

# Canine captures the catwalk

■ Landon the Sheltie shoots for stars, has his own dog blog

By Rachel McGrath  
Special to The Star

Move over, Marley, Lassie and Scooby-Doo. Here comes the next big thing: Ventura County's Landon the Sheltie.

The 3-year-old dog, rescued from the Camarillo animal shelter by Connie Coleman of Thousand Oaks, is winning hearts and fans on fashion runways and has his own blog.

Coleman is hoping to take Landon's career to the next level, convinced that the sky's the limit after he proved to be a natural on the catwalk at a celebrity fashion show.

"I thought we could maybe do something big because he's such a cute dog," she said. "He's got

this great personality, and everyone loves him. I want him to explore all the avenues and do as much as he can do."

Coleman has signed up Landon for acting lessons, given him his own blog and is hard at work creating the "Landon the Sheltie" brand, which will include his own line of doggie apparel and motivational products.

Coleman, who's actively involved in the Southland Sheltie Rescue, came across Landon in June 2009. He was about a year old and had suffered a dislocated hip and had to have a part of his tail amputated after being struck by a car.

"What's interesting is

See LANDON, 2B



Landon, a 3-year-old Sheltie who was rescued from the Camarillo animal shelter by Connie Coleman of Thousand Oaks, is winning hearts and fans on fashion runways and even has his own blog.





CONTRIBUTED PHOTO/CONNIE COLEMAN

Connie Coleman is hoping to take Landon the Sheltie's career to the next level, convinced that the sky's the limit after he proved to be a natural on the catwalk at a celebrity fashion show.

## LONDON from 1B

that it's given him a kind of signature swagger for his runway walk," she said.

The 14-inch-tall, 20-pound pooch got his first taste of being in the spotlight when he walked the runway at the 2010 charity fundraiser Patterns for Paws at the Pacific Design Center in Hollywood.

Coleman, who has a background in high-tech, marketing and communications work was studying fashion design at the Art Institute of California and was invited by Christopher Grubb, president of Arch Interiors of Beverly Hills, to design a costume for a dog for the canine fashion show that raises money for the Amanda Foundation.

Grubb, it turned out, also needed a dog to mod-

el the outfit, so Coleman suggested he use Landon. That's when, it seems, a star was born.

"It was kismet," said Grubb, an interior designer.

"In dressings, fittings and on the catwalk, he's a pro. He's a natural at it and he doesn't have an attitude like most models," he said.

Dressed in an outfit designed to make him look like French King Louis XIV, Landon got his photo published in newspapers around the world.

"He was on the Internet in India, in China, in Japan, in Germany, in Australia, just all over the place and I just could not believe it," Coleman said.

Having been bitten by the fame bug, Landon returned along with Grubb for the 2011 Patterns for Paws show, this time dressed like Rudolph Valentino with a turban head-dress. And once again



TROY HARVEY/THE STAR

Landon poses on a picnic table at Arroyo Verde Park in Ventura. Landon has found stardom since he was rescued from the Camarillo animal shelter by Coleman.

pictures of him appeared worldwide in print and on television.

"There's this poise about him, like he knows what he's there to do, and he just wears it," Grubb said.

The attention Landon received convinced Coleman that Landon has a big future as a model, a film and television star, and motivational and inspirational dog.

For the past year, Landon has been taking acting classes at Hollywood Paws, a Los Angeles animal training facility.

"He has to feel confident and he has to have food motivation," said Bri-

ana Messerschmidt, one of the facility's trainers. "The first thing almost all dogs learn is a mark and how to stay there. Then they have to be able to do the basics like sit, lie down, speak and do all these things on cue. Then they have to learn how to do that on the mark and from a distance and despite distractions."

A lot of studios have their own animal trainers and animals, said Messerschmidt, so it's hard to turn your pet into a star. But Messerschmidt says Landon has got "the look" to make it

In the short-term, while he completes his acting classes, Coleman says Landon will serve as "spokesdog" for Otis Bow Ties during the holiday season, modeling its line of ties, and he's also in the process of becoming an ambassador for the non-profit rescue Pet Orphans of Southern California, visiting schools in Ventura County as part of the charity's humane education program.

Down the road, Coleman has set her sights on Landon getting into TV and films and building the brand.

She is writing a book

about Landon, developing a motivational product line of "Landon the Sheltie" T-shirts and tote bags, and creating a Comfort Dog line of therapeutic canine apparel.

Coleman's big dream is that a Hollywood studio will give Landon his own show.

"I would love it if he could have his own cartoon show like Scooby-Doo," she said. "I would love it if some producer said we could have a cartoon with a dog within the fashion world."

On the Net: sheltiehug.com