

FRIDAY EXTRA!

The Daily Astorian

Friday, March 18, 2016

Weekend Edition



Joshua Bessex/The Daily Astorian

Louie, a 5-year-old pit bull mix, was adopted from the Clatsop County Animal Control and Shelter in Warrenton.

LUCKY LOUIE

Dogs over capacity at Clatsop County Animal Control and Shelter

By ERICK BENGEL
The Daily Astorian

Month after month, Louie was the little doggy no one wanted.

Brought to the Clatsop County Animal Control and Shelter in Warrenton as a stray when he was a month old, the black-and-white pit bull had been twice adopted and twice returned. He lived a total of 19 months at the shelter, including a one-year stretch — one of the longest stays of any animal that has passed through its doors.

"We all loved him. He was easy to walk and everything. But, you know, he was a pit bull," Marcy Dun-

ning, a shelter volunteer, said. "It was getting to be like, 'Hmmm, he's not going to be adopted because he's just been sitting here for so long.'"

Then an Ilwaco resident, Jeff Rusiecki, suddenly had an overwhelming urge to visit the shelter after he and his wife, Judy, lost their fourth dog, a Chesapeake Bay retriever.

"I actually felt guilty because I was telling my wife, 'We're not getting any other dogs,'" Rusiecki recalled.

Then Deputy Steven Hildreth, the animal control and shelter supervisor, asked if they would be interested in looking at one.

"And when he brought Louie out, I knew immediately," Rusiecki said. "When we had him, and saw

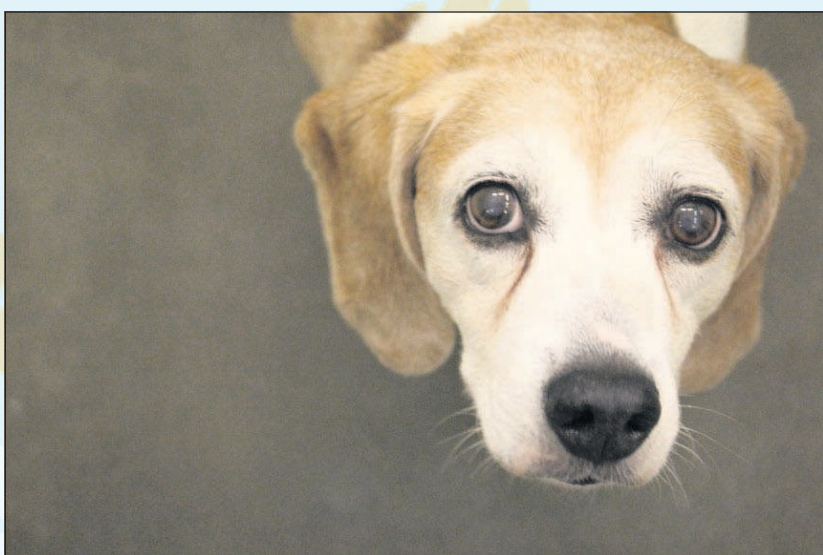
him for the first time, we knew that he'd found his forever home."

There's no mystery to Louie's adoption troubles: He may be one of the most well-mannered dogs Jeff has ever known, but Louie's breed gets a bum rap.

Pit bulls, popularly perceived as aggressive and dangerous, are as friendly as their owners raise them to be, said Rusiecki, Astoria's emergency communications manager.

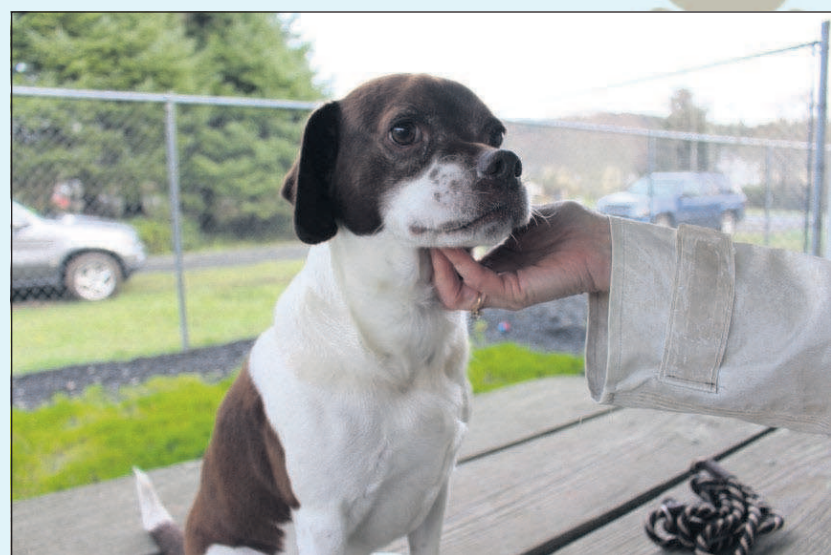
And, he added, the shelter volunteers had obviously spent a lot of time training Louie, who knew how to sit, shake, roll over and lay down.

See *DOGS*, Page 5C



Erick Bengel/The Daily Astorian

Betty Boop, a 12-year-old beagle mix, is one of the "seniors" of the animal shelter's dog kennel.



Erick Bengel/The Daily Astorian

Riley, a 5-year-old male beagle mix, gets some fresh air with Marcy Dunning, a shelter volunteer.