

Stinky George

In December 2009, Happy Trails received a strange call from a business in Poland, Ohio. A stray black goat that did not have any horns had shown up in the area surrounding a strip mall, and decided that it would make it's home next to the building of a wholesale pharmacy.

The employees began to leave the little guy food, and cautioned each other to drive slower through the parking lot to avoid hitting their new resident.

Though he was happy for the food, the small, black goat did not trust people. He wasn't at all into human contact or wanting to be very near to the people who were trying to help him. **The good folks who worked at the business were concerned for his safety and well-being**, with the bitter cold winds of winter whipping around the sides of their building. He had no shelter from the freezing rains or the heavy, wet flakes of snow. There was no dry area where he could lay down.



We've discovered that it's nearly impossible to get great photos of any dark black animal, but this is George, safe and sound at Happy Trails.

Could Happy Trails please help them safely catch the homeless goat?

Rounding up stray farm animals that aren't crazy about people is always a fun time...not. I'm certain that we picked the coldest day of the year to hitch up the trailer and venture over to Poland, about an hour away from the sanctuary. Cheri Rider, Rob Willard, and myself, bundled up in layers for this chilly adventure, and drove past a heavily populated shopping area. ***Where in heaven's name did a stray goat come from in this neck of the woods?***

The driveway to the business wound up to the side of their building. Even in the darkness you could tell that in warmer weather, the grounds around the building had been very nicely landscaped.

Rob shut off the engine and we hopped out of the nice warm truck and into the frigid arctic winds that were blowing stinging, icy snowflakes into our faces. I had been playfully whining during the entire ride about the cold and the crappy weather. I was having one of those days where after working outside for any length of time, you simply couldn't get warm no matter how hard you tried.

Cheri and Rob were looking around and surveying the scene. *Where should we start to look for the goat?* Behind the building there appeared to be acres upon acres of woods. Surely we would never find this thing. They were talking about splitting up and searching various areas of the vast wooded area. This did not sound the least bit enjoyable to me, as I pulled my stocking hat completely down over my frozen nose. As they contemplated a plan, I danced around trying to get rid of the chill and trying to see through the holes in the knit

pattern in my hat. Tears from the searing cold were filling my eyes.

An icy blast hit us hard and I continued to dramatically moan and groan, and in my pretend misery, I walked over to the corner of the building that was right in front of us. Rob and Cheri continued to debate about venturing into the vast open area behind the building. Surely in this corner of the building smack next to me there would be less wind and virtually no area to really have to search. I jokingly blurted out, **“Uh, I’ll pick this area to search.”** With that said, I boldly set foot into their very nicely manicured beds of shrubbery next to the building.

Whoosh! Fast as lightening, out from behind the bush directly in front of me ran the goat! “There he goes,” I yelled excitedly. *“That was the goat!”* Rob and Cheri took off in chase around the other side of the building. We all met up in a back parking lot, where the goat had easily distanced us and hit the woods at full speed. *Phooey.*

“That was brilliant,” Rob said dryly. “You just scared the goat away.”

“I was just joking around! How was I to know that the goat was in there?” I couldn’t believe what had just happened!

We would have never chosen that corner of the building to look for the goat on purpose — it was one of those freak accident things.

“I’m going to go look in the woods,” Rob told us.

“Be my guest.” Cheri and I did a quick search of the wooded area directly across from our trailer before giving up completely, and then headed back into the warm truck. It was pretty obvious that the goat was not going to come back any time soon just to humor us.

We decided to drive over to a nearby fast food restaurant and get something hot to drink while we gave the goat some time alone, just incase he decided that he was coming back later to his favorite building site. We walked in the door of the restaurant completely bundled-up head to toe, feeling like that kid in the movie *Christmas Story* who could hardly move because of his layers of clothing. Decked out in our heavy winter coveralls, our layers began to peel off. We made an impressive pile of hats, scarves, gloves and coats. During our strip act, we noticed a guy at a nearby table watching us. His curiosity finally got the best of him, and he wandered past our table on his way out. “You folks been out huntin’?”

We laughed at the mere thought of the three of us out hunting. “Sort of. We’re trying to catch a goat!” Of course we then had to explain the entire story.



After we could finally feel most of our toes again, we headed back over the pharmacy, but of course, there was still no sign of the lone goat. *We'd have to try another day.*

SECOND ATTEMPT

On Monday, February 8th, our second goat rescue attempt was successful! Almost too easy.

We had just experienced a major snowstorm in the last several days, and the snow was in massive snow drifts around the building.

This time we pulled the truck around to the back of the building. As soon as we walked across the parking

lot toward the corner of the building where, by now, the goat had become accustomed to being fed and had a small shelter that was constructed for him, we could easily smell un-neutered male goat. *Yuck!*

If you have never smelled that before, it is quit a unique and offensive smell.

As we walked closer, the smell got increasingly stronger. You could tell that he had been spending quite a bit of time recently in his newly remodeled area in the corner of the building. His scent was so strong that it nearly hung in the cold air.

We unloaded a role of fencing from the truck. A path had been shoveled through the nicely manicured landscaping so that the goat could reach the safety and comfort of the small area where the two walls of the building met. It was there that someone had constructed a small, wooden lean-to so that he

could get out of the elements. The fencing was secured down this path and up against the one side of the building. It was also rolled out along the giant snow mounds and to the other side of the building. There, that would deter him for a minute if he tried to run away! A helpful employee offered the goat grain to keep him occupied. "Did you guys name the goat?" I asked. **"One of the workers here named him George,"** came the reply. Under my breath I whispered, Stinky George.

Rob had crept quietly down the short path and was now squatting down under some tree limbs fairly near George. George was sure that something not good was about to happen. We could see George eyeballing the quickest way out of Dodge. "Hang on...don't move yet! I'll get inside the fence and get between the tree and the wall," I offered. It was rather slow-going as I literally waded through thigh-high snow. Finally, I too came face-to-face with George. **"Lord have mercy does he smell!"** I wanted to hold my nose shut. George surveyed the situation. He looked at Rob, then back at me. He looked at Rob, then back at me. I moved very slowly toward him with arms outstretched. I had a strong desire to spray perfume on the goat. ***Good grief was he ever stinky.***



George immediately moved up to the front of the horse trailer and stood by the wall. He was not thrilled in the least to finally have been captured for his own safety.

Then George made his move. Like a professional line backer he faked left, then right, then dove straight forward toward Rob and tried to get past between Rob and the tree. Rob dove sideways, and the goat slipped through his arms. But wait! ***He had caught a leg!*** Rob's glasses were all askew and he was holding on to the stinky goat's leg for all he was worth.

I hurried, as best you can possibly hurry through thigh-high snow drifts, over to the unhappy pair in the snow. I put my arms around the goat's head and shoulders and mistakenly claimed, "I got him - you can let go!" Rob let go, and with a strong jerk, stinky George knocked me over sideways and we both fell into another massive snow drift. I didn't let go however — there was no way I was letting go and having to attempt to catch this goat a third time. This was it, and I held on for dear life.

But dear God the smell! And now it was right in my face! I was very grateful that the smelly animal didn't have horns — that could have made matters much worse.

After Rob was convinced that me and the goat weren't going anywhere, he headed to the parking lot to bring the truck and trailer around — no sense in trying to walk the irritated, frightened goat that far!

So there I lay in the snow, holding onto stinky George, afraid to move. Though Rob wasn't gone long, it seemed like forever. He finally pulled up nearby and hopped out of the truck. "*Take your time,*" I told him sarcastically.

Finally the ripe-smelling animal was safely in the trailer, good-byes were exchanged with the worried folks at the business, and we were off. But the damage had been done.

I took my gloves off, smelled them, and threw them on the floor. Yee gads. We were freezing, and the heater in the truck started to warm things up. "Oh this is nasty — roll down your window!" The open window brought us more of George's wafting fragrance up from the back of the trailer. "Quick, roll 'em back up! Roll 'em back up!" It was a no-win situation.

George arrived safely at Happy Trails, and for isolation purposes, spent a few cozy nights nestled inside the trailer in a thick bed of straw. You could simply walk toward the back of the sanctuary where the trailer set and get a good whiff of stinky George. His manly odor permeated a quarter mile radius around him. "*We officially dub you, Stinky George!*" For now, the name is very appropriate.

The clothes that I had on when I goat-wrestled with George in the snow drift were double-bagged and tied tightly closed because the smell began to drift through my house. When we finally moved George out of quarantine and had to use the trailer to haul a horse, even the horse put its nose down on the floor and carefully sniffed the poignant odor coming from the trailer. She was completely offended to have to ride in that trailer.

So now, at the advice of the vet, George is awaiting the weather to warm slightly before he gets neutered.



Stinky George has a bizarre fascination with the second tier cat cage, and he stuffs himself into the cage on a daily basis for a nap.

We ourselves are counting down the days. I think all the other animals in the vicinity of George are counting them down also.

As far as George himself goes, he thinks he quite handsome and attractive, and that his cologne is like no other. George is in an area of the barn where he can see all his other goat friends through the open-wire fencing that separates the stalls. He has taken up the very strange habit of jumping up into the second tier of the cat cages, and stuffing himself into a cat cage to sleep. No, not a normal thing for a goat to do, but then, here at Happy Trails, we have come to expect the unexpected.

We'll keep you posted on George's progress.

Thanks to the kind-hearted folks who noticed George hanging around their building and who offered him food and shelter during the most bitter weeks of winter. George is very lucky to have such great human guardian angels watching out for him, and he was loved and accepted and cared for by these wonderful people. They had hearts filled with compassion, *even if George was just a stinky homeless goat.*

On behalf of George, many many thanks for being so kind and caring!

If you would like to help out with George's vet bill and daily care, tax-deductible donations can be made in George's name and sent to:

Happy Trails, 5623 New Milford Rd., Ravenna, Ohio 44266.

His vet bill will cover the neuter surgery, blood tests for the goat disease CAE, fecal counts to determine deworming methods, hoof trimming, temperature taken, heart and lungs checked, and de-licing.

And hopefully with time and TLC, George will learn to trust us as his caretakers and will allow us to pet him. *We'll work on that, however, after he gets neutered and the smell goes away!*