

On the Positive Side: Food Loyalty

Guest Author Les Parr

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Food. Loyalty. If you have a dog, which comes first? Personally, my dog follows me everywhere she can...except when she passes a food dish! With a young female German Shepherd, there was no question. Loyalty.

Lady's story begins in January 2009 when Jerry, a retired Navy man, and his wife Harley Ledet were living in El Paso, Texas. They decided to look for a companion small dog for Dusty, their little Chihuahua, so they went to an animal shelter. As Jerry said, "this young German Shepherd came up to us just as if we were looking for her, and stayed near us." Even though they did not know if their dog and a big dog would get along, they told the shelter folks they would take her, and got Lady the next day. The animal shelter gave lady her shots, and embedded an ID chip in her shoulder. This small act turned out later to save Lady's life!

At the time the Ledets found Lady, she was about 1½ years old, and showed some signs of abuse, and had been injured. Nothing was known about her before she turned up in the animal shelter. She fit right into the family and became a great pet, Ledet said.

Then came the day that was to change Lady's life again and take her on a strange journey. In November of last year, the Ledets decided to move to a retirement home in Las Cruces, but were told they could not have Lady live with them. It was an emotional time for them to decide what to do with Lady while a woman in their church was keeping her temporarily. Finally they decided to return her to the animal shelter. When they went there, a new phase in Lady's life began. They met a young soldier at the shelter, and when he saw Lady, he said he would take her.

The Ledets lost track of Lady until they received a telephone call one day from an animal hospital in El Paso. Lady had been shot, but the wound was not critical. They were able to put the story together about what happened. Apparently the soldier was transferred, so he gave the dog to a woman he knew in El Paso. For some reason, her neighbor did not like Lady and shot her. She was released from the animal hospital to return with the woman who got Lady from the soldier.

At this point, exactly what went on in Lady's life becomes confusing. The El Paso shelter received a call that someone had turned a German Shepherd loose in Sunland Park. They saw the dog again a couple of days and tried to catch her, but she was "too fast and too smart" according to a report.

The former owners had traveled back and forth between El Paso and Las Cruces many times, with Lady along, and they used the side road, Highway 478. This is where Lady's loyalty kicked in apparently, along with her intelligence. About two days after she was seen in Sunland Park, someone from the shelter that knew her saw Lady along the road between El Paso and Las Cruces. About two weeks passed, and she was reported again along the roadside. Then about three more weeks passed, and Lady was brought to the animal shelter nearby.

This is where the ID chip came into play. Without identification, Lady's fate would have been death, but the shelter was able to discover the chip, read it, and locate Lady's owners in the retirement home. In Las Cruces. The Ledets immediately went to see Lady. When they got there they heard Lady barking, and she immediately came to them as if she had finally found them!

She had been looking for a long time! Lady had lost a lot of weight and was not in good condition, but she was alive, and she was in Las Cruces, and she had found the Ledets!

How Lady did this is one of those unanswered questions. Intelligence, undoubtedly, but probably just plain loyalty! She wanted her previous owners.

Where to keep her was another immediate problem, so they called some friends, Don and Beate Nixon, and asked for help. The Nixons have other dogs, but still came to the rescue. "When I saw her, I knew right away that I was not going to let the shelter dispose of her. We said we would take her". Don said "She is very quiet, needs lots of attention, and I think she will be good with children."

She has had all her shots updated including for rattlesnake bite, and has gained some weight, he said. Lady is about four years old now. Don and Jerry both said they would give Lady to a good caring home with loving people, and perhaps with children. Don added that prospective owner will have to show him where the dog will live, and prove that they want Lady and will care for her. If not, he will keep Lady. Anyone interested in perhaps having Lady may call Don Nixon at 575-521-1319.

Guest author Les Parr, a retired realtor and editor/publisher of several newspapers in Washington state with a Journalism degree from the University of Washington, is a recent arrival to Las Cruces. Interested authors for "On The Positive Side" can contact the Humane Society of Southern New Mexico at (575) 523-8020.