

Sunday Column – Lucky Dog
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The cards were seriously stacked against Link, a four year old, somewhat nondescript, medium-sized, Georgia brown dog. A neighbor first noticed this boy illegally chained in the backyard of an abandoned Columbus home sometime around mid-June.

The neighbor became concerned and contacted animal control, asking that they look into his situation. Unfortunately, the law is a tad gray when it comes to determining if a dog is truly abandoned. Animal control can't necessarily walk onto someone's property and seize a dog because a neighbor claims he has been abandoned.

This dog-loving neighbor was tenacious though, and she called animal control every day in an attempt to release Link from his lonely life on a chain. Throughout the week she began to develop a relationship with this frightened pup until she was able to sit down next to him and give him some company and comfort.

In utter exasperation, Link's neighbor friend made a call to the Columbus Police Department. Three officers arrived on the scene. They were swift and decisive in seizing Link and turning him in for a five-day hold at animal control.

Who knows what Link's life was like for the four years prior to this terrible circumstance in which he found himself. However good or bad it was, he was understandably frightened and did not model the behavior of an adoptable dog while housed in the animal control pen.

Bear in mind these pens are approximately four by ten feet. They are located in a room that is so filled with noise that humans are well-advised to wear ear protection. Think of how these noise levels must impact a dog with his highly developed sense of hearing.

Fortunately, Link had another champion in the community, Becky Carter, the executive director and founder of Animal SOS. Becky always has her fingers on the animal pulse of Columbus and somehow manages to become aware of these amazing stories of rescue that just need another connection to become a success story. Becky called PAWS Humane to ask if we could pull Link.

These past few months have been crazy busy with all three of the large volume shelters in Columbus perpetually full. But we finagle things the best way we can to allow us to take in one more animal. Animal control personnel did not give us a lot of hope for Link. They believed he was vicious and unadoptable.

It's very hard to say "no" to Becky so we made the trek over to animal control to check this guy out. After a few minutes of hanging out with him, augmented by several cookies, our very skillful animal care supervisor, Elijah, put a slip lead around Link's neck and peacefully walked him over to PAWS Humane. It was somewhat anticlimactic but thrilling at the same time to realize this dog now had a chance.

Because of all Link had been through, we decided to place him with one of our favorite foster homes where he spent the next three weeks without incident. In fact, he integrated seamlessly with the other animals in her home and was a model foster dog.

On August 5 Link was adopted by his new best friend, Joe, who a week later dropped by PAWS Humane just to let us know what a good boy Link is and how happy they both are. Link is now called Buddy, "because he's my Buddy."

Did you happen to count the number of people involved in this project? It required the intervention of multiple independent humans and organizations to get Link, now Buddy, to a positive outcome. Each took on a leg of Link's journey and we did not give up on him. It is kind of amazing how each was an indispensable link in a chain that has forever changed the lives of Buddy and Joe.

Bobbi Yeo lives in Opelika, AL. She is the CEO of PAWS Humane in Columbus, GA, an animal shelter and veterinary clinic offering low-cost spay/neuter and other services to the public. Email her at byeo@pawshumane.org with your comments and story ideas.