

OLIVIA MARJO

the 1st 2 years





ALFALFA



SKYE

# OLIVIA MARJO

BORN: July 2, 2017

ADOPTED: Dec. 20, 2017

AGE: 5 months, 18 days

WEIGHT: 6 pounds

BREED: Miniature Poodle

For two days we debated our new puppy's name. Several options were suggested and mulled over, but we quickly narrowed to two: Sadie or Olivia.

Both were names we liked. Steve leaned toward Sadie initially. I gave both serious consideration, but truth is, I preferred Olivia from the start. It was a name chosen for the heroine in a Regency Romance work-in-progress years prior, so rather special to me already. Plus, it seemed to fit our precious fur-baby.

By December 22, OLIVIA won out over Sadie!

The middle name was easy. As an homage to my mother - a true dog-whisperer who never spent more than a handful of weeks in her life without a small dog at her side - I abbreviated her name, Marjorie Jo, to MARJO.





On December 20, 2017 a true Christmas miracle occurred in the Lathan household.

On our way to Louisville for some last minute Christmas shopping, we stopped at the Kroger's in Mt. Washington. In the maybe 10 minutes I was inside, Steve made a phone call I never in a million years anticipated. I overheard the tail-end of the conversation when I slipped back into the car, dumbfounded and not trusting my ears as I slowly comprehended the topic. He ended the call, turned to me and said, "That was a lady who breeds miniature poodles and we are going to get one for you."

I broke down in tears and didn't stop for close to an hour!

2017 had been a tumultuous year for me for several reasons, but mainly due to a reoccurrence of tongue cancer. That trauma was behind us, but the fright of what-could-have-been weighed heavily on Steve. He knew that the one great desire of my heart never realized was to have a devoted, loving, faithful, inside canine companion to pamper and spoil. Small dogs had brought my mom joy for as long as I could remember, beginning with Gidget when I was nine, and I had always longed for such a relationship. The pets we had kept over the years were delightful in their own ways, but never quite fulfilled the role of a bonded companion. Now, more than at any other time in my life, I needed a comfort animal, but had long since given up on the dream. For Christmas of 2017, my wonderful husband made my dream come true!

Unbeknownst to me, he had been considering relenting on his no-dog policy for a while. But why a poodle? Apparently, Steve had done some research! Poodles are very smart, for one thing, as well as hypoallergenic and non-shedding. Those are marvelous perks, but frankly I did not care what breed. A poodle was as good as any, as I saw it, and there was no way I was about to argue! He Googled "miniature poodles in Louisville" and Kathy's Poodle Kids was the first to pop up. God was clearly intervening!







# Believe in the Miracle

Kathy Stenger, a miniature and toy poodle breeder for over 25 years, had a litter of five puppies born in July. Kathy was very particular about who adopted her "kids" and almost refused when Steve said he wanted a "Christmas puppy." Thanks be to God, she listened to his story about me and told us later that she felt a prompting to give us a chance.

Parts of the next hour are a blur to me. I seriously did cry for a long time, the inability to control my elation mingled with a fair amount of fear that something would go wrong or that Steve would change his mind. Fortunately, Kathy could not meet us right away, giving us both time to calm and prepare.

We went to the bank and then went to Petsmart for a few things, although neither of us could think clearly on such short notice to buy sensibly. When the time came to meet the puppies, my anxiousness could barely be contained! Of the five puppies, only one was a male. I superstitiously decided that I wanted a female since all of our pets had been male. Wyatt was wonderful, as was Silk, but neither had been the cuddly, indoor dog I wanted. As for Belgarath, well, no need to get into that here!

It was a tough choice between the four females. Honestly, the final decision was essentially an eeny-meeny-miny-moe selection since they were all so adorable. Or so it seemed at the time. Now we know that this girl was gently calling to us and that God was pushing us her way as she is absolutely perfect.

The pages of this album follow our blissful journey as proud parents of our miniature poodle.





Selecting one from the litter of five adorable puppies was very difficult! I sat inside their play area for an hour, waiting for one to "call to me" in some mystical way. We took turns hugging and playing with each one, changing our minds several times because they were all so very cute! Finally we chose our girl, mainly due to the brown patch over her left eye and her sweet, reserved personality.



In the playpen at Kathy's house with her siblings. What a bunch of cuties!



First photo holding my new, as yet unnamed miniature poodle!







Freshly bathed and hanging out with her new mom in the basement office.



First dinner with her new daddy. No nibbles of chicken this time, but soon this will be a tradition!



We stopped at Petsmart in Louisville for more supplies before going home. First toy had to be Mickey Mouse!



All tucked out! Sleeping on mom's lap. Best day EVER!



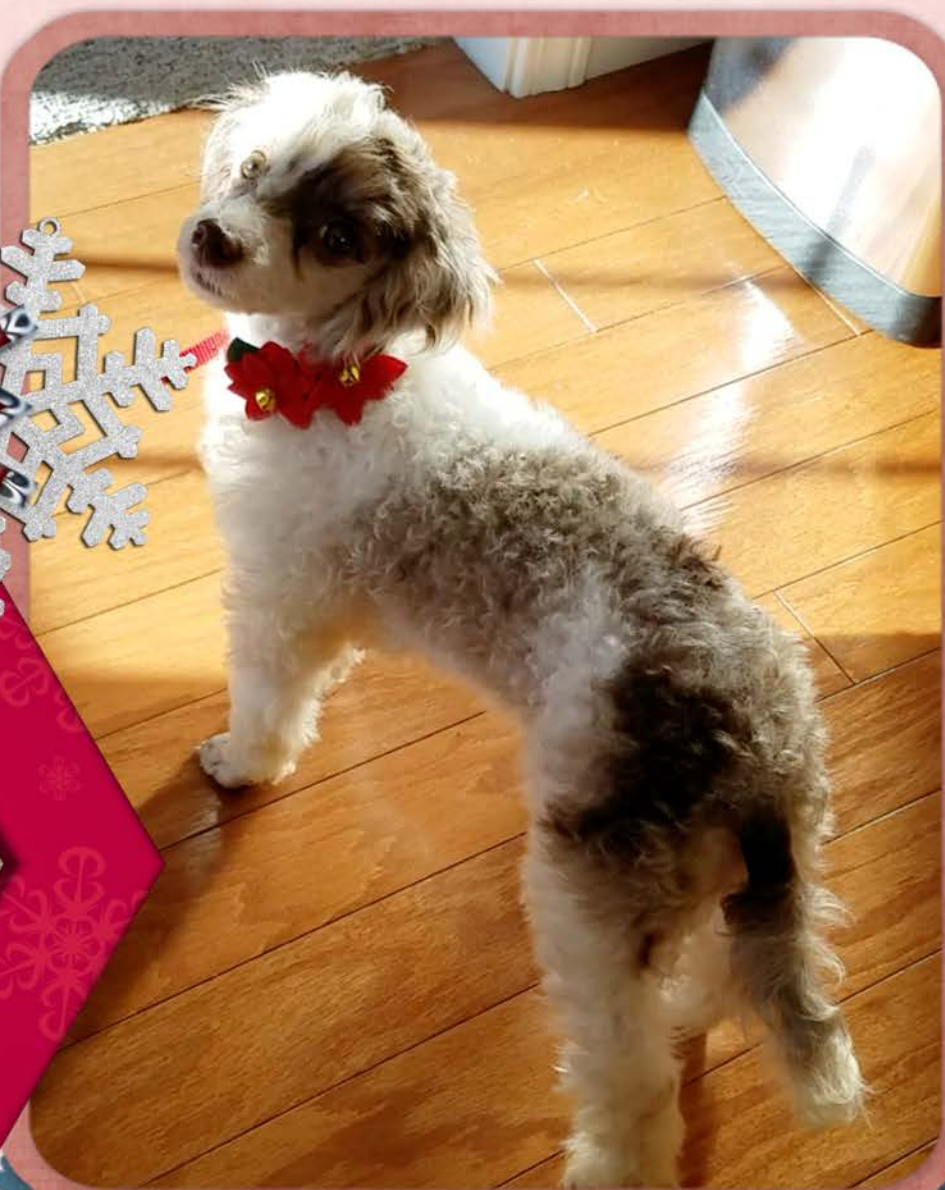
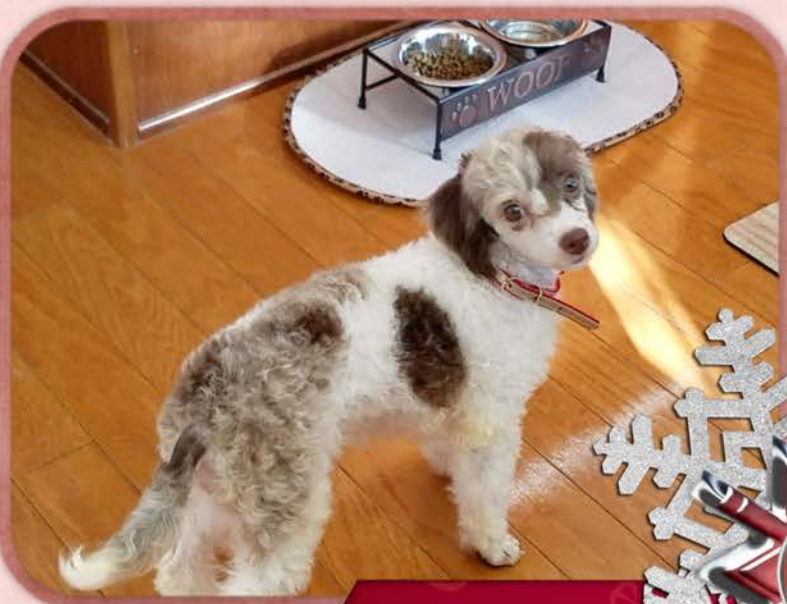


# Dec 21



For our first day, we let our new baby explore the main floor rooms. She loved her food. She loved the denti-treats. She loved her stuffed toys and cushy bed. She loved exploring and sniffing every corner we allowed her to roam to. She loved looking at her reflection in the dishwasher and barking like a tough dog!

She loved walking on the lawn, smelling the wonderful aromas, and eating the grass. She didn't mind her purple harness and leash. We took her outside often, baby-steps to housebreaking, but kept the puppy pads close by.



First time on grass and first pee-pee outside!







The  
*Toys*  
of Christmas



*merry  
&  
hairsty*





FIRST

CHRISTMAS



Snoopy was Olivia's first Christmas gift, from "human sister" Emily.







toys!





tough  
on  
toys!







As soon as we adopted Olivia, we asked Kyle & Serena (who have three dogs, and cats too) for the best veterinarian in town. No hesitation, they named Dr. Joseph Taylor at Bardstown Animal Clinic.

Kathy Stenger had already given the required puppy series of three 5-way-shots and the 5-day worming course, so our sweet new baby was up-to-date for her age. For this reason, and per his protocol for a new puppy, when we brought Olivia in on December 22, it was an informal "meet the doctor" visit. She was given a rawhide chewy, chewable medication for heartworm and flea protection, and a free bag of Science Diet puppy food. We were given informational pamphlets! Dr. Taylor was wonderful, as was his entire staff. Plus, he is a miniature poodle owner too!

On January 5, 2018, Olivia went in for the serious visit. She had a full exam and more shots. In just over a week with us, she gained half a pound! To our relief, she checked out 100% healthy and perfect.





**poodle (n.)**

LITERALLY MEANS

**"puddle hound"**

from German **Pudel**, shortened form of **Pudelhund** "water dog,"  
from Low German **Pudel** "puddle" + German **Hund** "hound"

The Poodle is one of the oldest purebred dogs. Its origins are uncertain, but most historians agree that centuries ago, cross-breeding of European water dogs and the North African Barbet resulted in the Standard Poodle.

Smaller versions of Poodles emerged in the early 1400s. One reason for a tiny poodle was to sniff out truffles in the woods of England, Spain, & Germany. Another purpose was as a companion to nobility and upper classes.



Poodles come in 3 sizes ~

Standard: over 15" & up to 70#

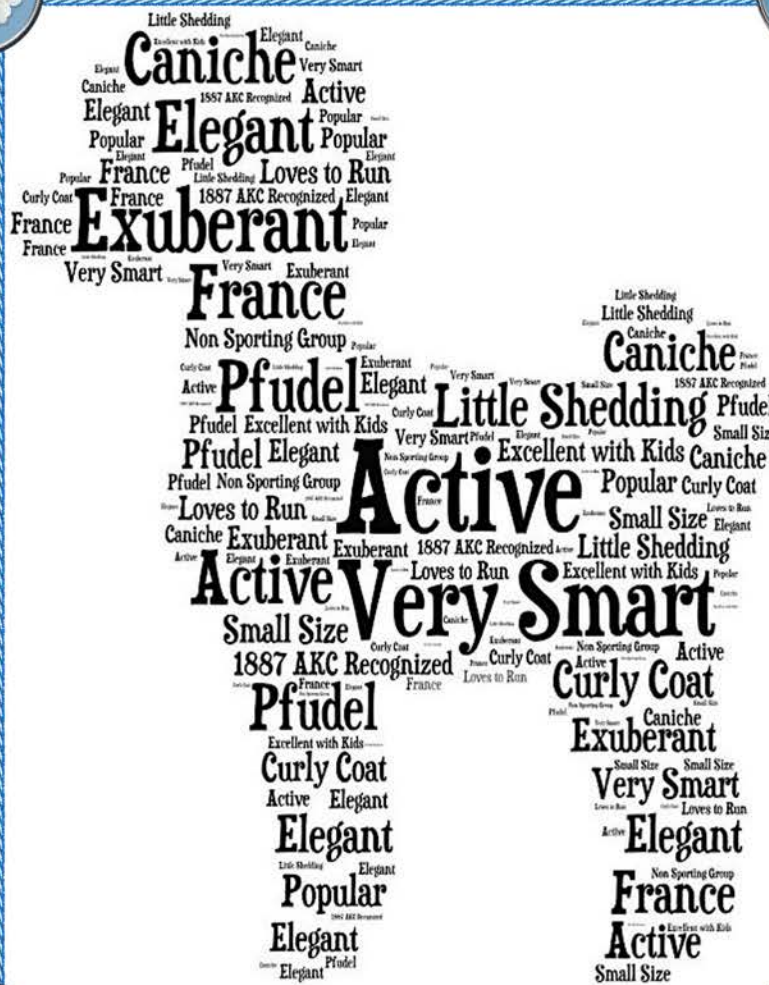
Miniature: 10" to 15" & 12 to 20#

Toy: <10" & 5 to 7#

Original Poodles were 3 distinct colors: black, white, or black & white. Multi-colored Poodles are called "parti" colored and today come in a wide variety of patterns.



POODLES ARE NOT FRENCH THEY ARE GERMAN



Believed to be a  
c.112 BC rendering of a  
Poodle on a Roman coin.

**I ♥  
MEINEN  
PUDEL**

The Poodle Skirt  
originated in 1947 by  
American Juli Charlot  
as a fun, last minute  
Christmas skirt.



The England  
Kennel Club  
registered the first  
Poodle in 1874.

The American  
Kennel Club  
recognized the  
Poodle breed in  
1886.

**SUPERIOR**



**GERMAN  
ENGINEERING**

In France, the Poodle is  
called a "chien canard"  
or "caniche" for its  
duck hunting abilities.  
Initially a working dog  
for water retrieval,  
the breed became  
a favorite.  
Today the Poodle is the  
National Dog of France.





# JANUARY 2018



**JANUARY  
SNOWY  
DAYS**

**OLIVIA  
LOVED IT!**

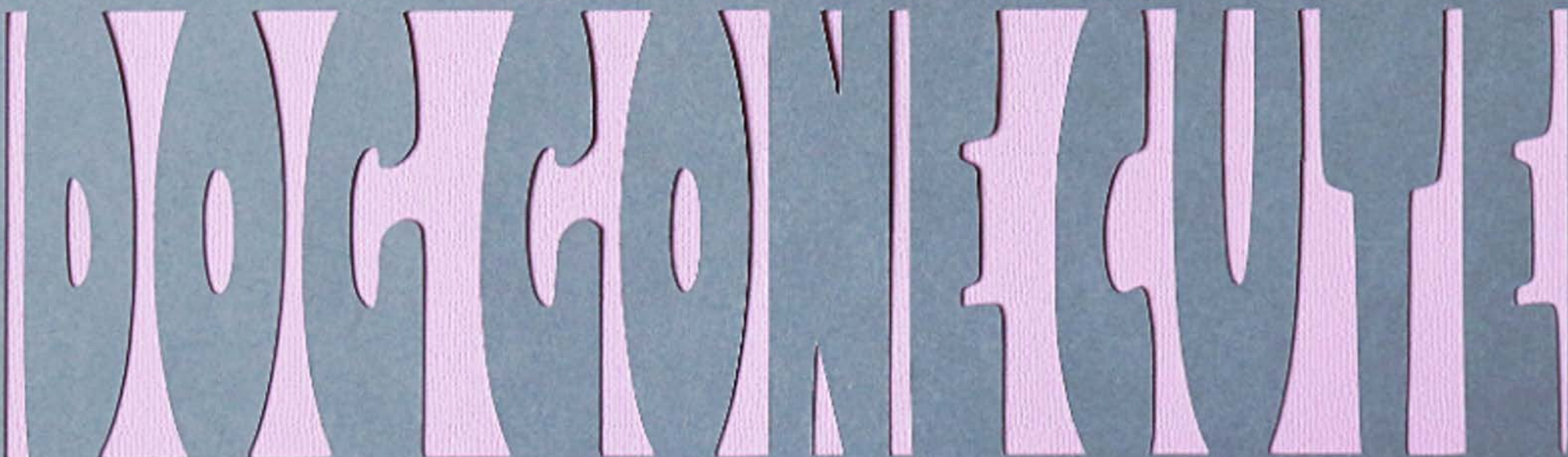












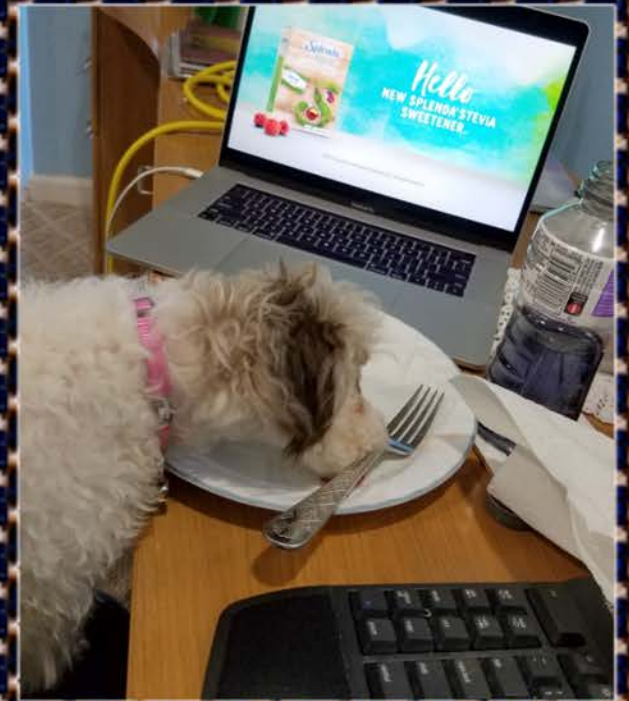




POODLE  
DAD







LIFE IS  
BETTER  
WITH A POODLE





FEBRUARY







Love



By February, Olivia had been with us for a whole month. She was completely housetrained, having only one or two more #2 accidents. We had fully fallen in love long ago and were well adjusted to having her in our life. Routines were established, and we were very comfortable taking her with us. She was never left alone!



H A P P Y



Be My Valentine



Love makes the world go round



love /'lev/noun: ♥  
love; plural noun: love an intense feeling of deep affection.



## TIME 2 LEARN

Sit!



Watch me!



Lay down!



Stand!

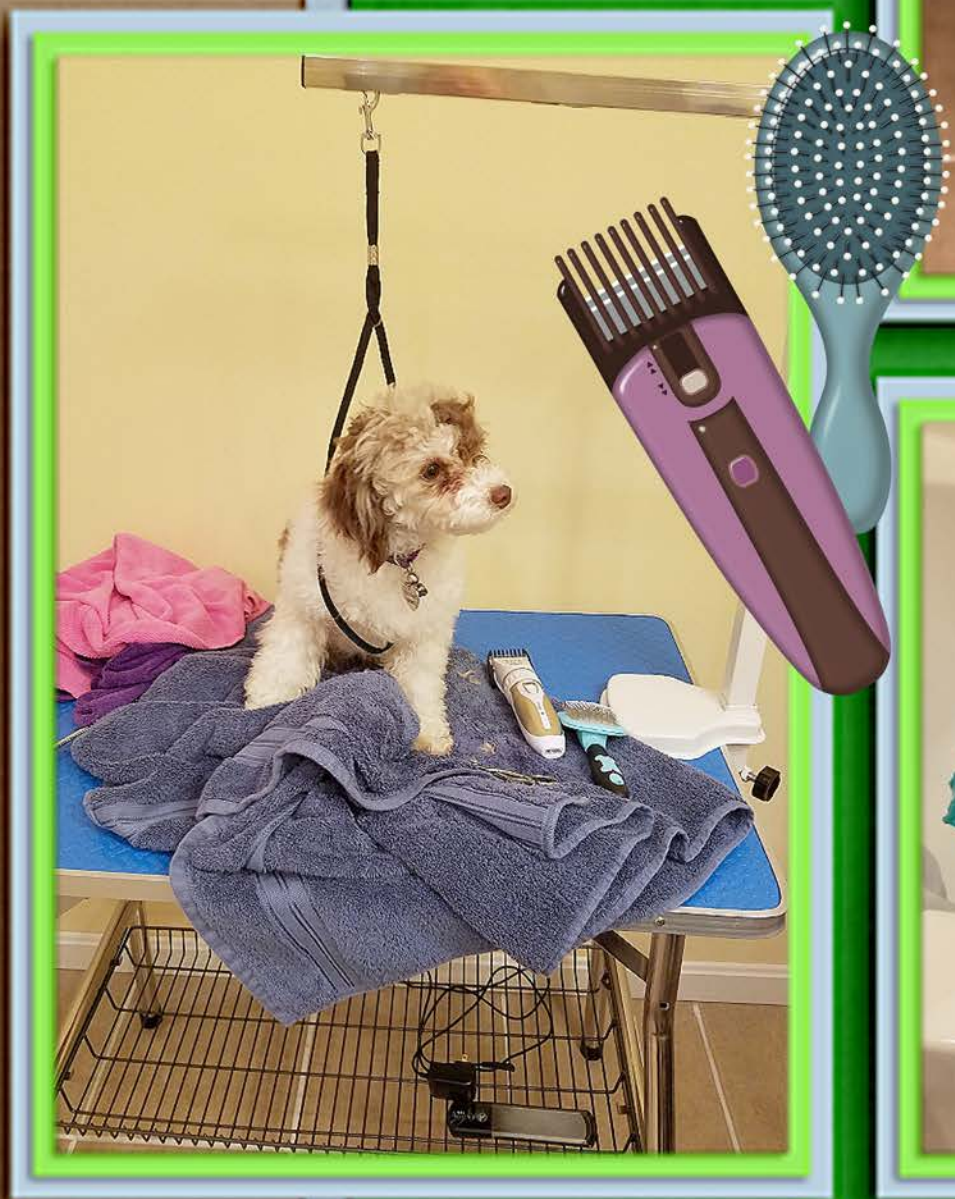
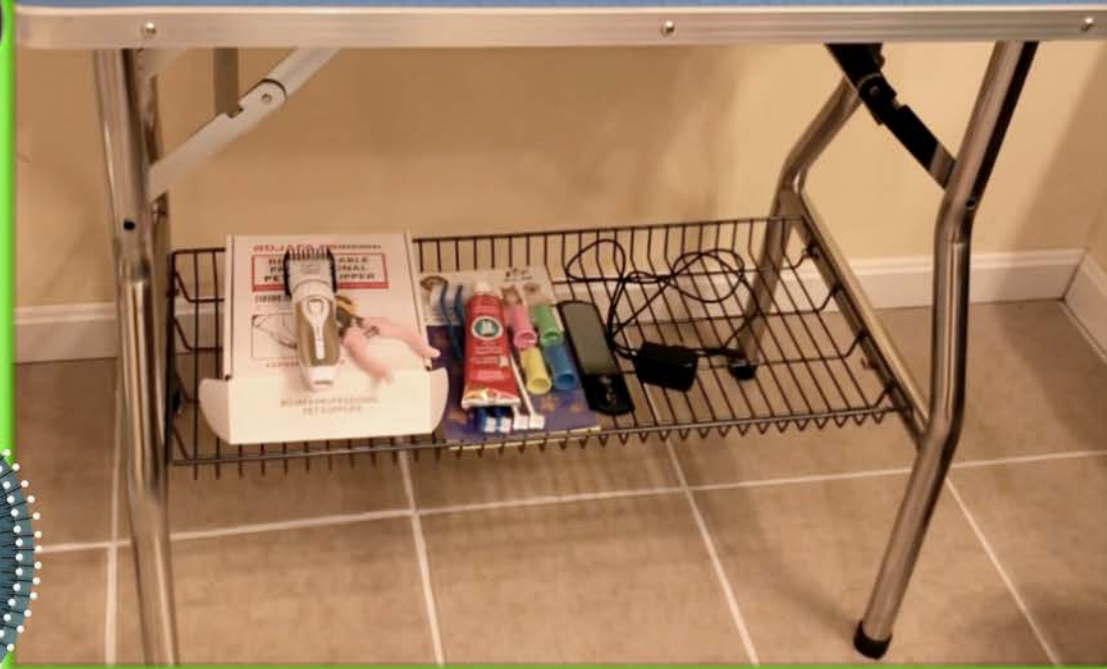


We signed Olivia up for a Puppy Training Class at Petsmart in Louisville. For 6 weeks, one day a week on Saturday, we attended the class. We learned how to use treats and a clicker to teach her discipline and commands. It was very fun, and Olivia did great! She got distracted easily during the class with the other dogs, but at home practice she learned very fast. So proud of our sweet baby girl!



# GO DIRTY!

After a bit of debate, I decided to learn how to groom Olivia myself. Since we had no intention of doing any of the "poodle cuts" a basic all-over trim is fairly easy. Google searching for how-to articles and best equipment, along with Amazon reviews, led to the cutting table, trimmers, bathtub, etc. that are best for poodles.





after bath



DOGGY  
BATH  
TIME





January

The Knights of  
the Hound Table



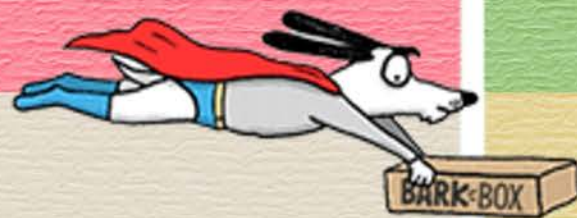
February

PARADISE  
UNLEASHED



March

The  
Academy of  
Fine Arfs



BARK=BOX®



April

BARKBEARD'S  
TREASURE:  
A PIRATE'S TAIL



May

AGE OF THE  
FUROAH



June

Squeakhearts  
Under the Stars



July

**BARK vs.  
TOXICRITTERS**



August

**Secrets of  
the Rainfurrest**



September

**BARK SLOP  
STREET FAIRE**



# BarkBox



October

**Night of the  
Ghost Squirrels**



November

**The Grinch**



December

**VIKINGS OF  
VALHALLA**



# March 12



**WINTER** wonderland







LOVE  
SNOW



March 21



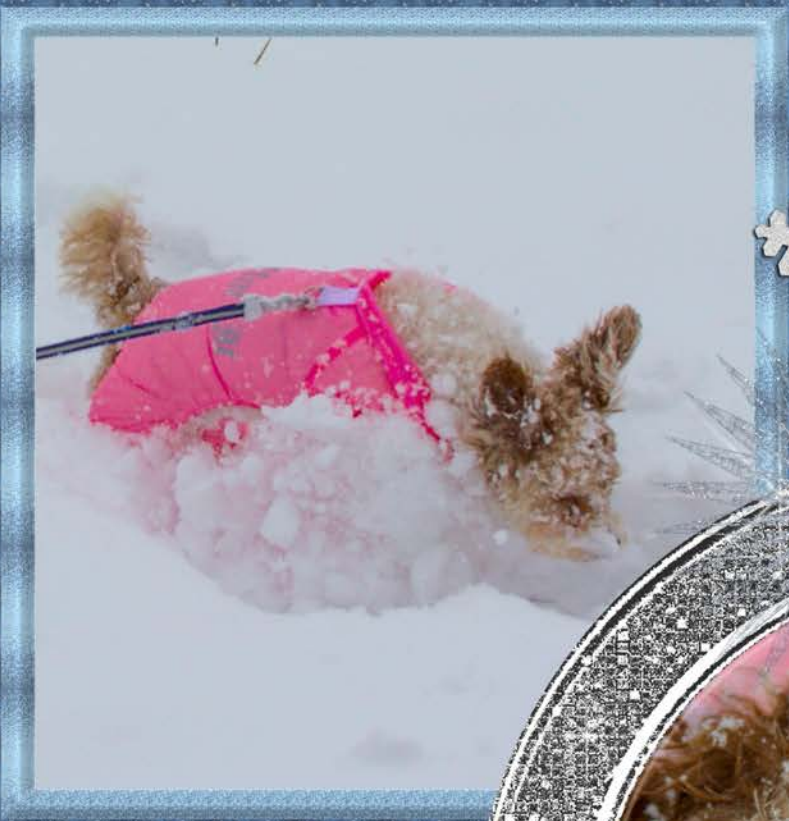
Olivia REALLY loves the snow! So much so that I had to dig out my heavy winter clothing to survive while she played. Not so fun for freezing mom!

Her favorite play was to burrow deep into the snow. Looking for truffles, we teased. Then she would jump, like a bunny, as she plowed paths all over the backyard.

The snow clumped and clung to her curly fur, forming chunks impossible to remove so nearly every outside excursion ended with a mini-bath. Melting the snow was the only way to get it all off!



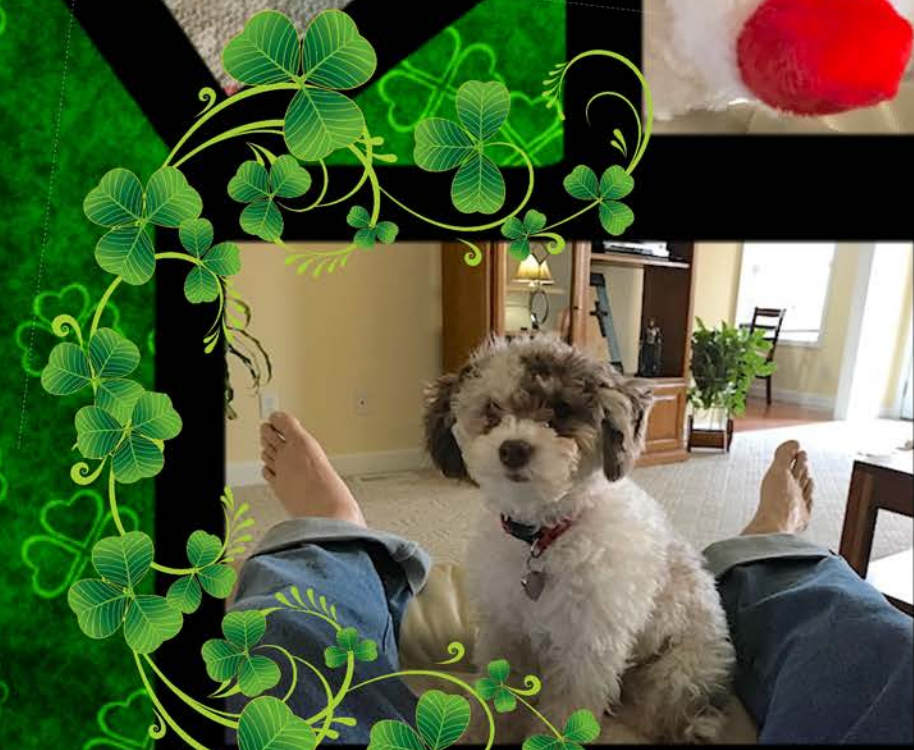








POODLE<sub>PL</sub>





On April 3, Olivia spent the day at the Bardstown Animal Clinic with Dr. Taylor and his excellent staff. She was spayed and had a tracking chip placed in her neck. Everything went well, Olivia home within a few hours. She was SO sleepy! It was sad but also quite funny. By morning she was almost her normal self, eating and drinking a bit less than usual but at least ingesting something. She had to wear the "cone of shame" for a handful of days, which she HATED! The stitches took a long time to completely come out, and two needed to be manually removed.

# April

  
**KEEP  
CALM**







On April 7, Olivia and I boarded a Southwest jet in Nashville for a non-stop flight to Mobile. It cost \$95 for a pet ticket and an airline-approved carrier was required. Other than that, the process was easy! Olivia slept through the whole flight, about 1.5 hours. She was amazing!



Our destination was Moss Point, to visit with my dad, sister Janis, Mercy, and sweet lil' bit Emerson. Janis had a right total knee replacement, so I got to play nurse again! We stayed until the 28th, long enough for Jan to be well on the road to recovery AND to celebrate the joint birthdays of my dad (83), Mercy (40), and Emerson (2).







Olivia loved Emerson, especially her colorful, stuffed, chewy toys and her tendency to drop food!



Olivia and Tucker got on fine. "Old Man" Tuck wasn't as playful as Olivia, but the two had some fun. Oreo patiently tolerated the puppy, and even played a bit.

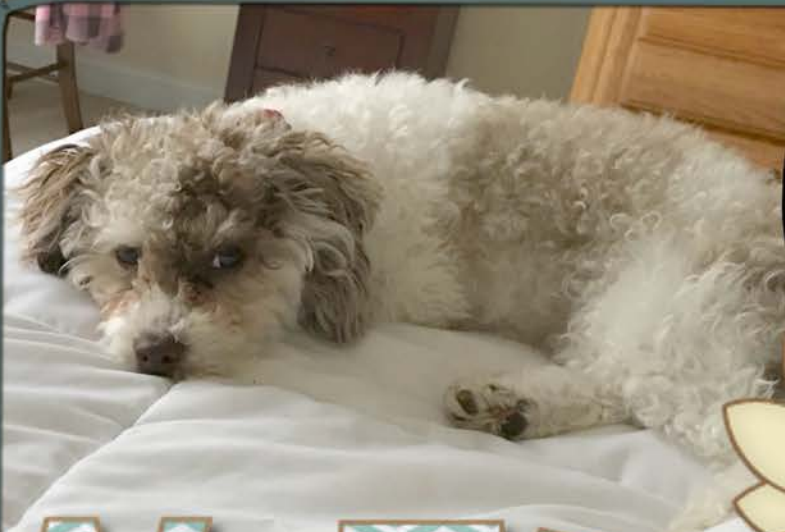




LOVE YOU,  
DAD



I  my POODLE



home

SWEET

HOME





May 18

After much prompting and cheerleading, and quite a few failed attempts, 10-month-old Olivia finally learned how to dash down the stairs! Like a toddler, once she got past the first scary descending steps, she ran full tilt to the bottom. Look how happy she is!

spring  
is in the  
air

Found this perfect cabinet at the Corvin Peddler's Mall for \$125 to hold only Olivia supplies!

DOG CABINET



PLEASE,  
PLAY WITH ME?





# SPRING





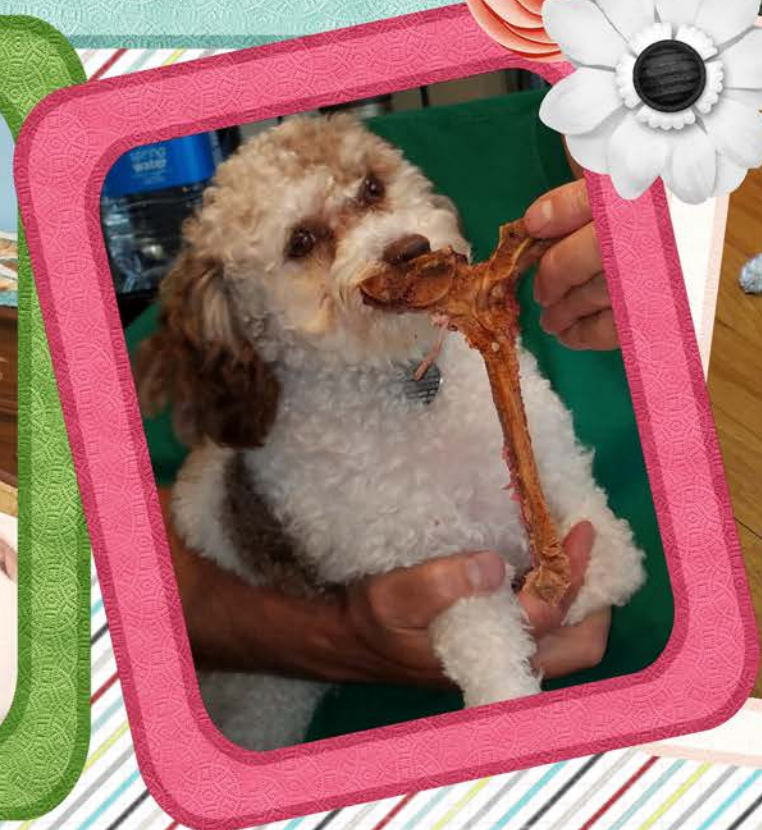


Spring FEVER





# JUNE









♥ happy together



We never intended to take Olivia with us everywhere we went. We talked about the necessity of teaching her to be home alone, but aside from never really needing to leave her, we simply could not bear to do it! So, Olivia quickly grew used to car travel. We bought a dog car carrier to strap in with the seat belt, but ended up using it mainly as a general carrier. Most of the time she sits in my lap or in Steve's arms looking out the driver-side window. She likes going with us, as opposed to being left alone, but is a nervous car passenger. She pants, moves restlessly on my lap, and rarely relaxes. For long trips, she is much happier in the confined carrier.

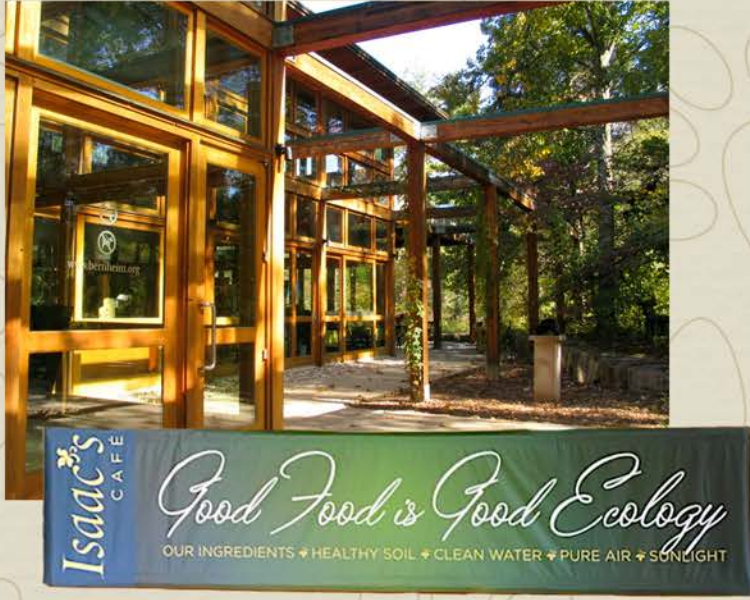






Elizabeth & Erica

Bardstown & Louisville are extremely pet friendly. Many restaurants have patios or allow us to bring Olivia inside if in her carrier. These are just a few of the local places we visit.

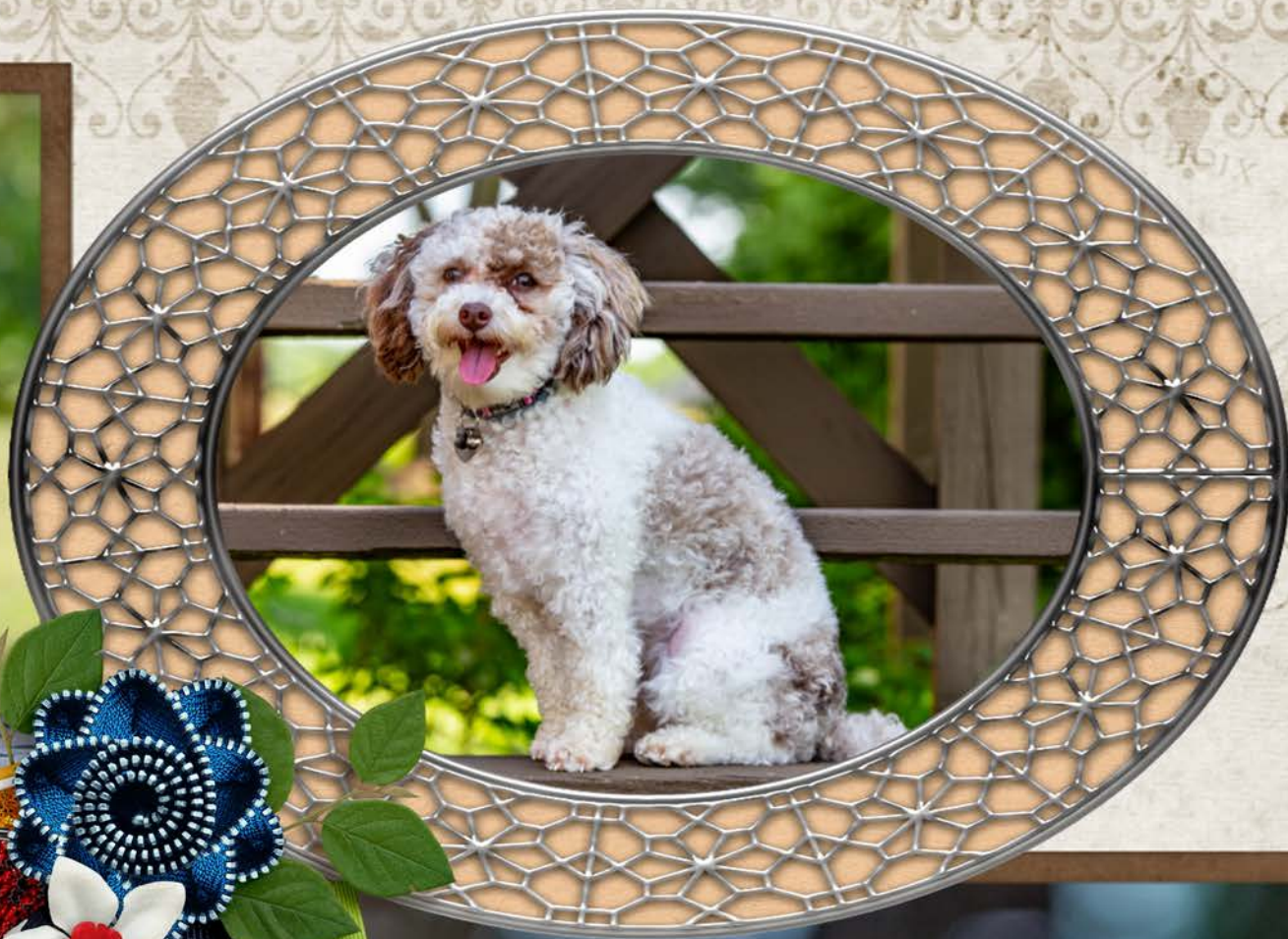




Happy Birthday Olivia







JULY



Olivia Marjo Lathan  
turned One on July 2, 2018.  
We did not celebrate in any  
special way, although she did  
receive a few more treats  
& lots of hugs and kisses!

At the end of June,  
photographer dad Steve posed  
our photogenic fur-baby for a  
series of professional portraits.  
Is she not the cutest?





# DOG WISDOM

CHASE YOUR TAIL AND YOUR DREAMS

BE FAITHFUL  
LOYAL  
BRAVE

dig life



WAG MORE  
BARK LESS



take a nap  
whenever you can  
never stop playing  
learn new tricks

# JULY

HEY YOU!  
THIS BELLY  
ISN'T GOING  
TO RUB ITSELF!



GOOD DOG!



# OLIVIA



ADOGS LIFE



Puppy  
love





ON JULY 18 WE BOUGHT BRAND-NEW BIKES FROM MIDDLETOWN CYCLING IN LOUISVILLE FOR \$1066 IN TOTAL. WHEW! THE RECENT CLOSURE OF THE WOODLAWN SPRINGS GOLF COURSE MEANT ALL THE ASPHALT TRAILS WERE FREE TO RIDE ON. FUN TIMES! THE K9 BACKPACK IS SPECIFIC FOR SMALL DOGS, AND IT ONLY TOOK OLIVIA THREE RIDES TO FIGURE OUT HOW MUCH FUN IT IS AND HOW TO GET INTO THE BACKPACK. SHE IS FAR MORE OF A BIKING ENTHUSIAST THAN HER MOM.



BIKE







I  
WANT  
TO  
RIDE  
MY  
BICYCLE





s  
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m  
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r  
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MY DOG



MY DOG

As time passed, we tended to take fewer photos of our sweet fur-baby Olivia. Bad parents! The following several pages cover the summer into autumn months of 2018.



FUN DAYS WITH THE FAMILY AT  
LOCUST GROVE IN LOUISVILLE.

JULY 13 & 14,  
2018



JULY

JANE AUSTEN

FESTIVAL

2018







Bardstown Craft Fair  
October



LIVE  
LOVE  
BARK



LOVE  
IS A FOUR LEGGED  
WORD







April 7 visit with Emily  
before flight to MS.



Kyle & Serena  
visit for mom's  
birthday  
~Oct. 28~



Bardstown  
Craft Fair  
in October  
with  
Kyle & Serena





# THANKSGIVING



2018



# FAMILY









To the left, Olivia and mom  
watched Eric Bolling on  
Election Night December 5

To the right, Olivia and dad  
tested the new Nectar bed.  
Both agreed it was awesome!



DECEMBER



Christmas  
bling!





Our second Christmas with Olivia drew near and it was time to select a tree from the farm in Lexington. The picking process took place before Thanksgiving and went smoothly, aside from a minor confrontation with another dog, who merely wanted to be friendly. Olivia was not in a friendly mood, however, and let him know!

We came back a few days after Thanksgiving, the tree cut and ready to cart home and into the house. Dad took care of that task, Olivia in her kennel to avoid a sap-and-needle covered puppy!

let  
me  
out!





# Christmas 2018



Furry  
&  
Bright



Our second Christmas with  
sweet, adorable Olivia Marje  
marked one year with  
a dog in our lives.





A new year, the second with an adorable doggie in the family!  
Olivia Marjo was now 1-year, 5-months-old.

2019 began with a separation of nearly a month when mom went to Mississippi to deal with the death of her father. Olivia stayed in Kentucky this time, alone with her daddy on 100% dog-duty.

This included the yearly visit to vet Dr. Taylor for an exam and annual vaccinations.

2019

# January



Olivia's favorite toy remained the Princess Doll from her first Bark Box. Her "baby" as we called it. She never chewed her baby, only held it in her mouth and kept it close when sleeping in her bed.

Every evening, immediately after dinner, Olivia got her baby and stared at Steve until he went into the bedroom for a few minutes of cuddle time on the bed. So cute! We learned that whenever she held the princess in her mouth and stared at us, it was her way of asking for special loving-time.

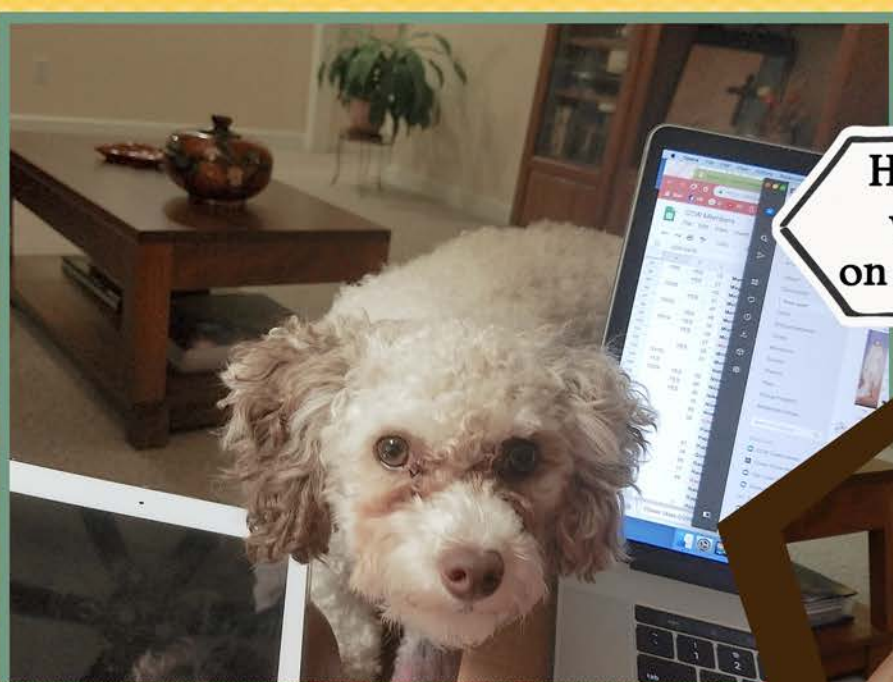


January 17 - Happy to  
have mom home at last!

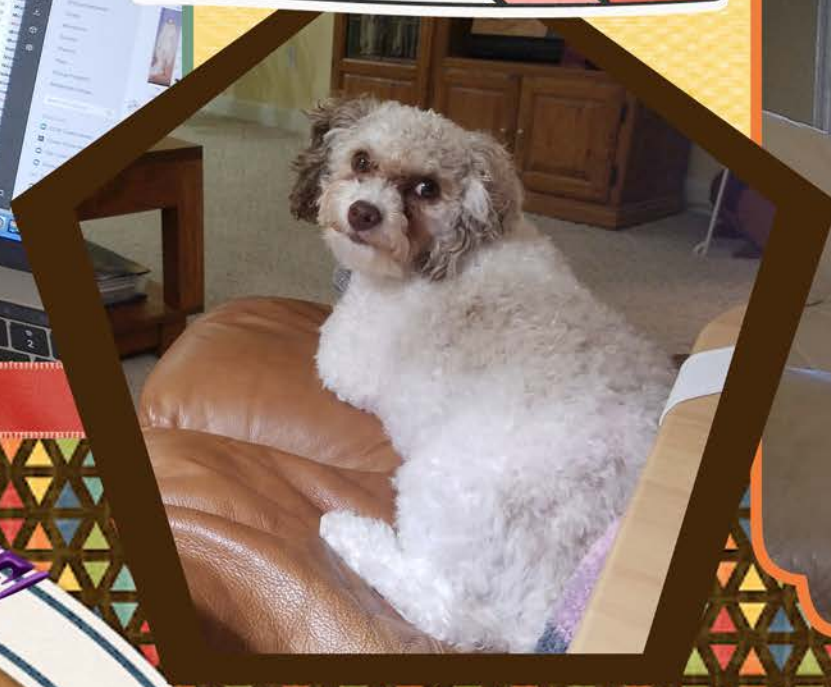


Basking in the sunshine after  
watching the sunrise.





Hangin' out  
with mom  
on the recliner.



Waiting  
for  
daddy  
to come  
home.

GET THIS THING OFF ME!





Olivia LOVES  
salmon!





dogs

are not  
our

WHOLE

life,



but

they

make

our

LIVES

whole.



not last  
often find. They are also very good  
relief for teething puppies.

will not leave the sport altogether.







## What Olivia Loves

- Chasing rabbits and the occasional bird in the backyard
- Barking at & visiting neighbor Mark when he mows the lawn
- Going with mom and dad everywhere
- Riding in the car & looking out the window
- Growling at Coco, the obnoxious Yorkie down the street
- Riding in the backpack with dad on his bike
- Eating freshly cut grass and clover, and the occasional worm
- Jerky treats, green minties, and rawhides
- Meat nibbles off our plates, yogurt, and peanut butter
- Playing in the snow
- Dad rubbing her ears
- Being adored & petted by every person who sees her
- Having her belly rubbed
- Taking apart toys to find the squeaky & remove the stuffing

## What Olivia Hates

- Having her nails cut or paws touched, especially front paws
- The obnoxious Yorkie named Coco
- Being put in her kennel
- Using the harness & leash rather than allowed to run free
- When mom cleans the tear stains by her eyes
- Potatoes, one of the few human foods she won't eat
- When mom loses her temper or is slightly cross
- Hearing the doorbell on TV
- Trimming the hair in her ears
- Being held too tightly for too long
- That Emily's cat Therman won't play with her





## *A fishy tale:*

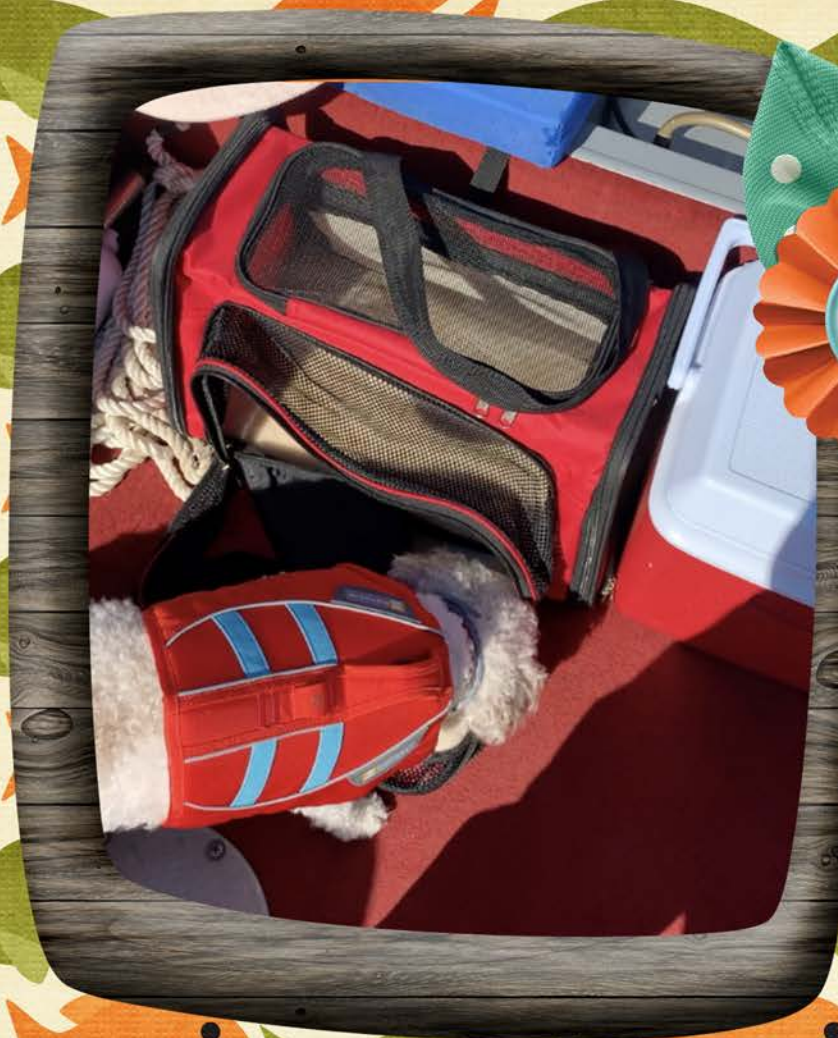
April & May ~ We spent several days on Taylorsville Lake in the awesome Lund boat with Olivia. She was a natural on and in the water. The motor noise didn't bother her one bit and she didn't mind going fast. She wasn't too fond of the safety jacket and we worried about her getting too hot. Once we knew she was content in the boat we took it off.



I ♥ FISHING

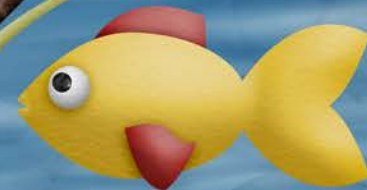




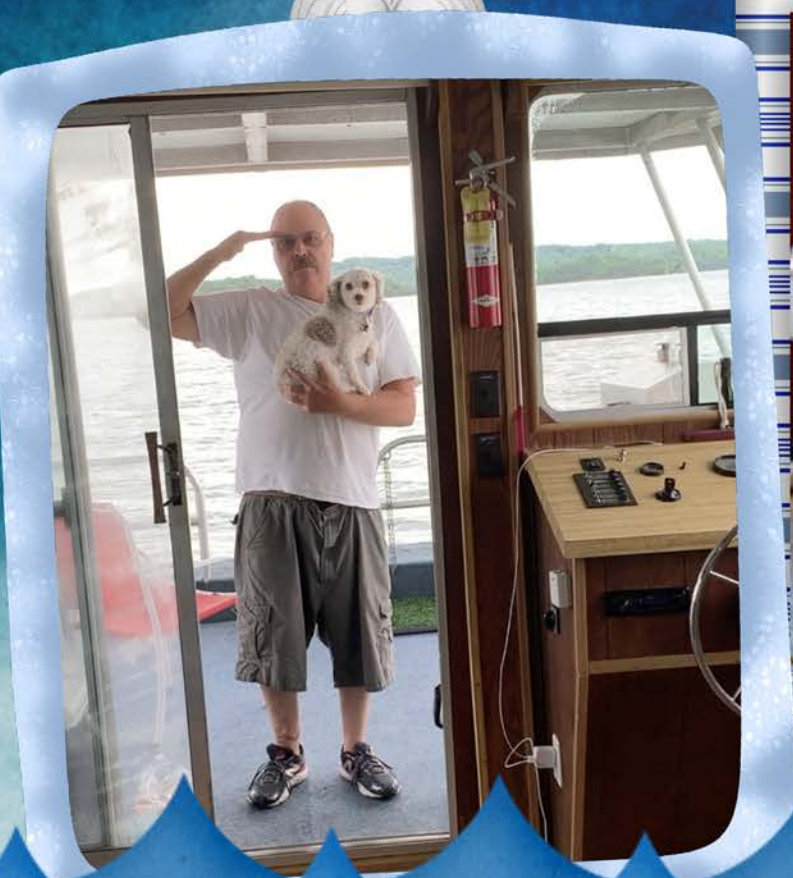


*Catch of the day*

FISHING  
HOLE







In June we spent a whole week on Dale Hollow Lake located spanning the border of Tennessee and Kentucky. We rented a one-bedroom houseboat from Hendrick's Creek Resort. Alas, the fish were not biting well, but we had a marvelous vacation. Olivia did well on the boat other than refusing to use the grass pee-pad we bought for her and being very particular about where she did her business on the shore. She rolled with whatever we did, including the small fishing boat and swimming from the shore. What a great girl!



# Travel

on a fun

we traveled

visiting with

In August we spent a week

vacation with Olivia. First,

to Nashville for a few days,

Neil and Emily. We finally toured Centennial Park, the grounds gorgeous with endless paths twisting around a small lake. Icing on the cake was touring The Parthenon. So very cool! Olivia could not go inside the Parthenon, so stayed outside with dad.

In other Nashville fun, we walked along the gravelly shoreline at Percy Priest Lake. Olivia did not want to go into the water but had fun exploring.

## Explore

## NASHVILLE



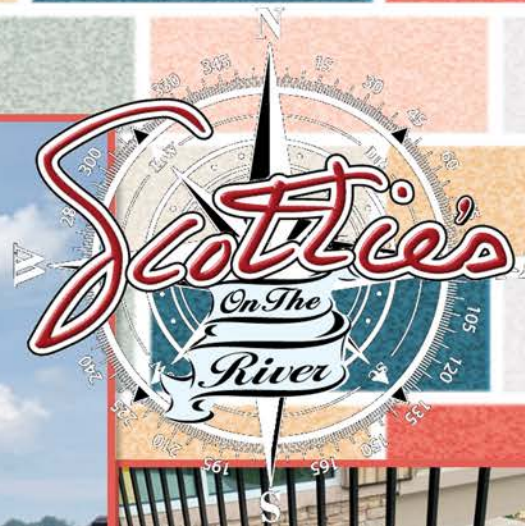




## vacation

After Nashville, we veered south to Chattanooga in Tennessee, close to the Georgia border. We stayed a bit out of town at a Quality Inn welcoming to pets. As we discovered, Chattanooga isn't a very pet-friendly town. This might not have been a big deal except for a major heat wave hitting the area. Temps were well over 100 degrees making dining outside, even on shady patios, very uncomfortable. And most restaurants didn't have patios available! We ate at Scotties three times due to the nice patio overlooking the river, pet water bowls, and excellent food. Another favorite was 1885 in the small area known as St. Elmo. Most meals were acquired at Texas Roadhouse, literally the only restaurant that allowed us to bring Olivia inside in her carrier.

## sightseeing



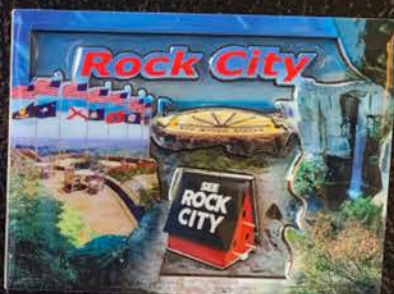
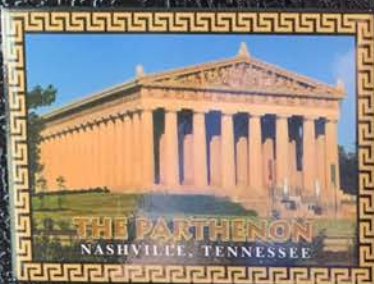


Woof



SOUTHERN COASTAL

1885  
grill



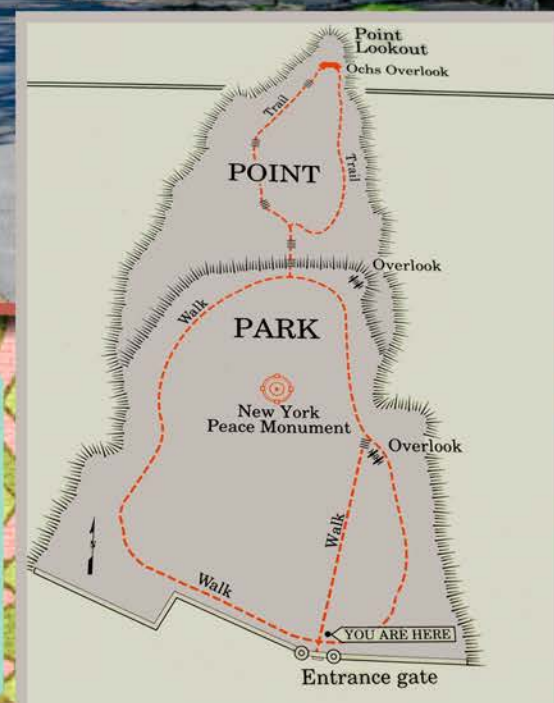
3 more frig  
magnets  
for the  
collection!







Point Park is a ten-acre memorial park that overlooks the Civil War Lookout Mountain Battlefield and the city of Chattanooga. A walking path around the park passes by several historic tablets, monuments, Confederate artillery positions, and scenic overlooks. We traversed the whole area, Steve taking tons of photos. Olivia had a blast smelling every nook and cranny, but it was very hot so we rested frequently and drank lots of water.



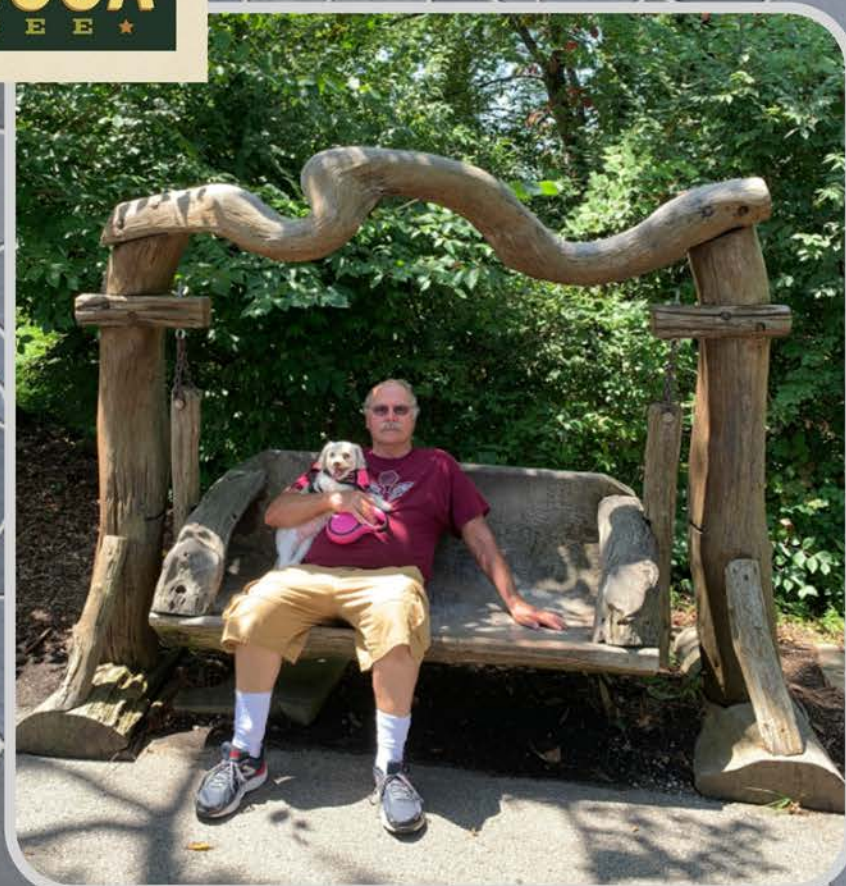
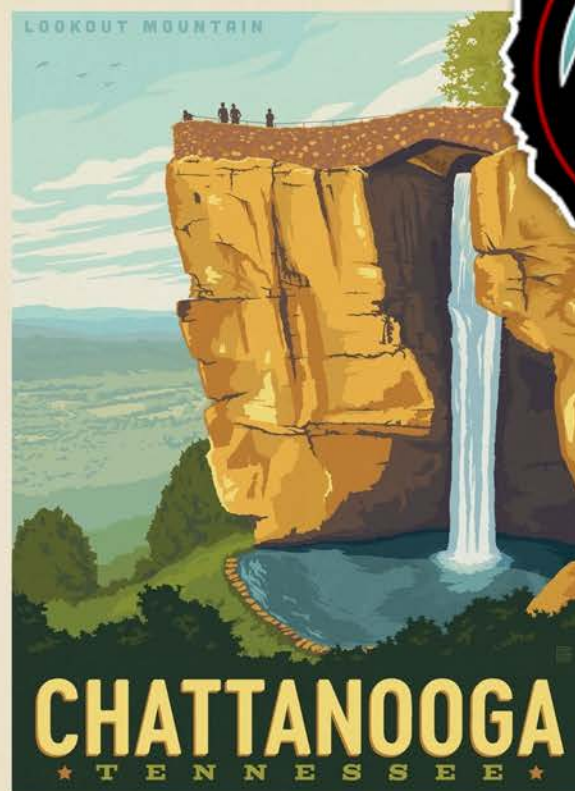






Lookout Mountain is a 2400ft. elevation ridge summit that was the site of a significant Civil War battle and today is famous for Rock City and the caves at Ruby Falls. We could not explore the no-pets allowed Ruby Falls, but enjoyed the incredible trails and views of Rock City. The high-point, literally, is the ridge with a panoramic view of seven states. Also very fun was the Fairyland Caverns.

It was VERY hot, but Olivia had a great time exploring the paths and meeting people. She did get a bit tired, mom and dad taking turns holding her in between rest breaks. She never complained, though, and kept going. What a trooper!









WALMART SHOPPING!



These final pages of Olivia's album contain a random assortment of photos taken during the autumn months of 2019.

The top two on this page were taken in August. Walmart no longer allowed dogs to sit in the cart so dad took to carrying Olivia in the backpack. This picture was taken after a bizarre encounter with a strange lady in the parking lot. She accused us of "torturing" our dog by putting her into a carrier designed FOR dogs! People are so strange. The other photo is cutie-pie Olivia hanging out in mom's office.

The bottom left two are from an October visit to Nashville celebrating mom's birthday. AMAZING gift from Emily: A painted portrait of Olivia in a fancy gown with pearls. So cool! It hangs now outside mom's office. We also got a tour of the new house Emily & Neil were buying. Fun visit!

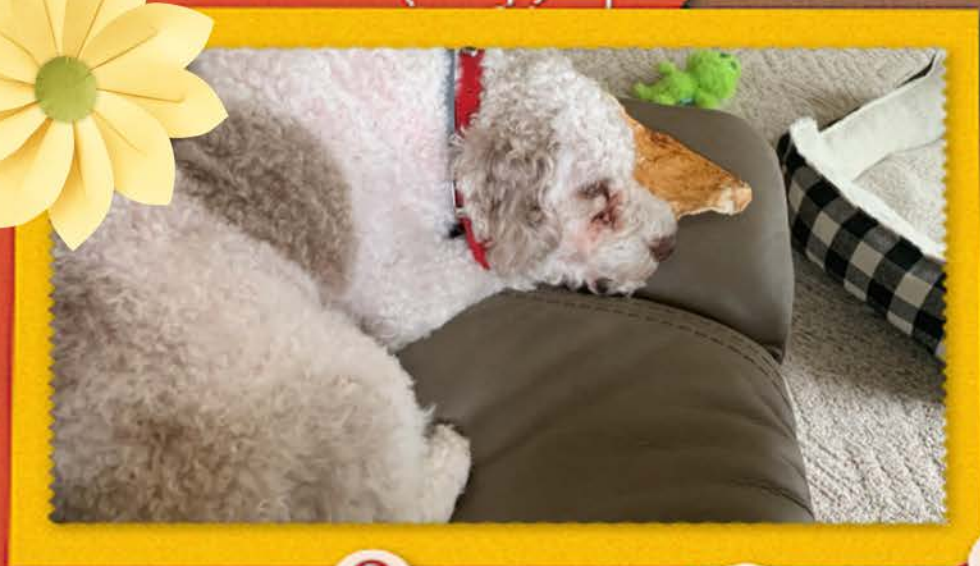
On the page to the right, on the top, Olivia is cuddling mom on the new Flexsteel recliner with the extra-wide leg rest. Plenty of room for my sweet girl. Next to that photo is one of Olivia resting on the couch while mom decorates for autumn.

Middle photo is our chubby-belly girl drifting off to sleep in her favorite cushy bed located in mom's office.

On the bottom are two photos of our adorable Olivia taken in November. She no longer takes her toys apart but still likes to chew on them.







# CUTE





# November 12



Off and on during 2019 we discussed the possibility of adopting another dog. The joy Olivia brought to our lives could only be doubled with another addition to our family. On the other hand, we loved pampering our girl and were unsure we wanted to split our attentions. Also, we didn't want her to be jealous. What if she hated the new dog? What if they didn't get along? Truthfully, we weren't too worried, figuring the two would learn to tolerate each other even if they didn't become best friends. At the same time, the longer we waited the more spoiled Olivia would become, lessening her adaptability to a rowdy puppy and willingness to share her mom and dad. If we were going to add a new baby to the family, we had to make the decision sooner rather than later.

Obviously the added expense was a consideration, as well as the inability to take TWO dogs with us everywhere we went. On the flip side, having two dogs to keep each other company would ease our guilt in leaving them home when necessary. Additionally, the benefit of our chubby Olivia having a playmate for more exercise, as well as companionship, were major perks.

As for the money... Well, can one put a price-tag on the peace, healing, and sheer delight dogs bring to one's life? The answer, we already knew, was NO. As we weighed the pros and cons, our profound happiness with Olivia decided the issue. In October we began looking at miniature poodle puppies in earnest. We fell in love with the "red" coloring and definitely wanted a puppy as young as possible. Just before Thanksgiving we found her.

This book ends our time as a one-poodle family. Subsequent albums will be devoted to our two sweet fur-babies.

**LIFE IS  
BETTER  
WITH A POODLE**





