

## Gypsy Lady

*By Molly Hegman*

After I was married and had two little girls, my husband and I decided that we needed a pet. I found an ad for sheltie puppies and set up an appointment to see them. When we arrived at the farm we were led to an area out back where they brought the puppies out for us to see. While sitting and watching my girls having fun romping with the pups I felt something nuzzling my knee. There was a beautiful, fluffy, tri-colored puppy who quickly climbed into my lap leaned against me and with her paws on my shoulders she snuggled up to my neck. I had been had. The girls were less enthusiastic as they had an eye for the big brother who was also a beautiful dog. After they warmed up to Gretel ... as they named her ... they were in "puppy love" also. We had about seven wonderful years with her until she was in a terrible accident.

A few years later we were ready to look for another puppy. We found a little older sheltie ... she was eight months old and very lively. This time I was dubious, but how could I resist the three little ones pleading for the pup? Her registered name was Lady Chardee of Hawthorne. We kept the name to Lady. It wasn't long before we discovered that she definitely wasn't a lady. We had a fenced-in yard which had worked for Gretel but our Lady was more adventuresome. We had to get a chain for the gate. That worked until my sweet 100 tomatoes started producing. A little boy from next door would come over, eat my ripe tomatoes and leave the chain off. Lady escaped every chance she had. All of the neighbors watched out for her but soon her adventures led to a car chase that left her with a painful broken tail. She was good for a while.

We moved to Charleston for Ben's job and found a house with a good fence. Lady was happy to explore her new surroundings. Laura's friends did not have dogs so they enjoyed playing with her. All was good until one day she escaped again. She was safe but we were mystified. The gate was locked. How did she get out ... did she jump the fence? After a couple of escapes I decided to arrange a trap. My bedroom window overlooked the backyard so I opened it. I then took Lady outside. She quickly ran to the back fence, stopped and turned to look at me. I had stayed on the porch. She turned several times to look at me. I turned and ran to my window, arriving just in time to see her wiggling under the fence. I let her get to the other side then screamed, "Aha! Lady! Don't move!" I ran and found her in the same spot. She was trembling! She continued to be adventuresome until she was about fifteen when she finally settled down.