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***Australian Shepherd Health & Genetics Institute,  
Inc.***

Press Release

**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**

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## **In Memory of Toby**

**Fresno, CA** – One of the most significant Aussies of the past decade is gone. Toby never attended a dog show, didn't do obedience or agility and may never even have seen a cow or sheep. Even so, his impact has been tremendous and will continue long after his recent death.

Epilepsy was once this breed's dirty little secret. Few would discuss it, and those that did often found themselves hounded into silence. Then Pam Douglas and her husband, Jim, bought a puppy who started seizing. Pam sought help, but the breeder and stud owner stonewalled. When Pam realized this was often standard operating procedure she launched a very public campaign to raise epilepsy awareness and work toward a DNA screening test.

Today we have a large international study of epilepsy in Aussies underway because Pam buttonholed the researcher at a conference and convinced him to accept our breed into his study. The breed community has acknowledged we have a problem and many will now speak openly and honestly about the disease. People have contributed thousands of dollars to support research and education efforts. We probably would have reached this point eventually, but we got there a lot quicker because of Toby.

The ASHGI board and staff extends it's deepest sympathy to Pam, Jim and their family. Toby's life was not an easy one and it was far too short. We know how deep your bond with Toby was and we share your grief.

The **Australian Shepherd Health & Genetics Institute, Inc.**, founded in 2001, is dedicated to educating the Aussie community about genetic and health issues and supporting research into those issues. It serves all Aussies, no matter what their purpose, the goals of their owners, or where they live. ASHGI works both independently and in cooperation with researchers, breed clubs, canine health organizations and foundations that provide grant funds for canine genetics research.

