



National Icelandic Sheepdog Rescue Alliance Newsletter January 2025

NISRA Board

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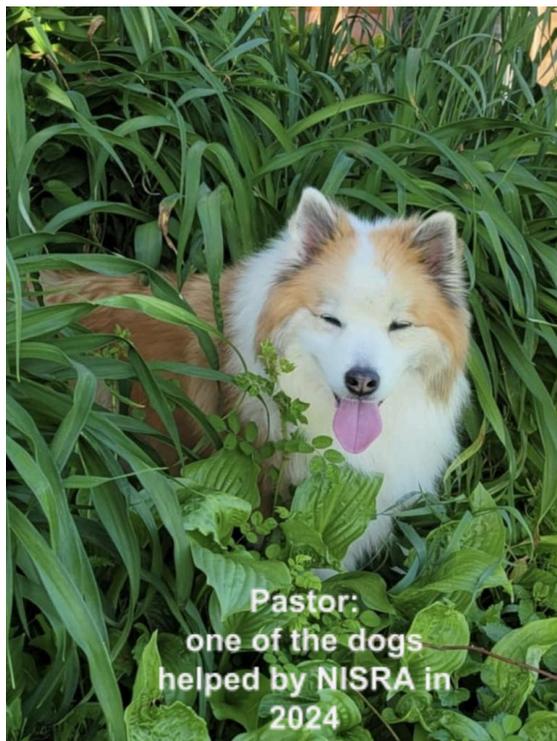


Table of Contents

NISRA: Who We Are: by Elaine Mozur	page 2
New Website: by Paula Sanderson	page 2
Financial Report: by Christine Vowles	page 4
Funding: by Elaine Mozur	page 5
Dogs Helped 2024:	
Nissa and Svana	page 6
Pastor	page 8
Ollie	page 10
Courtesy Postings	page 11
Estate Planning For Your Dog: by C. Schmidt	page 13
Update Those Microchips! by C. Schmidt	page 14

NISRA: Who We Are by Elaine Mozur

NISRA, the National Icelandic Sheepdog Rescue Alliance, is a 501(c)3 non-profit organization founded in 2009 to safeguard the welfare of Icelandic Sheepdogs. Our mission, to rescue, rehabilitate and rehome, provides a safety net for Icelandic Sheepdogs in distress and ensures that each dog finds permanent loving sanctuary. This is accomplished through the support of dedicated volunteers who are willing to transport, foster/evaluate, adopt and donate funds for medical treatment and other associated expenses. Additionally, NISRA acts as a communication link for owners needing: support with dog behavior issues, assistance for those looking to rehome after life changing events, courtesy posts on facebook, for owners who prefer to rehome their dogs independently.

Our website:<https://nationalicelandicsheepdogrescuealliance.org/> was updated to promote efficiency in organization & communication in 2024. Please fill out a Volunteer Form if you are interested in helping to fulfill our mission.

National Icelandic Sheepdog Rescue Alliance (NISRA): Website and Technology Updates by Paula Sanderson

Early in 2024, the newly appointed Board of Directors at the National Icelandic Sheepdog Rescue Alliance (NISRA) embarked on a comprehensive initiative to enhance the organization's online presence and operational infrastructure. The primary goals were to modernize the NISRA website and establish a sustainable technology stack that would support the nonprofit's growing needs—both now and in the future.

Website Redesign with a Purpose

A key element of this effort was the launch of a new website focused on the four core pillars of NISRA's mission: volunteering, supporting Icelandic Sheepdog owners, working with breeders, and guiding adopters. With these pillars in mind, the design team sought to create an engaging user experience that highlights the breed's distinctive qualities. To capture the Icelandic Sheepdog's natural spirit, the website features stunning photography of the dogs in their native Iceland. These images depict them enjoying the activities they love most in the environment that shaped their unique temperament and capabilities.

Beyond aesthetics, NISRA wanted the new website to be functional and user-friendly. The project included the development of 16 online forms tailored to various organizational processes. These forms cover volunteer sign-ups, adoption contracts, liability releases, donation records, and more. By consolidating all these areas into a secure, searchable database, NISRA aims to streamline data collection and ensure that information is both accurate and easily retrievable—ultimately improving efficiency for volunteers, adopters, donors, and breeders alike.

Streamlined Communication and Collaboration

In tandem with the website overhaul, NISRA implemented Google Workspace as a cornerstone of its technology ecosystem. Through Google Workspace, each board

member and key volunteer now has a branded email address, reinforcing a professional appearance and simplifying internal and external communications. This suite of tools also offers shared access to Google Drive, where members can securely collaborate on documents, presentations, and web content. By storing critical files in a centralized location, the alliance can maintain tighter version control and reduce the risk of data loss over time.

For monthly board and committee meetings, NISRA relies on Zoom. Each session is recorded and transcribed, ensuring that meeting minutes and action items are captured accurately. This approach not only supports transparency for current members but also creates a valuable archive for individuals who join the board in the future.

Robust Project Management for Long-Term Success

Recognizing the importance of efficient project oversight, NISRA also introduced a comprehensive project management platform through Teamwork. This tool keeps essential conversations, updates, documents, and task lists in one place—accessible to all relevant stakeholders. By housing these resources under a single platform, NISRA mitigates the risk of lost information when leadership transitions occur. The result is a more seamless onboarding experience for new board members and volunteers, allowing them to quickly access historical data and get up to speed on active and pending initiatives.

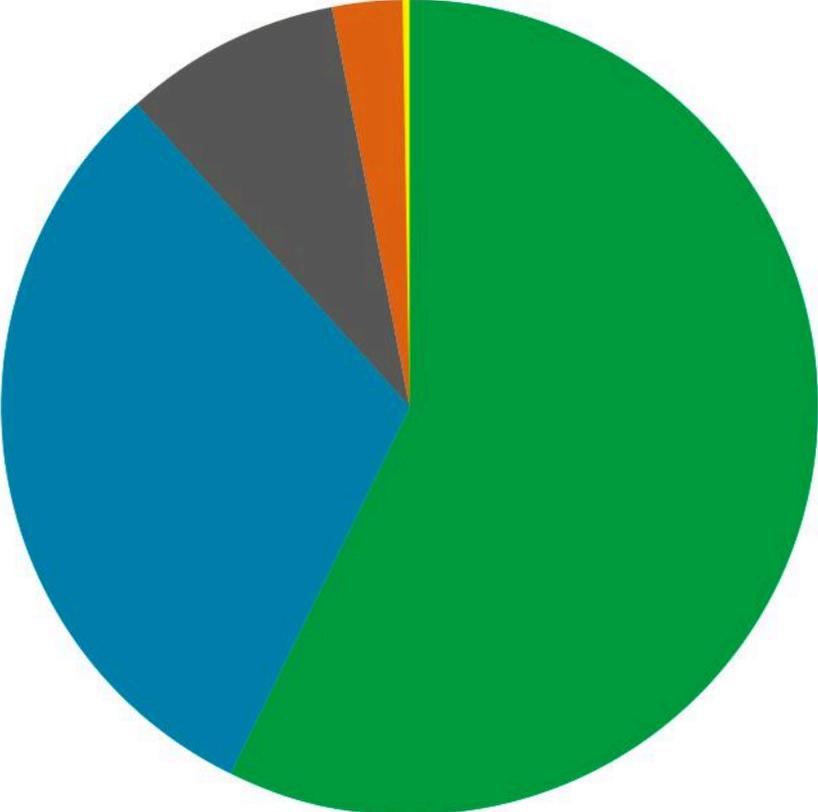
Looking Ahead

NISRA's new website and technology framework represent a crucial step forward for the organization. By integrating modern digital tools, the alliance can deliver more consistent support to volunteers, adopters, breeders, and owners while maintaining a strong focus on the mission: rescuing and advocating for Icelandic Sheepdogs. As these systems continue to evolve, NISRA will remain dedicated to preserving the breed's unique heritage and helping dogs and their owners thrive together.

With this transformation, the Board of Directors hopes to foster an even stronger community of animal lovers, volunteers, and supporters who share a passion for the Icelandic Sheepdog. By coupling a clear and welcoming digital presence with robust infrastructure and processes, NISRA is well-positioned to continue its important work—rescuing dogs, educating the public, and celebrating the spirit of this remarkable breed.



NISRA expenses 2024



- Rescue food, shelter, medical, transport
- Advertising/printing costs for donor calendar
- Insurance/fees
- Office & web maintenance
- Misc rescue fees

Funding by Elaine Mozur

NISRA's funding was based on individual donations until 2012 when the 2013 Icelandic Sheepdog Rescue Calendar was created by Elaine Mozur & Dolores Porrino. The calendar was well received and has been printed annually through 2025, providing a reliable source of annual funding for NISRA. (If interested, you can still order a 2025 Icelandic Sheepdog Calendar on the NISRA website.)

<https://nationalicelandicsheepdogrescuealliance.org/>

Reflections - 2025



National Icelandic Sheepdog Rescue Calendar

In October of 2013, Jo Ann Secondino hosted the first Ictoberfest, a large weekend gathering of fun activities for Icies and owners in Maryland, which became a fall tradition. It was held annually for 7 years through 2019. Ictoberfest sponsored a variety of fundraising events including auctions, silent auctions and the sale of clothing & items with Ictoberfest logos, designed by Christine Vowles, to promote/ commemorate the events. The Ictoberfest provided a large source of funding to jump start NISRA in its early years.

As the need for NISRA rescue efforts has recently grown, the need for NISRA funding has also increased. In 2024, the ISAA BOD offered to provide funding assistance to NISRA on an annual basis. We are also considering new fundraising options and welcome entrepreneur's assistance with this endeavor.

Rescue Dogs 2024

Nissa and Svana

The importance of an involved breed rescue group was recently displayed in Michigan. Elderly Icelandic Sheepdogs Nissa, age 16, and Svana, age 13, found themselves in a shelter after the sudden death of their owner, Bill. Family was not close by, so the Delta County Animal Shelter in Escanaba, Michigan took the girls in until Bill's family could make decisions about their future. Friend and former neighbor David Grote first made their plight known to the Icelandic Sheepdog community on



Svana and Nissa looking a little lost after the sudden death of their owner, a week in a shelter, and a day long drive from Michigan's Upper Peninsula to Kalamazoo.

Posted by Emily the day after the girls arrived in Missouri



Facebook. It was universally upsetting to think of these two old girls losing their owner and home and ending up in a shelter. That's hard for any dog, but especially ones that are so elderly.

Both girls are originally from breeders Cheryl and Bill Shelton of Sand Creek Icelandics. Breeder Bill Shelton heard about their plight and offered to help in any way he could. It's especially difficult for him because of the tragic death of his wife and co-breeder Cheryl and being located in Idaho. These dogs were "orphaned" in Michigan's Upper Peninsula. What could be done for them?

Our wonderful breed rescue NISRA stepped in. Many volunteers began figuring out the logistics of transporting the girls from Escanaba to their temporary foster home in Kalamazoo, Michigan.

This is an 8 hour drive each way in good weather, so no small task. People began brainstorming and volunteering and NISRA President Loren Dribinsky helped to organize them. Many thanks to Elise Butler, who drove to Escanaba, spent the night, picked the elderly Icies up from the shelter, and brought them back down state. (The Delta County Animal shelter released them to NISRA with the permission of owner Bill's family. They are to be commended for the great care they took of Nissa and Svana) Thanks also to volunteer Mark Kerschner who drove the girls from Muskegon to Kalamazoo. In Kalamazoo, Moriah Schmidt and Jordan Swinkunas welcomed them into their home and fostered them for over a month. While there, the girls came down with kennel cough but made a good recovery under the care of Moriah and Jordan and their vet.

During the initial days after their owner Bill's death, conversations with the deceased's family were taking place. Bill's son Justin and daughter-in-law Emily were willing to take the girls. However, life had become complicated by their very recent move to Missouri for a new job. It was worked out that the Icie girls would stay with Moriah and Jordan in Kalamazoo until after the Memorial for Bill. Then, Moriah and Jordan drove halfway to Missouri and met Justin for the Icie exchange. (The girls knew Justin and his family as they used to live in close proximity to Bill and cared for the Icie girls during their owner's ill health. They were very happy to see Justin!)

Reports from Justin and Emily are that Nissa and Svana are doing great in their home in Missouri. I think the pictures tell the story!

Thanks again to all who made this happy ending possible, including everyone who donates to NISRA (National Icelandic Sheepdog Rescue Alliance). Here is a link to the website <https://nationalicelandicsheepdogrescuealliance.org/> There you can find information on how to donate or volunteer so we can make more happy endings for Icelandic Sheepdogs in need.



Pastor the Icie

Time was running out for 9 year old Icelandic Sheepdog “Pastor.” His family’s health was declining and they were no longer able to care for him. A local Rescue was unable to find him a home. There was talk of euthanasia. Would NISRA be able to help?

In March of 2024, a member of the Icelandic Sheepdog Community was notified that there was a 9 year old Icie in Michigan in need. The dog’s name was Pastor and he was a 9 year old purebred Icelandic Sheepdog with some known health and behavioral issues. His family’s health was declining and they needed to find him a new home. So, they reached out to a local rescue: Saving Souls Pet Alliance Inc. This Rescue had been advertising him on Petfinders and their



Facebook page for several months. No adopters were coming forward and the family was becoming desperate and considering euthanasia if a home could not be found soon.

NISRA (National Icelandic Sheepdog Rescue Alliance) was notified and reached out to Saving Souls Rescue coordinator, Stephanie, to see if we could be of assistance. The Icie Community was ready to pick up, transport, foster and find a permanent home for Pastor with the help of NISRA, but this offer of help was declined. Neither would Stephanie give out Pastor’s owner’s information or the breeder’s information so that we could contact them.

Members of the Icie Community soon sleuthed out the breeder’s identity. The breeder was contacted and was very disappointed that she had not been notified about the need to rehome Pastor. She was willing to take him and she also had a couple of potential homes in mind for him. She was going to contact Pastor’s owners and Stephanie of Saving Souls Rescue.

I reached out to Coordinator Stephanie in NISRA’s name to give her a local contact as Pastor was located relatively near me. Stephanie told me that the new Facebook post for Pastor was shared many times and she was inundated with offers, many of them from the

Icie Community, to foster and adopt Pastor. She reported that she had two approved, vetted applicants that were going to meet Pastor and possibly foster to adopt him.

After this, I contacted Stephanie about once a week to see how the adoption process was going. She said that the first applicant's dogs did not get along with Pastor. Apparently he was leash reactive and they did not dare let the dogs off leash to meet. She was hopeful about the second approved home.

About two weeks later, I received a message from Rescue Coordinator Stephanie. She said they had exhausted their options and needed help placing Pastor. I contacted the Breeder and she told me about a person named Kathy who was interested. Kathy lives in Michigan on a sheep farm and has experience with Icelandic Sheepdogs. I also know Kathy, so I spoke with her about Pastor and she agreed to meet him.

I went to meet Pastor in his foster home. He is a typical Icie: noisy, busy, friendly, adorable. He is obviously loved and cherished and maybe a little spoiled. He is an anxious, energetic dog that is driving the foster family crazy, though they really did try to make it work. They agreed that he would be better off with someone who understood, and was experienced with the breed. .

So, Pastor (and his many toys, beds, meds, and other belongings) were loaded up and taken to meet Kathy. Kathy and Pastor seemed to bond quickly and he went home with her to meet her Icie and the rest of the family. Everything worked out thanks to Kathy's management of the two dogs' introduction. They both speak, "Icie" and quickly came to an understanding.

I have been able to give happy updates to everyone: Pastor's original family, his breeder, rescue coordinator Stephanie, and the foster family where I picked him up. Pastor is thriving in his new home. He hangs out with Kathy on the farm, plays in the pond, and visits with Icelandic sheep. I hear his special friend is Kathy's 3 year old grandson.



This happy ending could not have been possible without so many caring people. I am so thankful to be a part of the National Icelandic Sheepdog Rescue Alliance and a Breed Community that cares so much about our breed. Thanks to everyone involved.

Ollie



In August 2024 we were contacted by a kindhearted lady in Pawtucket, Rhode Island. She found a dog on Craig's List through her hobby business. She believed that he needed to change environments, so she assumed care for him, but she was not allowed to keep dogs in her apartment. When she looked online to find out what kind of dog he was, he was identified by Google as an Icelandic Sheepdog, so she contacted NISRA. We were not certain he was an Icie, but temperamentally and by appearance, he resembled an one. He needed a new home as soon as possible because of the apartment restrictions, so we picked him up from Rhode Island and found a foster home for him in Massachusetts. NISRA brought him for a veterinary evaluation and paid for vaccinations and neutering. We named him Ollie, and provided an Embark evaluation , which revealed he was 50%

American Eskimo and 50% Australian Shepherd. So, he had a herding and spitz background. His foster parent brought him for training with an old high school friend so that she could more easily walk him, and then she adopted him. Here is what she wrote about Ollie now:

"Ollie's most endearing trait is that he loves snuggling. He sleeps at the foot of the bed but come 7AM he creeps up so his head is snuggled under my chin and he burrows in."

"I thank my lucky stars for him everyday. He is so grateful to have a home. It's very clear to everyone how happy and well adjusted he now is".



Courtesy Postings for 2024

Here are some of the dogs (Icies and Ice-a-Likes) that NISRA provided courtesy postings for owners and shelters in 2024. They all found new homes.

A couple of highlights: NISRA in March 2024 was contacted by the spouse of a breeder who had died. Because of his age and disability, he could no longer care for three dogs. He preferred to place them, but we assisted in disseminating information about the dogs.



Also in March 2024, we were contacted by an elderly man in Vermont, who had changed households and was now living with a grandchild who is allergic to dogs. He requested help in placing his 6 year old Icie, Loki. At about the same time, we were contacted by two women in Maine who were interested in adopting an Icie. We put them in touch with Loki's owner, and they quickly journeyed to Vermont and adopted Loki.



Estate Planning For Your Dogs: Colleen Schmidt

No one likes to think about death, either the death of their pet, a loved one, or their own demise.

However, as Benjamin Franklin said, *“in this world nothing can be said to be certain, except death and taxes.”*

Since death is inevitable, it is best to plan for those left behind. What can be done?

Speaking of my own situation, as a responsible breeder, I require all of my puppy buyers to sign a contract that in the event of their inability to keep the dog at any time, for any reason, throughout the dog's entire life, the dog comes back to me. But what if I die? Who will take back any of my puppies that need rehoming? My family is awesome, but they will be struggling with my loss and the care of my own pets. Or what if I pass away and I have more dogs than my family can readily manage? What if there is a litter on the way?

These situations are why it is so important to have a breed rescue that is ready and willing to help. Whether you have one dog, or a dozen, a sudden death could land your dogs in a shelter or worse. A plan must be in place. Know who is going to look after your dogs if the unthinkable happens. Let your family know your plans. Have it written down and preferably legally set in your will. An estate planner will be most helpful in this.

Each state has its own laws as far as how to provide for your dog and other pets should you die. You cannot leave money directly to your pet. To fund your pet's ongoing care, you can leave money to an intended guardian directly in your will or create a pet trust. An attorney can help you set up estate planning documents to include your pet. Make your wishes known to your family and to whomever you are asking to take care of your pet after your death.

If you are a breeder, make sure your puppy buyers are aware of our breed rescue. Sometimes a family doesn't know how to contact their breeder or may be embarrassed to admit they want to rehome their dog. Sometimes there is a death and everyone is at a loss what to do. The family may feel more comfortable contacting a breed rescue. NISRA is there for all these eventualities.

The recent deaths of some of our dear Icelandic Sheepdog breeders has really brought this issue to the forefront in my mind. I offer my most sincere condolences to their loved ones. I hope their families and the families of the puppies they produced over the years will reach out to NISRA if there is a need.

There are many good resources on the web for estate planning to include the care for your dogs and other pets. The AKC has this article:

https://images.akc.org/enewsletter/akc_breeder/2014/02_estate_planning.pdf
[NISRA Website:](#)

National Icelandic Sheepdog Rescue Alliance is here to help. The New Website is up and running! We are here if you need us.

Update Those Microchips!

Recently, two dogs that looked like Icelandic Sheepdogs were taken into rescue. Both of them had microchips that had never been registered. We were unable to trace their owners or breeders.

The importance of regularly checking and updating your pet's microchip registry information cannot be overstated. Many microchipped pets wind up in shelters and never make it home because nobody can track down the owners due to unregistered or out-of-date contact information!

Here are three steps to make sure your pet is protected:

Step 1: Get Your Pet's Microchip NUMBER

Don't have their microchip number handy? Call your vet's office, they may have it in their records OR bring your pet into your vet's office, animal shelter, or animal control to have them scanned (there shouldn't be any charge for this). And hopefully, they're using a "universal scanner," as not all microchips work on the same frequency.

Step 2: Get Your Pet's Microchip TYPE/BRAND

Can't recall the type/brand? Lost the original paperwork? You can call your vet's office or the breeder, shelter/rescue where you adopted your pet; they may have it in their records. But it's even easier to look up your pet's microchip number on the AAHA Universal Pet Microchip Lookup site — you plug in the number, and the site will tell you if and with which registry the chip is registered (example below), when it was last updated and provide the necessary information about how to get in touch to check and update your contact information.

The Microchip is enrolled with:



Date Last Updated: 11/26/2012

For more information please call: 888-466-3242

Or visit: <http://www.homeagain.com/>

Step 3: Check & Update Your Contact Information With The Registry

Now that you have your pet's microchip number and the name and contact info of the registry, call them or go onto their website to update your contact info. I hope you never have the need to rely on a microchip. But if you do, you'll be glad that it's there and that your contact information is registered and up-to-date!