same time.

QCD stands for Qualified Charitable Deduction. This is a tax-free transfer of funds up to a certain annual limit from an individual's IRAs to an eligible charity. To initiate a QCD, you must be 70 and a half or older. The funds must go directly from your IRA custodian to the charity. QCDs can be used to fulfill your Required Minimum Distribution (RMD) and are a powerful tool for reducing your taxable income.

### The key features of a QCD are:

- You must be at least 70.5 years old to make a QCD transfer.
- The money must be transferred directly from your IRA custodian to the charity. You cannot withdraw the funds yourself first and then donate them, as this would make the withdrawal taxable.
- The charity must be a qualified 501(c)(3) like Healy Pack.
- You can donate up to \$108,000 to a single charity.

### Benefits of a QCD:

- **Tax-Free Income:** The amount you donate is excluded from your taxable income, which lowers your overall tax bill.
- **RMD Satisfaction:** QCDs can count towards satisfying your annual Required Minimum Distribution (RMD) from your IRA if you are 73 or older.
- **No Itemizing Needed:** Unlike other charitable donations, you don't need to itemize deductions to benefit from a QCD.

### How to Make a QCD:

- Choose a charity such as Healy Pack.
- Contact your IRA custodian. Inform your IRA trustee or financial institution about your intent to make a QCD.
- Initiate the Transfer: The custodian will then transfer the funds directly to the charity.

### Key Points to Remember:

- Transferred funds are NOT taxable.
- The QCD option is available regardless of whether an eligible IRA owner itemizes deductions on Schedule A or not.

For more information about IRA distributions and QCDs, see IRS Publication 590-B, Distributions from Individual Retirement Arrangements (IRAs).

Remember: You can have a mix of regular donations and QCDs. It is recommended that you make a list of all of your non-Roth IRAs and total up that list. Your financial advisor or tax consultant is the best person to advise you on how much to donate by using QCDs. This amount will probably vary by year.

### Additional Points to Consider:

Donating money via a QCD can favorably influence certain tax thresholds such as Medicare premiums, taxable Social Security benefits, or itemized deduction limitations. This can occur because donating via a QCD will lower your Adjusted Gross Income (AGI). The QCD portion is not reported as taxable income.

If, after preparing your tax return, you see that you do not have enough deductions to itemize, taking a QCD is more beneficial than a regular donation because it removes that amount from your taxable income altogether. In a way, the QCD simplifies the giving process.

### What Are the Taxes on QCDs?

Unlike the distributions from your traditional IRA, there is no federal or state withholding tax on distributions made to qualified charities. You report your QCD gift as a normal distribution on your taxes using IRS Form 1099-R. (This only works for IRAs you did not inherit.) Another great thing about QCDs is you don't have to itemize your tax return to benefit from one. That means you can take advantage of the higher standard tax deduction passed in the 2017 Tax Cuts and Jobs Act (TCJA) and still use your QCD for charitable giving.

One final word of advice: when you make a QCD, be sure to get the same type of acknowledgment of the donation (a letter or receipt) that you would normally get to claim a charitable contribution deduction on your taxes.

In summary, QCDs from your traditional IRA can distribute up to \$108,000 each year directly to charity without paying any tax, and those distributions will count toward your RMD.





# Alsatian vs German Shepherd Dog: Are They Really Different?

Eventually, most countries returned to the name “German Shepherd.” In the UK, “Alsatian” was officially used until 1977, though many people still use it today.

## Subtle Physical Differences

Although the breed is the same, regional breeding has created slight variations:

- European Alsatians often have straighter backs, broader heads, and sturdier bone structure
- American GSD are more commonly bred with sloped backs, especially in show lines
- Coloring can vary in both, ranging from the classic black-and-tan to sable, all black, or even white

## Temperament and Personality

Personality differences often come down to breeding lines rather than the name used.

- European Alsatians are generally calmer and less reactive
- American GSDs may show higher energy and drive, especially in working lines
- Show lines tend to be gentler, making them great family companions
- Working lines are driven, intense, and excel in roles like police, military, and search-and-rescue work

Regardless of origin, all GSDs/Alsatians are intelligent, loyal and protective dogs who thrive on companionship and purpose.

**F**ew dog breeds spark as much confusion as the Alsatian and the GSD. Many dog lovers wonder: are they separate breeds, or just two names for the same dog? The truth is simpler than you might expect—and rooted in history.

## Same Dog, Different Name

The Alsatian and German Shepherd Dog (GSD) are genetically identical. The difference is historical and cultural, not biological. After World War I, Britain renamed the GSD “Alsatian Wolf Dog” to distance the breed from its German roots during a time of strong anti-German sentiment. The name was taken from the Alsace-Lorraine region, near the German border.

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## Training and Intelligence

Ranked the third most intelligent dog breed, these dogs can learn commands in just a few repetitions. They excel in obedience, agility and advanced service tasks. Positive reinforcement works best, and consistent training is essential to channel their natural drive.

## Exercise Needs

GSDs—no matter what you call them—are high-energy dogs. They require at least 1–2 hours of exercise daily, plus plenty of mental stimulation. Working lines especially benefit from demanding activities like scent work, agility or herding. Without enough exercise, they may develop destructive behaviors.

## Health Concerns

Since Alsatians and GSDs are the same breed, they share the same health risks such as hip and elbow dysplasia, Degenerative Myelopathy, bloat or certain cancers

Average lifespan ranges from 9–13 years. European breeding standards have historically placed more emphasis on health and structure, leading some to argue they face fewer orthopedic issues. Regardless, responsible breeding is the key to healthier dogs.

## Grooming Needs

Both names, same shedding! These dogs have thick double coats that shed year-round and heavily twice a year. Brushing 2–3 times weekly helps control the fluff, while baths every 2–3 months keep the coat healthy without stripping natural oils.

## Diet and Nutrition

Large, athletic and active, these dogs thrive on high-quality, protein-rich diets. Most adults need 3–4 cups of kibble per day, divided into two meals to help prevent bloat. Large-breed formulations with joint support are ideal, and working dogs may need extra calories.

## Roles in Service and Protection

From military operations to guide dogs for the blind, this breed shines in nearly every service role. Their intelligence, courage and loyalty make them top choices for police work, search-and-rescue, and therapy. In the UK, K9 officers are often called Alsatians, while in the U.S. they're called German Shepherds—same dog, same incredible abilities.

## Are They Good Family Dogs?

Yes! When properly trained and socialized, GSDs/Alsatians make outstanding family companions. They're protective without being aggressive, loyal without being clingy, and gentle with children. Show lines often have a more laid-back temperament, while working lines may be too intense for first-time owners.

## Chose a Line Based on Your Lifestye

Since “Alsatian” and “German Shepherd” refer to the same breed, your real decision is choosing between different breeding lines:

- **Working lines:** high energy, best for experienced handlers.
- **European lines:** straighter backs, balanced temperament, often bred with health in mind
- **American show lines:** sloped backs, calmer personalities, family-friendly

## The Bottom Line

Alsatian or GSD—it's the same incredible dog. The difference lies in history, geography and breeding traditions, not genetics. Whether you call them Alsatian or German Shepherd, you'll be getting one of the world's most intelligent, loyal, and versatile companions.

*See page 12 in this issue for a deeper understanding of Show Lines vs Working Lines*

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# RESCUE DOGS AND THE PHILOSOPHY OF *Wabi-Sabi*

In our first issue of *Shedder's Corner*, I had shared my thoughts of how our founder Linda, seemed to love and embrace the “broken”.

Her passion and drive was not limited to dogs, or even German Shepherds for that matter. While GSDs remained closest to her heart, Linda had been rescuing people throughout her career as a social worker, which brings us to the topic of wabi-sabi.

Kintsugi, also known as kintsukuroi (golden repair), is the Japanese art of repairing broken pottery by mending breakages with gold, silver or platinum.

As a philosophy, it treats breakage and repair as part of the history of an object, rather than something to disguise.

The repair method arose out of the Japanese philosophy of wabi-sabi, which is

the aesthetic principle of seeing beauty in the flawed or imperfect.

The timeless wisdom of wabi-sabi might be more relevant now than ever, as the search for meaning and fulfillment in our lives must go beyond our previous materialism. When disruptions in our lives try to stop us, Kintsugi provides us with another possible choice of how we could treat those cracks and broken parts in all aspects of our lives. We can choose to panic or be patient, choose to throw away the broken pieces or choose to start a new beginning by filling the cracks with gold.

Rescue dogs provide us with an opportunity to metaphorically fill their hearts with gold. With plenty of patience and love while providing a safe home environment these dogs will more often than not transform into a wonderful family pets.

Do you have a kitsingu story to share? Be sure to let us know by emailing [ZebraGraphicsUSA@gmail.com](mailto:ZebraGraphicsUSA@gmail.com). We'd love to share it in our next issue.

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Seeing beauty in the  
flawed or imperfect,  
presents a unique  
opportunity for both  
personal and spiritual  
growth

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# Bone Appetit!

## 3-Ingredient Pumpkin Oat Dog Treats

Prep Time: 15 mins • Cook Time: 30 mins • Yield: 25–35 treats

### Ingredients

3 cups old-fashioned rolled oats (old fashioned, not the quick-cooking kind)

1 cup pumpkin puree, unsweetened

2 large eggs\* (*see notes for alternatives*)

*Optional: whole wheat or all-purpose flour, as needed for rolling*

### Instructions

**Prep.** Preheat oven to 350° F. Line two baking sheets with parchment paper. Set aside.

**Mix dough.** Add oats to a clean and dry food processor. Process oats on high speed for approximately 2 minutes, until they resemble a coarse flour. Add pumpkin puree and eggs to the processor, and pulse until the mixture forms a stiff dough.

**Shape treats.** To make bone-shaped treats, flour a clean work surface, and roll out the dough until about 1/4-inch thick. Use a cookie cutter to press out the treats and place on the baking sheet. They won't expand or rise much, so the treats can lay snug. For round treats, use

a small cookie scoop to dollop dough balls onto the parchment. Press each ball down with a fork, creating cross-hatch marks.

**Bake.** Bake the treats for 20-30 minutes or until the treats have stiffened up in texture. These treats won't pick up much browning color. Cool completely before storing and giving to your pup!

**Storing.** Since these treats are made with fresh ingredients, store them in the fridge for up to 5 days in an airtight container or freeze in a zip tight bag for up to a month.

**Notes:** if your dog is allergic to eggs, you can absolutely replace them in this recipe since the eggs don't provide lift. 1 cup of mashed bananas or applesauce will work just fine.

**Bonus Ingredients** (to spoil your dog!)  
1/4 cup creamy peanut butter (non-xylytol), reduce pumpkin puree by 1/4 cup  
3-4 bacon strips, chopped – no recipe alterations needed  
1/4 tsp cinnamon, for smells your dog can't resist

## Peanut Butter Dog Treats

PREP TIME: 15 MIN  
COOK TIME: 30 MIN  
YIELD: 31 DOG BISCUITS

### Ingredients

2 cups whole wheat flour

1 cup toasted wheat germ

1/2 teaspoon ground cinnamon

3/4 cup water

1/4 cup creamy peanut butter

1 large egg, room temperature

2 tablespoons canola oil

### Directions

Preheat oven to 350°. Combine flour, wheat germ and cinnamon. Stir in remaining ingredients.

On a floured surface, roll dough to 1/4 inch thickness. Cut with a 3 inch bone-shaped cookie cutter.

[www.tasteofhome.com/recipes/dog-biscuits/#RecipeCard](http://www.tasteofhome.com/recipes/dog-biscuits/#RecipeCard)

## Banana & Carrot Logs for Dogs



### INGREDIENTS:

- 1 ripe banana, mashed
- 1 medium carrot, grated
- 1 large egg
- 1 cup oat flour

### Supplements

- (optional) 1 teaspoon ground flaxseed for added fiber and omega-3s

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## Recipe from Jade the Sable



## PUPBITS FOR DOGS

SERVING SIZE: 30 PUPBITS

### INGREDIENTS:

- 2 cups oat flour
- 1 cup plain Greek yogurt
- 2 eggs
- Pumpkin: 2 tbsp pumpkin purée, pinch cinnamon
- Carob: 1-2 tbsp carob powder, tiny splash extra yogurt if dough is dry
- Peanut Butter: 2 tbsp unsweetened peanut butter
- Blueberry: ¼ cup mashed blueberries

### DIRECTIONS:

1. Mix oat flour, Greek yogurt and eggs until a soft dough forms.
2. Divide evenly into 4 bowls.
3. Stir in the flavor add-ins to each portion. Chill dough for 20 minutes.
4. Roll into 1 tbsp-sized balls.
5. Preheat oven to 350°F (175°C).
6. Place Pupbits on a lined baking sheet.
7. Bake 12-15 minutes, until firm and lightly golden on bottoms.
8. Let cool completely before serving.

## Newly Rescued Dogs

**B**ringing a rescued dog into your home is a deeply rewarding experience. You're offering safety, love and a second chance—but it also comes with challenges. Every dog carries a history, and as they adjust, you may notice a wide range of emotions. Recognizing these responses can help you to support them with patience and compassion.

### Curiosity

Many dogs begin with cautious curiosity—sniffing corners, tilting heads, investigating everything. This exploration builds comfort and confidence.

### Fear

Others feel overwhelmed, cowering or avoiding eye contact. Gentle voices, calm routines and slow introductions help fear transform into trust—the foundation for a lasting bond.

### Joy

Some show pure joy once they feel safe—bounding with wagging tails and sparkling eyes. Channeling that energy into play and walks strengthens your connection.

### Shyness

Some prefer distance, hiding under furniture or watching quietly. With encourage-

ment, they slowly step out of their shells—each small win is worth celebrating.

### Defensive Aggression

Growling or baring teeth usually reflects fear, not malice. With empathy, structure and sometimes training, defensive dogs relax and reveal their affectionate selves.

### Anxiety

Pacing or clinginess often signals anxiety. Safe spaces, predictable routines and consistency ease nerves until comfort takes root.

### Sadness

Withdrawn dogs may carry loss or confusion in their eyes. Steady affection helps sadness give way to hope and happiness.

### Confusion

New environments bring new sights and smells. Gentle guidance and routines replace bewilderment with understanding.

### Playfulness

One of the most joyful signs is play—zoomies, bows or chasing toys. Play signals trust and resilience, and nurturing it strengthens your bond.

### Affection

Despite hardship, many are quick to show love—curling up beside you or nudging your hand. These gestures reflect gratitude and deepen your connection.

### Guarded Optimism

Some approach eagerly but retreat quickly. This cautious hope is promising — with time, it blossoms into full trust.

### Reluctance

Hesitation at doors or stairs is common. Gentle encouragement turns reluctance into confidence, showing them their new world is safe.



Every dog adjusts at their own pace. Some leap into joy, others tiptoe with hesitation, but all seek security and love. With patience, compassion and steady guidance, you'll witness their transformation—proof of resilience, trust and the healing power of a safe, loving home.

*Emerald didn't take long to feel at home—she loves being a cherished member of Anne's pack*

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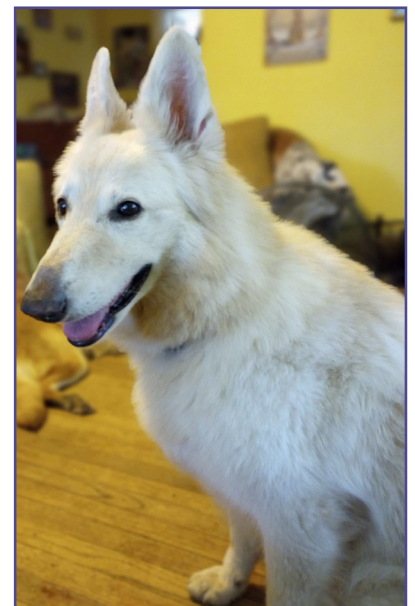
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*Laughter*  
is  
STILL  
*The*  
*Best*  
*Medicine*



Your dog knows you're leaving the moment you put on real clothes... because normally you walk around the house looking homeless.

*Don't mind my German Shepherd sniffing your back side, she's just doing a 'background check'*

*The Zebra*



**PAWCASTINATOR -**  
a person who avoids  
adult  
responsibilities by  
spending time with  
their dog instead of  
getting things done

What to do if You are  
Suddenly Abducted  
by Dogs



STEP ONE: Nothing.  
Do nothing.

STEP TWO: This is  
probably the best thing that  
will ever happen to you.

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*Schatzi is a member of Sharon's pack*

## Working Line GSD vs Show Line GSD: What's the Difference?

You may have wondered—or perhaps even been asked—if your GSD is a working line or a show line. There's an old adage that goes: a show line will chase a squirrel up a tree — a working line will try and climb the tree. As funny as it sounds, there's truth in it. I can personally attest to that with my own dark sable girl, Schatzi. Her name means "little treasure" in German, and if treasures could climb trees, there wouldn't be a single

squirrel left in my backyard.

To understand where the distinction comes from, we need to look back at history. When Germany was divided in 1949 into East (GDR) and West (FRG), the split influenced every aspect of life—including dog breeding. In East Germany, shepherds were bred to meet strict working standards, with stamina, strength, and obedience as top priorities. In West Germany, the emphasis shifted toward appearance and companionship, leading to dogs with more sloped backs and a polished show-ring look. A few years later, Czechoslovakia developed its own program in 1955, producing shepherds specifically for border patrol and law enforcement. Meanwhile, in North America, breeders leaned heavily toward the show ring, shaping the American and Canadian lines we recognize today.

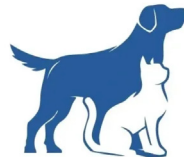
Each of these influences left us with the distinct lines of German Shepherds we see now. East German or DDR shepherds are rugged, slow to mature and famously steady. Their blocky heads and strong frames made them legendary in military and police work, and they thrive under the guidance of experienced owners who can provide structure and meaningful tasks. Czech working lines, by contrast,

were bred with intensity in mind. These dogs are dark, wolfish in appearance, and packed with drive. Their sky-high energy levels and prey instincts make them brilliant at tracking and apprehension, but they require constant mental and physical stimulation. They are best suited to very active handlers who enjoy training, sports, or outdoor adventures.

On the other side of the spectrum are the show lines. American and Canadian shepherds are known for their dramatic black-and-tan coats and sloped backs. While sometimes criticized for exaggerated features, responsible breeders have produced family-friendly dogs with steady temperaments and moderate energy levels. These lines tend to be softer in personality, making them well suited for families and suburban life. West German show lines, meanwhile, are admired for their striking red-and-black coats and straighter backs. They balance beauty with function, offering protective instincts alongside an approachable nature. Confident yet sociable, they are versatile dogs that can shine in obedience competitions, active households, or simply as loyal family companions.

Understanding these lines matters because it explains why your shepherd behaves the way they do. A working line dog might demand hours of exercise and thrive on training challenges, while a show line may be more content to relax at home with the family after a long walk. Recognizing your dog's background helps you set realistic expectations, appreciate their quirks and choose activities that bring out their best qualities.

In the end, whether your GSD comes from a working or a show line, they all share the same foundation: intelligence, loyalty, and a strong bond with their people. The lines highlight different strengths, but every shepherd—just like Schatzi—has the heart of a true companion.



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