

## **On the Positive Side**

### **Bringing a new Lady into the family**

**By Willa Hancock For the Sun-News**

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That little black dog had to be hungry, chewing on a scrap of paper along the highway. But what was she doing there 30 miles from town? Had there been an accident? Did she jump from someone's car? Had she been purposely dumped? She hadn't strayed out there on her own.

I pulled my truck off the pavement, but at my first step, she shot away with amazing speed. I could not outrun her and decided I'd better try another rescue strategy. Later, I returned to the spot where I had seen her and left dog kibble there.

A week later, my son drove into my yard and there, nestled beside him on the seat of his pickup, was a beautiful black lady. When I told her so she responded immediately to the name.

I soon discovered that Lady had been to obedience school. She knew "come," "sit," "stay" and "no." She always sat down promptly at the sight of the leash and never dashed outside without it. Once outside, she took off at high speed and pulled hard for a dog her size. However, she soon settled down. While the plump dachshund and I pursue our brisk morning mile, Lady races around at breakneck speed, probably covering five or six miles to our one. She rejoices being in the country. She's ready for any outing: gathering wood, taking out trash, working in the yard or going for a walk.

We have surmised a good deal about Lady's past in the months she's been with us. The previous owners must have paid something for her, as she's a purebred miniature pinscher and they do not generally come free. She's had her shots and obedience training. Somebody had cared for her - sort of - but they didn't love her. They used a flyswatter to beat her; I know because she is terrified of one. She cowers if anyone raises a voice. Her breathing is rough from being jerked around with a choke collar. When we drive past the overpass where she was abandoned, Lady shakes uncontrollably.

It was obvious that she had recently weaned a litter just before we found her. I can't help wondering what became of those puppies. Did the former owners think of Lady as a living, breathing ATM and breed her to recoup their investment? Or was she bred accidentally and they just got rid of the puppies as they did her?

With five dogs already on the ranch, we did not need Lady. But she certainly needed us. We are delighted with her, and she loves being a member of our family. We only hope that whoever failed to appreciate her does not go out and get themselves another dog they do not deserve.

Willa Hancock is a native New Mexican and lives in Luna County.