

Dogs on chains are illegal; help is available to fence in yards

By
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By any measure, dogs who spend their lives tied up are miserable, according to dog trainers, veterinarians, humane societies and rescue organizations that convinced the Oregon legislature to pass a law last year prohibiting the practice.

Under this law, a dog cannot be chained more than 10 hours in a 24-hour period; or 15 hours, if a tether is attached to a line, pulley or trolley. The law forbids the use of tethers, chains or ropes in any configuration that entangles and endangers animals, and also, outlaws the use of

pinching and choking collars.

The Toby Fund of Wolf Creek, Oregon, aims to help people get their dogs off chains through their Unchain My Heart program. Volunteers construct comfortable kennels or install fencing for dogs whose owners cannot otherwise afford to make these critical improvements; and the organization provides shelters and dog houses when needed.

“Our biggest challenge is to reach people’s hearts and minds and break through the mentality where they think it’s just fine to keep a dog on a chain,” said Bradley Vincent, Toby Fund’s Illinois Valley Coordinator, who has completed about 25 projects in the Valley over the

past two years. “Perhaps they grew up with a dog on a chain or they figure, ‘It’s only a dog,’ so it doesn’t matter.”

But it does matter — for many reasons.

“Dogs are highly social creatures. They have feelings and they’re miserable when kept alone all the time,” said Vincent, adding that chained dogs become highly territorial, more agitated and more likely to attack. “They build energy and have nowhere for it go, so it can come out as aggressive behavior.”

Vincent says the longer a dog is kept on a chain, the more difficult they become to handle. Many chained dogs jump up when anyone comes near and these

they learn that it’s OK to abuse some creatures, and this can lay the foundation for future abuse of both animals and people, as well as contribute to racist tendencies.

Vincent said people can call the Toby Fund or Animal Control when they become aware of a chained dog. He noted how dogs in bad situations that are visible from the street are more likely to get help, but that “too many dogs suffer in silence on secluded properties,” and in those situations, he hopes a neighbor will make the calls on behalf of the animal.

“We can send a letter explaining how life on a chain is hard on the dog and inform people about the new law. And mostly, express that we’re here to help. We’re not judging anyone and we’re not the police,” Vincent said. “Every situation is different. We assess the situation, note the size of the dog, or how many dogs, and come up with a plan. We let people know that we can install low-cost or no-cost yards or kennels.”

If people won’t accept help or make positive changes for the dog, Vincent says Animal Control should become involved. He also noted that dogs are pack animals that are happiest inside the home with their families.

The new law also requires all animals to have adequate shelter from the elements, with bedding that keeps them warm, dry, reasonably clean and prevents injury. Crawl spaces, steps, decks, stoops and the underside of vehicles, carriers and crates are not adequate shelters. Governor Kitzhaber also signed a second law, giving judges the option to consider severity and cruelty when sentencing someone for animal abuse.

If you know of a dog stuck on a chain, or if you have any fencing materials, wood, or dog houses to donate, please call the Toby Fund at 541-866-2527.



Clyde before his unchained experience.

(Courtesy photo for The Illinois Valley News)

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Dec. 3 & 10-B

~ Letter of Thanks ~

The family of Forrest “Dutch” Chester Warner would like to thank our friends, family and the community of Cave Junction for their love and support through this very difficult time in our life. We are truly blessed to have so many loving and caring people in our lives that care, know and loved such a wonderful man, a husband, Dutch, who we all miss.

Again, thank you,
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