

Sandy

More Than a Dog

By Maston Morrison Sansom & Irene Fleury Bier Sansom



On Sept. 20, 1974, I lost one of my true friends. Sandy, our dog, had become endeared to us with pet names such as our Baby, Pretty Brown Boy, Velvet Ears, Beautiful Face and Snoopy. ^{Woopy, Singy, Pupper, Baby,} The infirmities of old age took their toll in the common way. I regretted his loss greatly as I reflected what little I knew of his suffering.

The general expression "one man dog" did not apply to Sandy. He had grown up with Watson, Byron and Hugh. He was as much a part of the family, in our daily thoughts, as any of the individuals. I am of the feeling that I could reverse the expression to be "one dog man" for myself.

Sandy was sensitive to our way of life at Sighthill. When Hugh drove the old Chevy he would pick up Sandy coming up Water Street hill. He would recognize us anyplace and appreciated any favors. He was waiting to greet us every morning. Mow was his

(2)
great benefactor. She bathed, fed and cared for him, and, they had a way of communicating.

It was a week before I was 1958 when we acquired Sandy. He was a gift by the Jeff family on Poke Hollow Road. His mother a beagle and father, a shepherd breed, had made the litter of pups unwanted. Sandy was the runt but he was my choice. He was tiny and I slipped him into my side coat pocket and brought him home.

Hugh, then three years of age, loved him. One evening while playing with him, he asked, "Mommie, how do you make 'dods'?" Evidently he had in mind increasing the supply on hand. Sandy adapted easily to his new way of life. Maston then was near ten and Byron one year younger both at an age, which we believed, they should have a dog. The fun of naming him brought many suggestions. Sandy was chosen.

I

Sept. 20-74

Yesterday I phoned Mt Logan Pet Hospital and got an appointment for 4 P.M. The reason was that Sandy had awakened me at 5³⁰ A.M. howling in pain. I did not know what the trouble was but I put him outside. About Noon Nancy Gosnell came for a visit. While here Sandy had another attack and was howling and drew up his right front leg hobbling away.

I then felt seriously about Sandy's health condition as it seemed that this was deteriorating fast. In the afternoon, ^{I took him} ~~we~~ walked ^{up the} ~~about~~ the back yard. He went in his pen and seemed to look around. I had not stopped there so he turned and followed across the yard and through the forsythia back up to our porch. He seemed ready to rest so I asked him to come in the house. I then took him leisurely through the house into Hugh's room. He layed down on the floor and I rubbed his

neck under his chin. I realized this was about the end of life for Sandy and I grieved for him. He may have felt my sentiments.

I wondered what to do at the Veterinarian's place. I hoped Dr. Houk could tell us it was his teeth or something that could be corrected and Sandy would not have these attacks. I felt that I was his protector and should guard his life as my own.

About 3³⁰ I got the camper out to take him to the Dr. Sandy loved to travel and wanted in so I picked him up and he laid down inside. He could not rest it seemed though I sat down beside him. He moved to get up and gave a bark of pain. I picked him up and sat him outside again.

When Mom & I were ready to go Sandy went out the front door with us and walked right to the Camper to get in. I helped him in and he chose to stand awhile then lay on the carpet licking his front paws until we arrived at Mt. Logan Pet Hosp.

III

It had started raining on our way there. I went in and was told to bring Sandy inside. I picked him up and carried him in to keep him from getting wet. When he smelled the scent of dogs he growled roughly while in my arms. The girl directed me to the exam room. Sandy would not walk so I picked him up and placed him on the table. He laid very relaxed on the table. He smelled the scents of other dogs on the table. He appeared content and licked my left arm two (never to be forgotten) licks. It was a few minutes before Dr. Hook came in.

Dr. Hook examined him and looked at his teeth - a lot of bad ones, his heart - he shook his head and said it was very bad. The attacks would continue and he would get paralysis and by stroke eventually die. He said, however, he could change his diet and give heart medicine which might help him to feel better. I thought

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perhaps this would require Sandy to be hospitalized - my thoughts were that this would be unbearable for Sandy. My line of thought came to realize that there really could be a humane consideration. Mom asked the Dr. what he did to put him to sleep. The Dr. told her that they discouraged anybody observing this but Mom said, I have taken artistic and I want to stay with him. Mom said she wanted to do this but that I didn't want ~~it~~ to. I said, "you go ahead!" I felt that in a ten second period it would all be over for Sandy and this would save him ^{from} further suffering from heart, ^{or stroke} eyes or blindness, and hearing or deafness.

I walked out but turned and went back going into a room where the Dr. had placed Sandy on a table. A nurse lightly held Sandy - tilting his head up and the Dr. prepared to inject the anesthetic by clipping the hair to better see the vein at the top of his left front leg. Sandy was at ease and Mom and I both reached out to pat his paw. Mom said "Sandy, we are here with

you." The Dr. inserted the needle, and to me, I could detect no reaction. Sandy closed his eyes and the nurse laid him down on the table. This was instantaneous, ~~seemingly only a~~ heartbeat. The Dr. said, "That is as easy as we know how to do it." In a minute or so Sandy gave a slight movement like a stretch and Dr. Hook said that is a natural reaction of his muscles. The Dr. carefully put Sandy in his basket. He looked so peaceful and natural in his basket. We could not help but talk about "velvet ears".

I carried the basket to the camper and closed its doors. I walked behind the camper and gave my emotions free rein. I could have screamed "what a sad life" but I thought "how happy that we lived in this world together".

With tears I drove home in the rain. I took the spade and opened a grave for Sandy at the spot I had often felt was for him. This was near the house, in the sunshine, and always close to our activities. I placed a large plastic cover over the top of the basket and set it down

about 3 feet in the ground. The rain kept falling and I felt that my heart was being buried there. I raised the plastic twice and looked at him. He seemed asleep, and, I could think ^{only} to ask "Mom to pray for him, and, call him" "pretty brown boy" and "a good boy". Mom was there.

The rain, I believe, fell until Sat. morning at 11 AM. This added to the dejected spirits we had. Our way of life will change as does everything but we will always feel the great loss of our faithful Sandy. We considered him a fixture here and part of our beautiful surroundings and family.

I walked ~~by his grave~~ ^{by his grave} and walked almost across the fields but my thoughts seem futile. I know, I know; time changes all things.

I

A week before Xmas 1958, ~~Sandy~~
a puppy was given to us by neffs on Pale Hollow Rd.
Acquired mainly for Maston since we
thought all boys age 10 should have a dog.
Dad brought him home in his jacket.

The fun of naming him was next. After all
the boy suggestions SANDY was chosen.

Heigh was only 3 years old. One day he
accidentally shoved him down the basement steps.
Such holding & me scrambling to go after him.
That was a long sermon to Heigh about cruelty
to animals.

He slept indoors until warm weather & then
we made him a box under the hi-boy in the
garage. There he watched the boys tinker with their
projects.

He was enjoyed most by Maston & Heigh, as Maston
used to take him on his paper route. He was
with Moby all the time during his pre-school
years.

His skats were given to him early after our
previous experience with "Chum."

It didn't take him long to learn the ways of all Beagle dogs & soon made neighborhood friends ~~with~~ ^{with} Thunder & Blackie & many others. They would run the woods & hills & fields in search of rabbits, moles, possums etc. In those days no law was against freedom for dogs and he surely enjoyed his freedom. One day Duke Boy found him under the High St. bridge & brought him home. ~~After~~ ^{After} times Dad would see him running the fields around the Reformatory, but he had ~~got~~ ^{been} around enough by then to find his way home. A lot of days he would not be hungry because he found his own wild life meals or rummaged the garbage cans.

An end to all this freedom came when the Humane Society was organized in about 1962. The apt. people did not like dogs on their property so in order to cope with Sandy's desire to ~~go~~ ^{go} with Master on his paper route, he would leash him & take him anyway. All the 13 years of paper carrying, Sandy trotted the route every night.

One A.M. when Whoddy was out front playing Army a big Boxer jumped Sandy & shook him by the

back of his neck. I don't know how they were separated but by the time I got to the scene the neighborhood kids had yelled enough to scare him off. Ever after no more big dogs for Sandy. He was ever vigilant of the yard & kept them out. Only his friends were welcome,

We soon learned that the ~~Accumulation~~ officer's meant exercises. For ^{after a few days} ~~when~~ he would not come home we would go out to the pound and retrieve him. After these experiences we decided to keep him in his pen during the day, let him go on the route when Martin came home & at night turn him loose to roam the hills. The pen was like a jail & it soon got to him so we came upon a plan of roping him on the porch during the day, where he could be near us & let him loose at night so he could go at will & exercise. We had an insulated box on the porch & he loved to sleep in that winter & summer. Each morning early I would chain him up & then go about my business. I went to observing one A.M. as the end of the rope was not looped over the wrought iron so he headed for the woods with 15 ft. of rope behind him. I could not

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go searching for him because my legs were bad, but as soon as Dad & Hugh were home they started out in the twilight. Though they went through the woods knowing this was his hunting grounds & at intervals Whedy would whistle & call his name. Finally when they reached the woodland that is now the University, Sandy answered Whedy's call with a bark. By repeating the call, we located the direction & went that way across ^{the now} ~~the~~ Univ. Dr. & found him ensnared in a thicket of blackberry bushes. Another time a lady drove over the hill called & said she unsnapped his rope to free him.

We had many incidents with small children in the apt. trying to roughly play with him. His defense was a nip on the arm. The mothers would call the police & take their children screaming to the hospital, when at times the skin was not broken. We got him out of many a scrape like this by paying the bills.

Under these restrictions we undertook to walk him across the fields toward the University. This of course he loved although he did not understand why he could not be free.

Sugh did this part and never resented giving him this pleasure.

His life became routine and we kept him close to home. On one occasion I decided to open his pen gate and give him freedom to run. He ended up on Church St. courting. In his desire to stay with his friend he ran afoot of the police which somebody called. He evaded the cops and they lost him on Water Street Hill. The police on foot making a search for him came to our house and asked Mom if she had seen a dog. Now when Sandy evaded the cops he came to Mom. She then put him in his pen and he went in his house. The police seeing the dog pen asked if we had a dog and then took the liberty to go look at him. Sandy stood out at the officer and he retreated saying "That is the white faced dog". The officer threatened to file a charge against me for allowing my dog to run loose. I talked to the police and argued for Sandy and there was no charge made. At this time the officer carried a tranquilizer gun and Sandy was defensive against any uniform.

VI

On one occasion he returned home carrying an Alpo can in his mouth. We had not tried Alpo but from then on we supplied him with (usually) a half can of Alpo with one-half can of Ken's Ration. He liked this diet.

When Hugh was in high school ~~the~~ his friends would come to see him. One evening the Woods children came and Blackie was with them. Sandy resented Blackie getting attention and a fight ensued. Hugh jumped to stop it and aid Sandy. The gnashing of teeth was for real and Hugh got too involved and a tooth sank into his leg. He did stop the fight and dispersed Blackie. Hugh went to the hospital.

Sandy was sensitive to our way of life. Hugh would pick him up in the old Chevy coming up Water Street hill. He always recognized us anywhere and appreciated any favor. He ^{was} waiting to greet each of us every morning. Mom was his great benefactor. She bathed, fed and cared for him and they had a way of communicating.

VII

and Sandy always was a good boy, seemingly very understanding and accepted all the rules & limitations the new law enforced on dogs,

after we got our new rug we did not permit Sandy in the living room but put up a baby gate across the kitchen door. He would lay there every night as close as he could get to us. often I would go to the kitchen table & read the papers or write letters just to make him happy & keep him company. I think ~~discovered~~ his happiest hours in his last year. Mom seemed to comfort him and he watched her every move,

his sight In the past year we noted his bad health - numb feet - the tumor - his deafness. At times it seemed he slept day and night. Recently he was restless and would just rest awhile and then move around. Sometime he hardly could climb up the step to the porch or go in or out of the house. He would bark to get in the house and whine or cry to get out. His misery was no doubt almost unbearable but he suffered silently.

VIII

When his attacks first occurred he was frightened. Once he lunged against the front screen door to get in. He would have what appeared to be a stroke. I would quiet him by having him lay down. I even gave him $\frac{1}{2}$ aspirin tablet to ease his pain. He seemed to respond to treatment but this was only the beginning of the serious biological change that brought on death.

Sandy would chase the rabbits and cats from the yard in his ~~good~~ better days. The rabbits would run for their lives but Sandy ran for the pleasure. He would bark when he holed-up the rabbits & possums over the hill. His last few months he had a good sense of smell but did not hunt or molest the burries. They had their nests and raised their young here in the yard. He was blind.

He loved to sit with us in the yard or on the porch in the evening. This was his happiness.

IX

During his life in the pen it was plainly visible that he loathed it. He would stand by the gate & bark to get out. I would ignore him & go about my duties. Finally he would go to his box & sleep until evening & then the barking all over again. We always allowed him out after dark & he would jump & run & roll in the grass as much as to say "It's heaven to be free again".

In 1960 when we made our trip to Calif, Grandma Beaddy kept him in her yard. Then when Dad & I went to San Diego in 1973 Aunt Ellen had him in her yard. Just a couple times we left him in his pen & then only for a week or two. He loved to go in the Camper, we took him 3 years to visit Maston in Schenectady, also took him to Fenup in N.J. In his younger days when the pen got to him he would manage to dig out,

after his friends would be running loose & come to his pen to say "hello". This made Sandy feel very humble & dejected - no wonder he dug out to frolic the words with them. A little female lingered around here from time to time. Even slept on the back porch ~~or~~ ^{on} back in the yard amidst the locust trees where we had some old sponge rubber discarded.

X

When Sandy was still a puppy and sleeping in the garage, we worried when it got down to zero. Besides his insulated box we devised a ~~10~~ 10 watt bulb in his bed. This was too man made & strange to him & nothing could get that dog to go in that box. Dad & he had a real bout one night but Sandy won!

Several years ago we noticed a soar & swollen jaw. It was an infected cut so I took it on myself to help him. Hugh had some medication for an infected toenail from a Radiatrician. I soaked his jaw several times a day & then used the ^{salve} ointment & wrapped his jaw. To keep the bandage on I found a bright red sock that was once Whody's when he was about six. It just fit. I concocted a pair of ^{mesh} sack garters around his waist & used the supporters to fasten to the red sock. It would stay on all day even tho he went outside & hobbled on his three feet. He looked so cute rigged up like this that we took a picture of him. In a week's time he was well again.

Another ~~paper~~ "Paper Route Episode" occurred when Whody had him at Utratas. Their big German Police broke his chain & started after Sandy.

XI

Whody picked sandy up & threw him between
the screen door & other door, This saved his
life for that dog was trained to be vicious & sandy
hated any big dog anyway,