

SPRING FLING:
THE ADVENTURES OF
CALI

A GDA | TLC

PUPPY IN TRAINING

**As told to her Puppy Raisers
Bob and Kathie Stegemann
April-June 2024**



Hello again to my wonderful Sepulveda Building Materials sponsors! I have been a busy girl these past several months; growing bigger, polishing my manners, learning many new things, getting used to public outings, and just having SO much fun being a puppy. Let me tell you all about it!



As you will recall, I joined my puppy-raiser home in mid-February, going to Simi Valley with Bob and Kathie and their three labs: Akira, Abby, and Riley. Playing and romping and settling together all day long, they show me how I should behave, and we have a grand time. One of the hardest things to learn was to wait patiently in a circle with everyone for our kibble meals (rather than a leaping puppy dance), and to eat only mine

without jumping into their bowls -- I am a pro at this now! I also have a quick recall to my name, I love sleeping in my crate, I am perfect on house breaking, I have been good at settling in the car, and love to get dressed in my GDA|TLC jacket to go out (which proclaims you as my wonderful sponsors).



We also have a home in Big Bear Lake, so I have also gotten used to settling down for long car rides. And I have learned that the same rules apply no matter where I am, no matter what

house I am in. This lesson has been further reinforced by getting to spend time with several other puppy-raiser families as well, what fun!



And almost every day my folks take me out and about to learn my public access manners, walking along busy streets to experience all the traffic, walking in parks, shopping

centers and other public areas to experience busy crowds (do you know they want me to walk by other people and dogs without greeting or playing?!?!?), and learning to settle under tables at restaurants. I am learning to stay by their side on a loose leash, turning when they turn and stopping when they stop, not paying attention to other shoppers (both adults and kids) unless given permission to say hello. I am getting pretty good at these skills already! Harder is resisting the constant temptation to check out interesting things on the shelves, and sniffing stuff on the floor.....

Most fun of all is doing stuff with my puppy friends! I finished my GDA puppy-kindergarten in late April with flying colors, and now go to obedience classes that are a mix of GDA and non-



GDA puppies, so we all learn to focus on our handlers no matter what other dogs are around. We also go on GDA walkabouts that meet at various stores and parks in Santa Clarita. And our Simi group has a monthly puppy-raisers meeting, so everyone can schmooze and see how



everyone else is doing. I will continue all these regular obedience classes and meetings throughout my puppy-raising phase -- YAY!!

Occasionally we meet up with other puppy-raisers at local restaurants for lunch or dinner. All us puppies are expected to maintain our manners, and walk quietly into the restaurant and settle under the table without engaging the other dogs -- this is hard for a sociable party-girl like me! It is fun when we get up to leave, and

**other diners didn't realize we were there!
Surprise!**

And occasionally I will spend time with other puppy-raiser families, sometimes just for the day while my raisers have other things to do, and sometimes with an overnight or two as well. And sometimes another puppy will come spend time with us. These are both a ton of fun, as I learn to fit in with other families/routines, and learn to host another pup.



We also enjoy some less structured social time. My folks are in a weekend cards group with some other puppy raisers, providing an ever-changing

group of 3-8 puppies-in-training and breeders and career-changes of all ages to play with. This tends to be less structured play time, as long as we all maintain basic manners and don't get too rambunctious.

Oh and guess what! In early May JADE, my folks' prior puppy, graduated as a Guide Dog! I didn't get to go to her graduation ceremony, but at the end of the month my folks took me to lunch with Jade and her new partner! WOW! Someday I hope to be doing something like that!



And in June I made the local Simi Valley Acorn newspaper! On June 1 a whole bunch of us GDA puppies went to the annual Simi Valley Boots & Slippers Square Dance Club fundraiser dance, where they raise money to sponsor puppies. My predecessor Jade was sponsored by this fine group. Well, the event was covered by a full-

page spread in the 6/15 Acorn, and I am one of the four pictures! Ta-Da!

And in June we added another member to our household, adopting a 4-year-old tabby cat



named Shibu. I hope we become friends!

April Highlights:
I am now fully street-legal, and have started going out to restaurants on a regular basis (they expect me

to settle quietly under the table, how boring!). I had a two-day stay with Cathy and Phil and their dogs Johnny and Nitro, an overnight with Debbie and Larry and their dogs Kepler and Farah, and a three-night hosting of another puppy. I finished my Puppy-K series of classes, went to the annual GDA Volunteers' Lunch (lots of puppies, and I was very good!), had my first walks at Descanso Gardens, joined my first Santa Clarita walkabout, strolled Gardens of the World, and went to the monthly Simi Valley Puppy Raisers meeting. And I enjoyed a two-day visit from out-of-town family, a couple of cards-night play-dates, and my first quick trip to Big Bear.

May Highlights:
Regular restaurant



visits continue, and I am getting the hang of settling under the table. I had two one-night trips to Big Bear, passed out kisses at the GDA|TLC booths at the Simi Valley Street Fair and the Santa Clarita Disabilities Expo, and had lunch/walk days at Ventura Harbor and at Point Fermin (Korean Friendship Bell). I enjoyed two cards-night play-dates, participated in two Santa Clarita walkabouts, had my first public obedience class, and went to the monthly Simi Valley Puppy Raisers meeting. I had a grand time hosting Mystic for an overnight and Pepper for a four-night stay, it is so much fun to have an extra playmate! And we wrapped up the month by



having lunch with JADE and her new partner.



June Highlights: We started the month with the Simi Valley Boots & Slippers annual fundraiser square dance with 9 puppies, followed by dinner at TGI Fridays with a bunch of raisers and 5 puppies. The following weekend I had a lot of fun at the annual GDA|TLC Open House,

participating in the Puppy Trials and visiting with tons of people. We are continuing frequent restaurant expeditions (I am getting so good with this), and are starting to throw in a variety of other stores as well. I had an obedience class,



and a three-night trip to Big Bear, and was nabbed by GDA staff to go to a school presentation for 80+ home-school kids -- my GDA handler was very impressed by how good I was at only 5-1/2 months old. I had an overnight

stay with Cathy, Phil, Johnny and Nitro, and hosted 9-week Harry for two nights, 14-week Frankie for three nights, and 9-month Tayla for nine nights late June into early July. And I am trying to make friends with the cat (a work in progress). And I turned SIX months old!



And with the summer heat starting, we have had days where it is just too hot to go out and do much of anything at all. Don't worry, my folks make sure our activities are weather-appropriate, we have missed several obedience classes, walkabouts, and shopping outings because of the heat. Those are home days, with maybe an air-conditioned restaurant thrown in. They tell me that it's important that I be comfortable staying home sometimes, too.



So that is **what** I have been doing, now as to **how** I am doing. Physically I have grown a lot, going from under 25 pounds to now 43 pounds. I have lost all my needle-sharp puppy teeth, and look like a young dog rather than a big puppy. *Everyone* comments on what a beautiful little lab I am!



I am energetic and attentive and smart and love to go out and about. My raisers are pleased with my house manners and are happy that they have yet to find any situations that bother me. They are pleased with my progress and developing skills, and enjoy hosting me as much as I enjoy being here. Life is good!

Of course there are some things to work on. Mostly, I play really hard and really

loud, and they are encouraging me to tone it down a little. Everything else is just a matter of continuing experience.

As for what is coming up, pretty much more of the same. We will continue with our frequent dining and shopping and walking outings, weekly obedience classes and group walkabouts, monthly meetings, GDA|TLC graduations, and other special events. And since I just turned six months old, my





folks tell me I will soon get to start going to Camp-GDA a couple times a month! They will start me with a half day, then a full day, then overnights, so that I can get used to the kennel environment and staff and have group play-dates with whatever other pups are there with me -- party time!! The idea is to keep increasing the variety, complexity and level of distraction for me to work through. I am looking forward to the challenge!

And I am looking forward to meeting you all soon, at your August 2 Golf Tournament in Mission Viejo!

Thank you all again! Everywhere I go, I proudly wear my yellow GDA|TLC jacket proclaiming Sepulveda Building Materials Charity Golf Tournament as my Sponsors!

I am looking forward to keeping in touch with you, and you can expect my July/August/September summertime adventures report in October.

Wiggles and wags and puppy kisses to all!

~Till next time~

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A black puppy is the central focus, sitting and looking directly at the camera. It has a colorful, multi-colored bone-shaped tag on its collar. The background consists of the words "THANK YOU!" repeated in a grid-like pattern, with each word in a different color from the rainbow spectrum. The puppy's front paws are resting on the "THANK" part of one of the lines of text.