

June 2014

Ed and Emily,

What a fortuitous meeting in April of 2013. The Krays were dropping Molly off for her hunt training. I had just lost my hunting partner a couple of months earlier. I came along for the ride and to satisfy my curiosity about GSPs. That one visit, meeting you both, seeing how much you focused on the breed, the requirements a potential owner needed to satisfy to deserve the opportunity to own one of your dogs, I knew I was about to be one very fortunate future Shining Star puppy owner.

The litter Cricket produced, though small, possessed huge potential. Over the first 7 weeks, I, and my family made numerous visits to see the puppies. We were encouraged to hold all of the puppies, getting to know each one, applying our own names to keep them all straight as we talked about them on the ride home. In the end, it was "Little Man", now Duke, who selected me to be his hunting partner. The next 8 weeks of sleeping next to his kennel on the couch will be forever in my memory. I was amazed at how quickly he adapted to his new home, how quickly he was housebroken and adapted to his canine brother Guinness, an 116lb Bernese Mountain dog!

Duke entered Puppy School, the typical 4-month old, full of energy, occasionally obeying spoken commands, testing his surroundings. After just 2 weeks, Duke came home a model citizen, readily obeying the 4 commands taught. I couldn't believe it was the same puppy I had dropped off just two weeks earlier. The day I arrived to bring him home, he was excited to see me but it was also obvious when we went down to the kennels, he was excited to see Ed. Ed took the time to show me what Duke had been taught and the correct way to interact with him to ensure Duke's continued success.

Next came 8 weeks of hunt training. I did my best to space out my calls to check on Duke. Ed encouraged me to call whenever I had questions or wanted to find out how training was progressing. Those status calls and Ed's updates on Duke's progress would make my week. I especially remember the call on a Saturday afternoon following Duke's first encounter with birds and Ed's enthusiasm over the desire Duke exhibited. I tried to visit every other week or so to get my fix of Duke. Ed and Emily always encouraged my visits opening their home around my schedule. Ed would always bring Duke outside and give a demo on how learning was progressing and I would come away with a weeks worth of advances to tell all my friends about. As we neared the end of training, I was able to accompany Ed as he conducted a training session. It helped me to understand just how far Duke had come, to see his progress and to recognize areas for further training. I got to observe first hand Ed's training methods and how he guides the dog to success with the appropriate amount of pressure for the specific dog he was working with to help them succeed. As the morning progressed, it was evident that Ed had formed a relationship with each student and tailored that day's lesson to the individual animal's needs.

