

**STRAY DOG EVADES CONCERNED FOLKS, BUT INEVITABLE
HUNGER NETS CAPTURE
4/27/99**

“You lucky dog.” How often have we heard that expression? It was started for the most part because it is true. Generally speaking, most dogs have it made. The other side of the coin is the expression, “It’s a dog’s life,” which was spawned because of the plight of many unfortunate pooches. This missive starts out with one such dog’s plight.

Some weeks ago on a trip to Utica with wife Nancy, we saw a beagle dog wending his way along the shoulder of Route 28, just north of the Wigwam Tavern. Nancy recalled seeing the dog on other occasions earlier in the month.

We stopped and I tried in vain to approach him. He was emaciated and, pardon the pun, had a real hangdog look. On our return trip, two young men were also obviously trying to entice him with offers of food.

I had noticed an ad in the *Adirondack Home News* for a lost male beagle from the Steuben area. I called the same evening and the lady who answered had received several calls about the same pup. She had, in fact, tried in vain that same day to catch him. Although he was not the dog, she intended to give him a good home if he would come to her.

A week or more later on April 12, Nancy reported seeing the dog patrolling the same beat, only this time on three legs. That locked it for me. I had to do something. We headed to New York Mills immediately after supper where I picked up a live trap from old trapper friend Frank Webb. On the way home in the fading light, I hurriedly set the trap.

It was obscured by a fallen pine top, as close to the dog’s beat as I could place it. A trail of meat scraps led to the entrance and a tasty pork chop bone was tied to the trigger at the back of the trap.

The following morning I was back at daylight expecting to see my quarry in the trap. Alas, no dog.

We had to go to Lowville that afternoon and the plan was to check the trap on our way home. Our return trip brought us back by the trap site at 3:30 p.m. I parked on the opposite side of the road and walked over to view the empty trap.

As I pondered my next move, Nancy called from the open truck window, “Forget it, here he comes down the road.”

As I raced back to the truck he watched me with a quizzical look. We drove by and he proceeded on toward the trap.

Circling back, we parked at a discreet distance and watched as he pulled up short at the bait trail. He soon disappeared off the shoulder and we drove by to see the results.

He was still engrossed in the bait trail. On our return, he was in the trap and howling his protestations about being saved.

When we returned home, I called the lady from Steuben and she was there an hour later with her husband and daughter. After several minutes of coaxing and reassurances, she was able to place a collar and leash on him. As they left, he was sitting on her lap.

Ruth O’Neil is the lady and I visited her a week later to see how they were making out. “Barney,” as she named him, was ensconced on the living room couch. He was to see the vet for a checkup two days later.

The O’Neils are caring people and have other dogs and cats that are very well cared for.

To make a long story short, one small pooch went from living a dog’s life to that of a lucky dog. I have learned since that several people in the area have been concerned about the dog and had tried in vain to help him. I am writing this to let you know of a very special lady and to tell those who may wondered about the outcome. To Mrs. O’Neil and all the others who tried to help this lucky dogs, thanks.