

'Safeway chicken' finds new roost

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even achieve nonprofit status.

While she specializes in rescuing potbellied pigs, Schoolcraft hasn't found an animal she could turn away yet.

"I have a very soft spot for every animal when it comes down to it," she said.

As a rescuer, she has taken care of roosters, tortoises, rats, mice, ferrets and rabbits to name a few.

"I don't turn down any animal based on background breed species," she said. "It doesn't matter to me. They're all animals and they all need help."

The latest animal to make the list was a hen she'd heard was staking out a place in Cottage Grove's Safeway parking lot.

"I was just browsing Facebook, actually, and it popped up on my feed," she said. "And nobody seemed to really know who her owners were."

Schoolcraft and her sister came into town to check the bushes around the parking lot for signs and found the hen had made several nesting spots.

"We didn't end up finding her but we did find several areas with plenty of chicken feathers, as well as other little marks here and there, so she was definitely there somewhere," she said.

The amount of potential hiding spots were too numerous, however, and the sisters gave up after three hours.

Schoolcraft, for several weeks, was unable to spot



COURTESY PHOTO

The hen rests comfortably in Kristi Schoolcraft's arms after being rescued from the Safeway parking lot.

the hen despite making frequent trips to the parking lot with feed.

"I just started going out, every time going to Grove. And very shortly after that, it became every day for like two weeks, in the evening or in the afternoon and leaving feed for her because it was obvious she was there. She was getting seen," said Schoolcraft. "And I thought, well, at least this way she's getting food. And at some point, maybe she'll trust someone enough to catch her."

One fortuitous day, though, Schoolcraft and her husband were getting ready to leave after

another unsuccessful day when a little chicken head popped out from the bushes.

"As I was getting back in my truck, I heard some rustling and I turned around and there she was," said Schoolcraft.

Surprisingly, catching the bird took only 10 minutes.

"It was almost like she just let me grab her," said Schoolcraft. "She had no problem with it. She was just like, 'Okay, I guess this is happening now.' I think I think she was ready."

The hen may well have been exhausted from the month-long ordeal. The

couple found some damage to the bottom of the hen's feet, likely due to the sizzling asphalt during the hot summer days.

Schoolcraft was also able to contact the owners and learned the chicken's backstory. Apparently, it had somehow stowed away on the undercarriage of its owner's truck and took a four-mile ride into town to the Safeway.

When the owner came back and started up the vehicle, the chicken bailed from the undercarriage, not interested in taking another ride.

The owner found it too daunting to capture the hen in a large parking

lot and, having 23 other chickens at home, signed it off as a lost cause.

Though Schoolcraft and the owner had made plans to reunite the hen with its original home, the owners has a last-minute change of heart and told Schoolcraft she seemed the right person to take in the hen after all.

Schoolcraft found it a hard offer to resist.

"I mean, she's so sweet. She just kind of stole my heart," she said. "So I was more than happy to accept bringing her into our flock."

In naming the hen, "Destiny" has been floated in reference to the chicken and Schoolcraft's fortuitous match, but Schoolcraft is starting to lean toward "Boxxy" due to the boxwood bushes she was found in — as well as the black hen's chromatic resemblance to a goth podcaster she likes.

Getting the hen to a new home was team effort, Schoolcraft pointed out.

"I definitely would like to thank the community for everything that they did for her while she was out there," she said. "So a big thank you so to them and to Safeway and to the attendants. Everybody really played a big part in it."

Schoolcraft said she will use Facebook to update people on the hen's progress and how her acclimation to 12 new feathered friends is going.

"And we also have a very robust, Rhode Island Red Rooster who is very interested in her," she said. "He wants to be her BFF."

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