

## **BEING THE GOOD SAMARITAN NEARLY LED TO AN ARREST 09/05/00**

On our way home from a day of marking timber awhile back we saw what was either a cat or a raccoon, obviously dead in the road. My partner remarked it was a good thing it was not flopping around or I would insist on rescuing it.

He was right, of course, and I have been that way my whole life. It started me thinking about the many ludicrous, sometimes hopeless, situations I have gotten myself into. Nearly every one of them served to give credence to the adage, “No good deed ever goes unpunished.”

I have been bitten, wet on, pooped on and sprayed with skunk essence. I’ve had clothing torn, vehicles soiled, been berated by family members for causing household problems, and lost sleep. You name it, I have been there, but never regretted any of it for a minute.

I have found countless homes for lost and abandoned pets as well as returning numerous species of wildlife back to the world in better shape than I found them. Oh, and one more consequence I nearly forgot – arrested.

I ran across an emaciated small raccoon with a trap on its foot tangled in the brush. He had one blind eye and rage in the other one as I tried to get the trap off his foot. His teeth were in perfect shape, which he promptly demonstrated by biting right down through the sole and toe of a brand new pair of B.F. Goodrich Lite & Tough hip boots. Quickly, I was able to curl my toes well back up under my instep or he would have done the same for them. Realizing I needed help to remove the trap, I threw him in the back of my old ’32 Ford and headed for home.

My mother came out of the house and held him down with a mop while I removed the trap. I grabbed him by the tip of the tail and tossed him in a small, empty chicken coop that was handy. I was touched by his obvious gratitude for his salvation, so decided to fatten him up and keep him for a pet.

I needed a permit from the Conservation Department for this, so I mailed a post card to Albany requesting the same. A week or so passed and on my noon hour home

from school my Uncle Mart, who was wiser than I to the ways of life, gave me a good piece of advice.

He told me, "Boy, you should let that coon go before the State sends a game protector here and arrests you for having it out of season." Since I was tired of caring for it by then anyway, I opened the door to the coop and returned to school.

True to my uncle's word, when I returned three hours later there was a game protector with my post card in hand and a gleam in his eye. Although I let him look and he found traces, he found no raccoon. He confirmed my uncle's prediction of what would have happened if he had found the animal there.

Two of my most ludicrous episodes occurred recently. The first began in Otter Lake early this summer. On our way to work we came upon a mother woodcock trying to protect her newly hatched chick in the road. The rest of her brood were mere specks on the blacktop.

We turned back immediately to shoo the chick off the road where the mother could care for it. By the time we got there the mother had been struck and killed. We took the youngster down to 10-year-old Elizabeth Zerilli, who lives a short distance beyond. She made a vain attempt to feed the chick with earthworms, their main diet. It was a hopeless situation, but Liz deserves thanks for trying.

The second episode qualifies as the most foolish in a long career of similar events. We discovered two hairless, blind baby mice in a nest under my mother-in-law's car hood. Granddaughter Cyndi tried feeding them with an eyedropper and Gramp paid out eight bucks for baby formula. They both gave up the ghost after a week.

It was not a total loss. We still have plenty of formula for the next batch of wild or tame waifs.