

## A Shetland Sheepdog Sniffs for Sport

STORY BY RICA LEWIS | PHOTOS BY BRANDON ATWELL

You might call it a super power.

With her nose to the ground, 6-year-old Shetland sheepdog Pansy sniffs for sport.

Tapping into her natural ability to navigate the world through her nose, her owner Jill Miller trained the dog to pursue a scent. It's a skill that requires consistent focus and endurance, the willingness to toil through open fields in sweltering heat for up to 500 yards. But she's just a beginner, having recently earned her AKC title in what Miller calls an obscure canine sport: tracking.

Pansy is the fourth dog Miller has trained, and she has not taken to it as intensely as others on the track.

"It took Pansy around 80 times to grasp what we were doing," she said. "Every dog learns a little differently and it's been great just bonding with each of

them. Pansy and I have made lots of friends."

And while Pansy is not as serious about the sport, she does get the job done and always enjoys the thrill of the chase.

"Pansy is always a bundle of energy when we get home from a day of tracking," Miller said. "She seems to understand that she has completed a task, and she is proud."

An Oregon native, Jill and her husband, Jim, moved to the Village of St. James just over three years ago. Jill was an avid hiker when she discovered tracking. Drawn to the idea of learning the sport with her four-legged friends and meeting other people and their dogs, Miller and her previous pooches earned titles and awards at various AKC events.

