

Found, or POUND?

(as printed in AKC Gazette, Mar 2001 Miniature Pinscher Breed Column, courtesy of: Faith Gordon)

I recently received phone calls from an animal control officer in a nearby town and a local veterinary clinic, each reporting recovered Miniature Pinschers. I was asked in each case if the dog could be mine.

After they described the dogs to me, I knew they were not mine or dogs that I had bred. I visited the dogs and found both to be friendly. One was found near a busy mall in the suburbs and the other in a residential neighborhood in the city. Neither dog could be traced by tattoo or microchip, and neither was claimed by an owner. No one called vet offices or animal control, or put ads in the papers to find a missing Min Pin. The animal control officer kept one dog for a while and gave it to a friend. I don't know what happened to the other one. I only hope it didn't end up on the street again.

Most likely, these dogs originated from a pet store or the puppy broker that operates about 30 miles from here. Either way, someone paid dearly for each of these dogs and both were well cared for.

Stories of dogs escaping their homes and fenced-in yards are always disturbing. For instance, while being cared for by a neighbor of mine, a little non spayed terrier-mix female named Bailey jumped the fence and ran off, never to be seen again. Her owner was in the hospital, terminally ill, and Bailey was his baby. The last person to see Bailey said she was running with, or being chased by, a group of dogs.

If breeders would microchip or tattoo their pups before they are sold, and register the number in the breeder's name, then the breeder would be called in the event that one of the dogs was found running loose. The AKC has a wonderful success rate for returns through its identification program, Companion Animal Recovery. Even if your dog is not a purebred (or even if it's not a dog at all -; cats, birds and virtually any companion animal can be micro chipped), a microchip can save its life.

Escapes happen, even to the best of dog owners, no matter how safe you make your yard. A busy little Min Pin can find the weak spot in your fence in the blink of an eye -they are like ferrets. Once, when my dogs escaped, they only went as far as the house next door and were immediately rounded up. But there was that moment that seemed to go on forever as I fought back tears, called their names, and kept an eye out for an oncoming car that they might not see.

I tattoo and microchip my dogs and the pups I sell. And that gives them a good chance of being returned home. Do yours have that chance?

You can contact the AKC Companion Animal Recovery at (800) 232-7894