

DOG SAVING DAY

by Lee Netzler

Yesterday I saved two Scotties. I had Rusty in the Jimmy and we were on the way to Longs Peak Animal Hospital for a vet appointment. As we drove north on Drake, I spotted two nice looking Scotties, one black and one wheaten, running loose in the yard just south of 17th Avenue. It took a moment to realize that they were unattended and in danger of going out into the traffic on 17th. At the stop sign for 17th I shifted the car into Park and got out. The dogs had rounded the corner to sniff the shrubbery, although one had almost walked into 17th at the corner.

I walked up to about 15 feet from them, crouched down and called to them, offering a treat from my pocket. One came over and I kept coaxing until the second dog followed. I fed them both a couple of treats, and gently slipped my index fingers under their collars. Now what? No leash with me, traffic whizzing by, and I was squatting awkwardly clutching two active Scotties. I carefully nudged them around so that I could get one on each side of me, slipped my hands from the collars to their bellies and lifted them under my arms. It was a clumsy posture, and I worried that one or both would object and wriggle free, or perhaps even bite me. If that happened and they skittered, it was likely they would flee into the street. That scared me! I managed to talk soothingly to them, and they accepted me carrying them back to the Jimmy.

The next problem was how to get them in the car. I had both hands full and certainly couldn't let them go, nor could I just dump two strange dogs in with my unsuspecting Scottie. I decided I would try to open the upper part (a hinged window) of the tail gate. I managed to bump the latch button with my elbow to get it open, and then lifted both dogs over the still-closed tailgate and set them in the trunk area of the Jimmy. What a relief that was.

Of course they were all curious by then. Rusty was in the back seat, on the other side of the seat backs from the two strangers standing in the trunk area. I fed the two "saved" Scotties a couple more treats and managed to get a look at one of the collar tags. I only got a glimpse, but it said "Longs Peak Animal Hospital" where I was going when this all began. The dogs all seemed to be getting along, so I set out to drive us there. As we rode, the two strangers began getting nervous about their situation and barked occasionally. When I got to the vets, I called Rusty into the front seat and we exited and went into the hospital before the other Scots could climb into the back seat.

After getting Rusty confined inside, I went back out and managed to take the collar off the one Scottie that had the tag on it. Back inside, the vet staff checked their computer

and identified the dog. I should have recognized them. They live about 3 blocks from our house and I had helped the owners find the wheaten (as a young puppy) about a year ago. The wheaten was renamed from Beamer to Wally and the black Scottie is Max.. Once we identified them, the receptionist called the owner and he came to the vets to pick them up. We transferred them from my Jimmy to his car.

He hadn't even realized they were missing until the vet called him. He said that he had a contractor doing work in the lower level of their house and they must have left a door open. By the time I found the dogs, they had traveled about six or seven blocks to reach Drake and 17th.

It was a scary experience for me. If the dogs had been left on their own, I feel certain they would have strayed into the 17th Avenue traffic. If they had gotten skittish when I encountered them, or after I picked them up, they could easily have panicked and run onto 17th then. That would likely have been a death sentence. If they had not been compatible with Rusty, I could have had a 3-way dog fight in the Jimmy. There were so many places where it could have ended badly!!

But, everything went well. The owner thanked me several times before driving off. I had only met him briefly once before, although I had met his wife a few times as she was searching for a companion to Max.

So, it was a happy ending, but it sure had me stressed while it was playing out. Maybe today I should stay home. I don't think I'm ready for another Canine Rescue mission just now.