

Gussie Georgi, our wonderful corgi, passed away on Sept 4, 2010 at age 15. Corgis are remarkable dogs with tiny little legs, medium sized bodies and really big hearts. Many of you who only got to know Gussie in the last year and a half of his life when he was confined to a wheel chair would have been amazed to see him as a young dog when he was an accomplished, if somewhat peculiarly shaped athlete. He loved to play on the trampoline in the backyard of our house in Topsfield, MA. And since he could not jump up onto it by himself with his four inch legs, my kids



built a Corgi-ramp. He loved to get a running start up the ramp and hurl himself onto the trampoline where he would push his favorite Frisbee around and go sliding after it. He taught himself a Frisbee trick that I have never seen another dog do. He would hook his nose on the edge of the Frisbee and throw it



up in the air and then catch it.



When we got Gussie as one year old puppy fourteen years ago, the dog in charge of our household was Kentucky, a black and white and very bossy border collie. This was shortly after the release of the delightful family movie, Babe, about a pig raised by border collies. There is a scene in Babe in which the border collies chase the piglet around yelling "get the pig." The young Gussie rather resembled a piglet in size, shape and color, so my kids taught Gussie and Kentucky the game of "get the pig" in which Gussie became the pig and



Kentucky chased him enthusiastically. You probably will not believe me, but I swear that Gussie was so into the game that he would scrunch up his face into a snout and oink! This went on many times in the courtyards after we moved to Leverett House, astonishing students and many others.

Gussie and Kentucky loved Christmas. They would jealously guard the stockings when they went up on the mantelpiece (they had their own paw-shaped ones). And they were as excited on Christmas morning as a five year old child. But Gussie had another issue which we never completely understood. The tassels on Santa Claus hats drove him absolutely wild. If you wore a Santa hat, he would stalk you until he saw the opportunity to hurl himself at your hat and savage it. Needless to say, Santa was very careful when he visited.



Gussie has been with us for our entire tenure as Leverett Masters. Many times over the last twelve years I wondered whether I would be able to do this job without him. With his absurd shape, his big almost rabbit-like ears, his little clown face and his perpetual smile, he was the perfect irresistible ice-breaker. I got to know many students over the years while walking him in one of the courtyards on warm spring or fall evenings. And just watching Gussie walk with his unique Corgi biomechanics would cheer anyone up. Gussie spent a lot of his later years at Leverett lying under JoAnn's desk in the House Office. The loud snoring coming from under her desk often confused students until they understood what was going on. When Gussie started having trouble with his back legs and moving like a seal out of water, it was JoAnn who found the doggie wheel chairs on the web, adding at least a year to his life.



He was also one of the bravest dogs we ever knew. He was happy to stand up to any other dog, no matter how tall. And as his little back legs and eventually the rest of his body started to fail, he never complained, but he simply tried his best to be part of the family no matter how hard it was. Two years ago at this time, just before we got his wheel chair, he insisted on hiking with us up Flying Mountain in Southwest Harbor, ME, a nice half-mile walk to a height of 284 feet. When he got to the top, he was so proud that that his smile took up his whole face.

Now that he has been released from his wheelchair and the pain and frustration that he must have felt in the last year, we can focus on our memories -- that wonderful little smile, his silly walk, and his matchless enthusiasm for life. We will never have another dog quite like him.