

ON THE POSITIVE SIDE

Troubling animal welfare cases can have silver lining

By Frank Bryce

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Writing articles about positive outcomes involving animal welfare would seem to be an easy job with so much human compassion and concern in our local communities. One of my ways of coping with issues is always looking for the silver linings of dark clouds as they say and therein lies the problem, the dark cloud.

In a recent incident, the silver lining shows through remarkably bright as a beautiful stray cat was lucky enough to cross paths with a patchwork of help from the usual blend of odd sources. The cat was observed in a thick patch of oleander bushes by a young lady who saw the cat's plight and lit a small fire in several directions within the community to save it. Oleander, as the cat has come to be named, had somehow gotten her right front leg through her collar and the collar was now embedded in the skin beneath her leg, threatening to destroy her leg and her life if not corrected.

Las Cruces Animal Control offered the young lady a trap to catch the cat but she felt unsure about doing that and asked for help from the Humane Society of Southern New Mexico. Being injured, hungry and alone, the cat was not difficult to trap and with a check by flashlight at 5 a.m. the next morning, Oleander was guaranteed immediate medical attention. With added involvement of the Animal Welfare and Responsibility Education, the Big Kitty Fix, and the Calista Veterinary Animal Clinic, the collar was removed, Oleander's wound was stitched and she was beginning to enjoy a caring and comfortable environment, hopefully for the rest of her life. Silver!

And although her original family might never be located, Oleander is, for now, in good hands.

A deeper, darker cloud with only a thin silver lining beginning has its story now posted on YouTube (<http://youtube.com/watch?v=KavylcgWeKw&sns=com>). Markey, a poodle mix, it has been reported, ended up on death row at the El Paso Animal Shelter as an indescribable neglected mass of matted hair and injuries. A local rescue which saw Markey's unbelievable condition and fate intervened with another rescue organization to surreptitiously pull him out of the El Paso shelter and begin his life-saving path.

Removal of two pounds of matted hair from this little guy revealed one eye that had not been able to see through the hair for who knows how long and an empty eye socket from an untreated injury or infection exacerbated by the matting. An untreated and open laceration hidden by the matting had to be repaired. He was covered with skin sores again complicated by the extreme matting and neglect. His personality, however, was unbelievably not destroyed and his sweet nature with the attendant medical care and love provided by the Cherished K-9 rescue showed through like the bright first light of dawn on a clear New Mexico morning. Silver!

This loving little dog was adopted by an individual originally from the El Paso Animal Shelter, identifiable by a microchip, and was about to be swallowed up by a system that would never bring to light his tragic situation and mistreatment. This week, Humane Society of Southern New Mexico will be discussing legal recourse to address the shortcomings of the El Paso Animal Shelter and the possible prosecution of criminal neglect by the owner of this little guy. The video posted surely indicates the need for further action. Maybe more silver linings will emerge with positive action.

Frank Bryce is president of HSSNM. Interested guest authors are invited to contact HSSNM at 575-523-8020.