

SOME FOLKS CAN'T HELP THEMSELVES WHEN DISCOVERING A NEEDY ANIMAL

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My episode with the lost dog in my column last week was not my first where the animal had to be trapped to help it. Obviously abandoned and perhaps abused, their faith in humans had been strained. One has to work at restoring their trust and love.

The first experience happened five years ago and we still have the mutt we named Lady. It all started early one February morning when granddaughter Cynthia saw what she thought was a coydog. It was some distance from our home. Getting out the old 222 I looked the animal over with the patio door open through the rifle scope. Cynthia's anguished appeal from behind me precluded any thoughts of further action with, "I hope he's not going to shoot it."

I tried unsuccessfully to coax the animal to me. It bolted and established a pattern that became familiar over the next six weeks. She would appear briefly periodically and furtively avoiding any contact with us. I scattered some meat scraps on the snow across the river where we saw her searching about. She buried any she could not eat and we watched a fisher eat them on her. A dish of dry dog food placed in our carport was gone about every third day. I decided I had to do more to help the animal.

Borrowing a box live trap from friend Frank Webb, I set it in the carport. Two days later during supper, wife Nancy said, "Don't look now Mart, but that dog just went into the carport."

Moving over to the kitchen door we could see through the window that the door on the trap was down.

A check outside found our quarry tugging on a pork chop bone tethered to the trigger. When she discovered us she cowered in a corner of the trap, her muzzle sporting a half dozen or so porky quills. She readily accepted meat scraps Cindy handed her through the wire of the cage, and I pulled the quills, as she was so distracted.

We moved the trap into our dog yard and it was time for the moment of truth when I opened the trap door. It arrived very dramatically as she was all over me like a cheap suit, licking me to death.

We named her Lady and she has it made. This past winter she wormed her way into the house. Her joints have begun to bother her so we feel the warmth is better for her.

Over the years my work has brought me in contact with several stray animals. The worst case was a box of kittens I found abandoned back in the woods on a state truck trail. Luckily I was able to find homes for all five of them.

It has not always been easy helping out strays, but I do not seem able to stop myself. It usually ends up putting me on the receiving end of my favorite adage: “No good deed ever goes unpunished.”

To make a long story short, my proclivity for helping out stray people has caused me to endure much more punishment. Those that know me well will vouch for that, but that’s another story, or stories as well. To be continued.