

Pipers Story

March 5, 2015 ----- this is how it all started

'Bacon trap' finally lures stray, emaciated Bernese Mountain Dog to caretakers in Lorain

Friendship APL caring for Bernese Mtn. dog

LORAIN, Ohio - A stray and emaciated Bernese Mountain Dog was finally lured to caretakers in Lorain County when they employed a "bacon trap."

The dog had dodged the Lorain Police Department's Animal Control officer for months after it was first spotted in November.

Officers tried several times to catch it to get it out of the harsh elements during one of the most brutal winters in Ohio history.

Temperatures fell to as low as 20 below zero in Lorain in February.

The dog weighs between 40 and 50 pounds, and, according to breeders, should weigh between about 85 and 110 pounds.

Police officer Richard Broz said that many other stray dogs would not have survived the extremely cold winter on their own.

Broz helped catch the dog, which is being cared for at the **Friendship Animal Protective League**.

Officials want to know who the dog belongs to and where it came from since it was on its own outside the entire winter.

Greg Willey Executive Director of the Friendship APL said the Bernese could be put up for adoption once it's nursed back to health at Friendship where it's being treated for a variety of health issues due to exposure.

Hi Everyone, we have now in our rescue program the stray from Lorain Co/Ohio. We went to get her the minute they were able to release her. She is very sweet but surely needed a bath on the way home. She is nine years old and has been out in the elements all winter. She was caught in a live trap a week ago. She is terribly, terribly thin and just not feeling very well so has a room alone for now and eating four small

meals a day until her system gets used to eating good food again. I've put a carpet and a bed in her room but can't get her to lay down on one of them so she's more comfortable. I hope she feels safe and loved soon. She already comes up and wants to be petted just like every other Berner. On Friday, we go for her vet visit. Please say a little prayer for her as she really needs us all to pull for her.

UPDATE 3/13/2015:

Here is an update on this little girl, as of noon today:

She DOES have a chip, through which her breeder was found, and her age established. She is 9 years old, was sold to a lady many years ago, but that lady can not be found and no information is known of her whereabouts.

The shelter people named her "Piper", which really seems to suit her personality.

Piper is extremely underweight and very weak, having lived the entire harsh Winter with a herd of deer in the woods (for 4 months - since the end of October when she was first sighted, until just recently when she was caught).

She will stay in foster care, given her age, however, this will be a forever foster care !

Your well wishes and prayers will continue to be of great need ----- thank you all for thinking of Piper !

NEW UPDATE ON PIPER, 3/14/2015: (much better news than expected ...

Piper did well at the vet apt. yesterday. Now we wait for all the blood and stool tests to come back next week. She does have a bilateral bacterial ear infection which is being treated easily. The large scar below her right ear is from some past trauma. She does have some drooping of her muzzle on that side as well so likely the facial nerve was injured at the same time. It's impossible to tell what happened to her. She carries that ear a bit lower than the other one and there is some damage to the tip which some think is frostbite. Her teeth are in need of cleaning and she does have some gingivitis which is focal and will need a few teeth extracted there. Her eyes are fine. Chest and abdomen x rays showed nothing significant, no tumors were visible. She does have spondylosis of the lumbar spine and it is pretty dramatic on the x ray but doesn't seem to be bothering her too much. I intend to begin her on Duralactin soon. She has a small mass on her left eye lid. She is bleeding and we are hoping it's a normal cycle, she does not have any uterine infection currently. Have decided with my vet's suggestion to wait until later this summer to consider the spay, teeth and maybe the eye surgery if she is progressing nicely. She is all set up with her own room just now for a week or so as she is too weak and tired to be integrated with my two young dogs. It only took her a day to decide to sleep on the dog bed I gave her. Piper is eating four meals a day now and really looks forward to them as you can imagine. Every day she seems more interested in her environment. She sleeps most of the time that I'm not in the room with her which is probably for the best, means she is comfortable. She got a bath on Thursday and will need another soon as she has lots of dandruff. Piper is a very sweet girl and today I began some clicker training so she learns her new name easily. I think that she had a good life at one time in the past as she readily jumps up into the car and rides very well. She is not afraid of doors or dishes as mill dogs are. And she walks wonderfully on leash. She actually wagged her tail when she jumped up into my car at the shelter and saw another Berner. I'm waiting to see how long it will take until she wags her tail for me. I'll let you all know when that happens. Just be assured that she is getting the best medical care, lots of love, attention and good food and she will be staying with me for the rest of her life.

UPDATE 3/16/2015:

Just got a call from my vet and Piper's blood chemistries came back within acceptable limits as did the urine sample. So one more hurdle over but more to go. I see little changes in her each day. She seems a bit stronger and we have begun small walks three times each day. She still is sleeping quite a bit but I really wanted to get her out today since it's so nice. She really likes walking in the field across the street and smells everything with her nose on the ground. I heard from Jim T. who was helping to get her caught all winter. He said that they tried to dart her twice and as well had the live trap out a couple of times. She once was in a large garage but once she saw them off she went. She would stop for cars and then off across the street she would go. He said that he took food out for her often once he found out where she was staying in the woods. So I'm very sure he was part of the reason she survived the winter. Piper owes him a big thank you for sure for his kindness and concern. He wants to see her again so we'll be arranging that once she is feeling better and stronger. Thank you everyone who has contributed to her medical care. It's very much appreciated.

UPDATE 3/21/2015:

Today Piper and I ventured to the vet's office and she has gained 3 lbs. this week so she's on her way to better health. She has more to go however. Still eating four meals a day and increasing the size of them and adding a bit of kibble into it. She's eating with more vigor now and gets up to standing when I come into the room each time so I think she has more energy. Still no tail wagging but it will come with time.

UPDATE 3/24/2015:

Hi Everyone, some good news today. Piper has begun to wag her tail every time I come into her room and the frosting on the cake was her giving me a kiss on the cheek when I bent over her yesterday. She's eating everything in sight and is beginning to look more like a dog than a skeleton now but still has a long ways to go with gaining weight. Her ear infections are clearing up nicely also. Hopefully her heat cycle will last only another 10 days or so and then she can get another bath and live in all the house with us. She's a sweetheart for sure and now really enjoys our walks outside.

Piper update 3/31/2015:

Hi Everyone, hope all are enjoying this almost spring weather. Piper is doing fine. Yesterday while out walking she actually laid down on the grass and rolled over several times, wiggling like a pup and seeming to really enjoy the warmer weather and getting her back all scratched and dirty with old grass. She is such a good girl that before we got home she shook it all off. She still is very anxious when she hears or sees people outside and really wants to run away but we are working on it. I'm afraid that she will continue to have some scars from her trauma outside all winter. Her cycle is all over. She continues to have a cough/gag several times a day and I'm a bit worried that she might have lung worms from being outside so talked with my vet yesterday and we are going to treat her like she had them and see if it clears up. Just 5 days of panacur. This week she's going to get a second bath and hopefully smell better. She is so very sweet and is beginning to really trust me. She is loving her four large meals every

day. I can't believe how much she is capable of eating. I've had several dogs lately that were on diets so this is different for me but she's worth all the groceries.

UPDATE 4/6/2015:

Hi Everyone, Piper is doing better all the time physically. She's now up to 73 lbs. but surely has some more weight gain to go. However, she's looking more like a normal dog all the time. Currently she getting 2 lbs, of a meat mix (turkey and hog) cooked, 3 cups of oatmeal and 4 cups of a good grain free kibble per day divided into 4 meals throughout the day. She is always ready for her next meal too. Her heat cycle has finished and she's had her second bath which was very needed. Her muzzle in particular was so dirty that it took lots of scrubbing to get it white again. This is another way I know she lived with people happily previously, she did not flinch at the dog dryer at all after the bath. The ear infections are healed. She did have a cough/gag which bothered me so my vet and I decided to give her 5 days of panacur in case she had lung worms and sure enough after the treatment she's not coughing at all. Since her lumbar spine is so affected with the spondalosis I decided to take her to Dr. Hall for some cranial-sacral work last Friday and I do think it really helped her but according to Dr. Hall it wasn't badly out of alignment which is good. We still are looking at surgery in the future to spay her and extract the bad teeth but that's a ways off. Piper surely has had trauma being out in the wild for so long. It mostly manifests itself by her being so scared when outside and not wanting to be around people. My granddaughter was here for four days over her spring break and Piper was not trusting of her at all. So I had her feed Piper for the entire time and she did get some better by the end of the four days, would allow Brandi to pet her willingly. She still sleeps much of the time but I think it is allowing her to rest, relax and get so much cortisol out of her system. I just can't even imagine what it would be like to be frightened and so wary 24/7 for so many months. I'm hoping that the memory will begin to be replaced with good things and she gets comfortable here for the rest of her life. I have begun to start with meet and greets with my two dogs in the house. They are both so young and have lots of energy so it's going slowly as I don't want them to accidentally hurt her just with rough play. She is getting stronger all the time too. She does like to be with them and we get lots of tail wagging when they are together for short periods of time. She is a sweet sweet dog. Both Brandi and I have begun to use clicker with her so she learns her new name and she's picking it up very well. She is very trusting of me by now so we just have to wait it out and give her good experiences with people for her to settle and trust again and hopefully recover fully from her wild winter.

UPDATE 4/12/2015:

Hi Everyone, Piper has had a very good week. Her weight is up to 78 lbs. so she's gained 15 lbs. in a month. She's still very hungry and eats anything I give her. I'm thinking that her ideal weight will be at least 85 lbs. if not a few more since she still is too thin. I've increased the meet and greets with my other dogs and Rio has finally stopped bothering her like the adolescent that he is. I've left the gate to her room open all week so she can come into the rest of the house as she prefers and she does so with increasing frequency. The last few days she has seemed very comfortable and ok in my backyard which is fenced in so today I left her loose out by herself to sniff and wander around. I went out after a while and called her and she came right to me without any hesitation which is so good as she really has been afraid previously when outside. So not only does she know her new name but she will willingly come

when called. Of course we've used lots of treats in her rehab. I'm so proud of her willingness to change and trust again. I'm sure that in another month she'll just be a different dog than when she arrived.

UPDATE 4/27/2015:

Hi Everyone, Piper has attained her ideal weight of 82 lbs. So she is being weaned off her four meal a day schedule much to her distain. I can always count on her to be in the kitchen at meal times, don't have to call her ever for meals. She now is out free in the yard with my dogs as she seems strong enough to handle some of their rough play. I am happy that Rio does seem to acknowledge her age and does give her more space and courtesy that Jessie. She does seem to enjoy being out in the yard laying down in the sun and warmth but does wander around sniffing and checking out all the space also. Depends on her mood. She does not voluntarily run around just walks like the old lady that she is. Last week she had repeat x rays and a tracheal wash, after which a cytology and culture were completed. The x rays still showed bronchitis, the question is why she has it. On the cytology there were some cells (which I can't spell) that usually mean parasites so my vet recommended she get a shot of ivermectin which she got today. The culture showed microplasm so it was recommended she also get a round of doxycycline. This I'll begin in a few days as I don't like to overload a dog on meds. So I'm hoping that once she is through this round of meds she will stop coughing and gagging and breathe much easier and feel better.

UPDATE 5/11/2015:

Piper has stopped coughing and really pretty much healthy now. The last round of meds has done the trick, which meant that she had parasites in her lungs. This morning she was actually playing rough house with the dogs for a short while. She's not real active but what a sweet heart. I'm so lucky to have her here with us. Since she's up to weight I'm slowly switching her over to raw. She sure will eat anything I give her.

UPDATE 6/21/2015: Well, this is the fourth month that Piper has been back in civilization. I'd say for the last month she has been healthy and at ideal weight, at last. She is not an active dog and sleeps most of the time (loves her soft bed) but always is in the kitchen when she hears me cooking or knows meal time is near. She's been transitioned to a raw diet and really enjoys her meals, vegetables, fruits, everything. She's learning to catch a piece of banana or other fruit at lunch time, when I share mine with the dogs. When I'm fixing her food she's begun to do the cutest little dance as she goes from standing on one front foot then the other and bobs her head at the same time. I call it the Piper jig. My vet wants to pull a few bad teeth and spay her now that she's healthy so I'm trying to decide if she's up to the surgery and if it's advisable to do at her age. My young male has taken a liking to her and often chooses to sleep next to her and they face fight a little and she licks his ears or belly like a good momma would even though he's nearly two years old. She's not spending so much time outside now that the bugs are flying about constantly. Since her favorite pastime is laying in the grass, they bother her and she continually snaps at them so often comes in soon after relieving herself. She most certainly likes the AC. What we are working on now is to not be afraid of people so much. My granddaughter has been here a lot this summer so she feeds Piper and they are becoming fast friends. So when her mother or dad come to pick her up we have them petting Piper too and she is getting more comfortable about strangers in the house and petting her. Willingly stays in the living room with them all now which is real progress as she used to run to another room when someone she didn't know came into the house. So all in all life is good for Miss Piper these days.

UPDATE 7/10/2015:

Sherry has adopted Piper !!!!! Here are Sherry's words:

As of the end of June I felt that Piper had recovered enough to undergo surgery so on the 25th off she went for the entire day. She was under anesthesia for a long while as there was much to do. First, were the teeth. She had three removed and the dead canine was very hard to get out and ended up needing a skin flap once it was out. So she required soft food only and nothing hard to chew for two weeks following the surgery. Then they cleaned all her teeth. Next was the spay. Her uterus was huge and filled with mucous and fluid and the ovaries were full with cysts. My vet said it was only a short while until she would have had a full blown pyometria infection and that she'd feel so much better after she recovered from the surgery. Next he removed a growth on her eyelid. I worried all day as she is so old and needed so much work done. We also completed a rabies titer and repeated the brucella test. The later was negative and the titer was in the protective range. I was so relieved as I really didn't want to give her the rabies vaccine unless it was absolutely needed. I picked her up at 5 pm. She came up the stairs from the surgery and kennel area just fine. I took her for a short walk in the yard as she really had to relieve herself. She jumped up into the car just like in the morning. She was a bit uncomfortable that evening and had some dry heaves for a few hours but did eat a little later in the evening and slept all night. Her recovery has been without any complications and did not have to go back for any stitch removal. She was on antibiotics for 10 days. She amazes me all the time. In just a few days after surgery she was trying to play more with my other dogs when out in the yard. She is most definitely feeling much better than before the surgery, more active. She's had another bath just recently and looks great. She's fully recovered now after 5 months and lots of funds, unfortunately. I have decided to adopt her as she is very happy here with us. She wags her tail all the time now and will run, in her fashion, when I call her or when she wants to play with the other dogs. She comes to the kitchen when I'm cooking now and loves tidbits of fruit or vegetables. I have her on a raw diet now and she eats every bit of it. She has her special bed in the living room and sleeps there most of the time. What a love. I'm so happy and lucky she came into my life. Sherry

UPDATE 1/31/2016:

Piper Update: During the summer - fall Piper still continued to limp on her left front leg. The vet and I both think that she was hit by a car and this limp was part of that injury to her. So we began cranial sacral work for her. We saw the vet about every 3 to 4 weeks for treatment and to my surprise and delight by early December she had stopped limping at all and was much more active when outside. She really enjoys playing around the yard with Rio who is two and she often initiates this play. When Jessie and Rio are playing they can get very rambunctious and loud and she usually will run over and stop it. She has established herself as the matron of my dog pack and keeps order as she sees fit. She has about twice as much coat as last year and it's very thick and shiny. The only exception is the space below her right ear likely from the car hit which still sheds skin from time to time and likely will never get any fur back. She still isn't very comfortable when she's away from home so I don't take her too many places given her age. However, she did accompany us to Chardon in December as I wanted to get a picture with all of us with Santa which I'd never done before. She decided that since we all were there she'd go along with it. By her behavior I'm sure this was a new experience for her but she tolerated it well and I now have our 2015 photo with the whole gang. Not an easy task for the photographer for sure. Piper gets a bath about every 6 to 8 weeks and she tolerates it well. Still learning to trust me to clip toenails and trim her foot hair which is very thick. Piper still has her special bed in the living room and sleeps much of the time as an old dog should. She's really good now about appearing in the kitchen every time she hears me cooking just like the other two dogs do. She's learned to eat many different kinds of foods and is learning to catch a piece of food that's tossed to her. She'll eat most everything

given and is at good weight at 81 lbs. She's not had any illnesses or medical problems since she got over the issues she came with last March. She is quite affectionate and will come up to me for scratching and petting especially when outside. She is pretty much my shadow. She's doing better when guests are in the house and doesn't always run to the bedroom as she did initially. At times with certain people will allow them to pet and love her now. It's just amazing how much she's changed since last March. I don't often think back on those days as she was so starved and sick and I was really worried that she might not survive. But she's proved to be a survivor and strong and a fighter in her quiet way. She should be nearing or at 10 years of age now and from all aspects is enjoying her new life. I tell her every day what a sweetheart she is and how much I love her. I'm so fortunate she came into my life. Sherry

Update June 21, 2017:

Piper has been doing well until a few weeks ago. She's not wanting to put her head down to eat. She is hungry and eating the same food from my hand. Just seems that she might be in pain with the head lowered. I tried a raised bowl but she would have none of that. So I'm feeding her by hand. Thank goodness for gloves since she eats raw. We went to see the vet yesterday and he could find nothing in her mouth or neck to account for this change. She does have a small growth right in the front of the lower front teeth but he wasn't too concerned about it and it did not seem painful to the touch at all. On exam he did find a mass in her abdomen right by her spleen. Did an x ray and it was very obvious. She is scheduled for an ultrasound and possible surgery depending on what is found on July 6th. She is fine otherwise. We did a full blood panel yesterday and today found that everything is good so no metabolic issues at all. I'll be taking her to Dr. Hall soon for some cranial sacral work to see if she can fix the neck issue. The mass is of great concern so please say a little prayer for her. Would love this to be a hematoma like your dog had Geri but know it likely is cancer. She is enjoying life so in her 11th year right now.

UPDATE OCTOBER 11, 2017:

I was bathing Piper on Monday and felt a big mass in her neck/chest. Saw our vet on Tuesday and he took an aspirate. It came back today and is what I was dreading. She has a very aggressive form of lymphoma. I learned all about treatments but just now am inclined not to start anything given that she is 11 ½ and does not like being out and about and getting in and out of the car is very hard on both of us as her mobility isn't what it used to be. I have such awful memories of using prednisone with my first berner and it was not effective in fighting her AIHA. I know it might help Piper but I don't know if I can go through it again with Piper. Been thinking it over all day and get more sad as time goes on. She has done so well this summer and really fine after her surgery in July. She still is enjoying life right now but I am a wreck. Sherry