

WAKING TO THAT DAILY 'GOOD MORNING' TAIL WAG

HAMISH TURNS 10, WRITES TED BROWN



TED BROWN
Column

Last week, we celebrated a milestone birthday on the farm.

Yup, good old Hamish, our four-legged family member, turned 10 years old.

For those who don't know him, Hamish is our border collie, and has been a permanent fixture at Brown Farm since he was six months old.

His parents hailed from the U.K., (his mom was from Wales and his dad was from Scotland) and he is a registered border collie.

I vividly remember the day we got him.

Acquiring Hamish was an impulsive move for me. The Sidekick and I had been talking about getting a dog to herd the sheep, but it was one of those "when we get around to it" topics.

As fate would have it, I came across an online ad. After I read the description and emailed the owner, I was smitten.

When I told The Sidekick about the dog, she was hesitant.

"I'm not a dog person," she proclaimed, "Dogs and I don't get along - they, you know, sniff you."

"And they have 'dog smell,'" she added, "I don't

really want a dog in the house. Whenever I go into someone's house who has a dog, I can smell 'dog.'"

I could see getting this dog might be a challenge.

"But this one will be a barn dog," I said, "We always had a barn dog when we had animals years ago - he'll be no exception. He'll hang around with the sheep."

Reluctantly The Sidekick agreed to "take a look at him."

Hamish's owner resided in Elora, so we met halfway in Guelph.

As his owner pulled into the parking lot, Hamish was perched on the passenger's seat, fearfully watching the road unfolding in front of him. He looked horrible.

When his owner led him out of her van, she was already apologizing - seems Hamish got car sick, really easily.

He'd thrown up in her van, and his mouth was drooling like a tap.

But once outside of the van, he morphed into a totally different dog than the one who looked to be with-in an inch of death.

And who does he trot over to, with his ears up and his tail wagging?

You guessed it, The Sidekick.

She squatted down to him, talked away to him, took the leash and the two of them walked around the parking lot, her chatting to him, with him wagging his tail in agreement.

He was a major suck-up



EHS, Alison Walker photos

The photo on the left is from 1996 showing Rene's Flowers in the Starkman Block at 4 Mill St. in Acton. On the right is the building today. This year marks the 200th anniversary of the founding of Halton Hills (Esquessing township).

dog if I ever saw one.

"He seems to like her," said his owner.

"Yup, her but not me," I thought, after I did the calling to get him, and set up the meeting ...

The drive home was uneventful, until I pulled into the driveway.

He threw up in my truck.

The Sidekick rushed to his defence, babying him and doing all the sorts of

things that mothering types like her do - and she still does.

The rest is history; Hamish quickly became a perfect fit.

When we sold the sheep in 2017, Hamish officially retired from herding and moved into the farmhouse full time.

Since I'm semi-retired, and he's fully retired, we spend most days together.

With his advancing

years, 10 human years, or "70 dog years," his age is starting to show.

He's a bit slower getting to his feet, and it takes him a tad longer to climb the stairs. He also snoozes in the sun more than he used to.

But once outside, he still can bolt across the yard after a squirrel like nothing's changed.

Hamish turning 10 is a reminder to The Sidekick

and me that we're all advancing our years.

And his time will eventually arrive.

But until then, we'll enjoy that warm, fuzzy feeling every day, as he rubs up against us, wagging his tail "good morning" to start our day together.

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