

Last update I shared some of the great engagements I had with people who want to do something right by their poultry acquaintances I shouldn't have tempted fate within days I had one of the most unpleasant experiences ever with a woman who had a rooster. In brief said individual needed a home for a rooster because she got a second lot of chicks purchased from a hatchery for their eggs (though she claimed to be a vegan ...) and one of the chicks had turned out to be a boy. She was "going on holidays soon" – actually in four days – and wanted to know when I could come and collect him, she was on Sydney's upper north shore. Amazingly, I didn't tell her where to go within the first 30 seconds of the call, in fact I had a 10 minute discussion with her which ended up with me telling her the conditions of surrendering her boy and that it would require her to bring him to me because I work full-time in addition to running A Poultry Place. I never got the return phone call. I have no idea what happened to that boy. It was yet another incident where I was put into the unpleasant situation of being made to feel responsible for someone else's stuff up.

Such incidents have the ability to cloud all the goodness around you. I felt low for days after that altercation.

Thankfully my faith in people was restored when I become a mother hen again. Ironically, my seven new sons were hatched a child care centre also on Sydney's northern beaches. Their arrival here came after a few weeks of email and phone discussion with the head of the kindergarten, during which time I realised how much the staff, students and parents had become attached to these youngsters. During discussion came the line "already as a staff we have decided not to do chicken hatching in the future and will be speaking to other local kindies about the concerns," which made me feel victorious. I'm unsure how many humans have been affected by these little guys but there's obviously a few – "we're all a bit emotional about letting them go and talk to them like we do to the children". Seven out of the 10 chicks which hatched were roosters, the girls have settled into a lovely suburban life. I look forward to updating the staff, students and parents of this kindy on how these little guys progress through their lives for many years to come – who knows where it might lead them (the humans).



I was also re-contacted by a woman who had surrendered a rooster, known as Marilyn, to me earlier this year. She had a dilemma: *"One our little chooks went missing a few weeks before Marilyn went to live with you. Her name is Mother (because of her persistent broodiness) and because she is very athletic and can jump tall fences from a standing start, she sleeps in the chook house but free ranges around the garden during the day. When she went missing, we assumed that she was broody somewhere around the garden. Then five days after Marilyn went to live with you, a very proud Mother appeared from under our trailer with seven chicks in tow. We were very shocked because we*



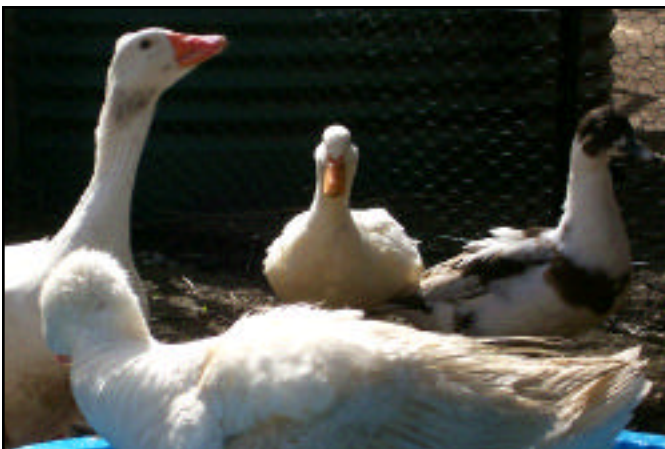
*thought we had separated Marilyn soon enough to prevent him reproducing. Apparently not. Naturally, we now have some roosters who need a home.”* My initial reaction to this was outrage and then I read on: “There is no chance of this happening again because all eggs have been collected, all hens are present and accounted for.”

So Marilyn’s boys – six of the svene chicks – (pictured left) came and joined us here.

The past month began with an adventure of the stressful kind, after I was contacted by a woman in a nearby country town who had become aware of a domestic violence situation in a neighbouring town, where a number of non-human beings were being used as pawns in a bitter struggle between two people who used to be a loving couple. The woman had got the warring parties to agree the best thing for the non-humans would be to relocate them to a safe haven and having heard of me through mutual acquaintances asked if I could help.

Domestic violence is unfortunately a huge societal problem and often caught up in the turmoil along with the humans are the non humans. In such circumstances ‘family pets’ are often used as bargaining chips, threats or forgotten about. This was one of them. It was not the first time and unfortunately it won’t be the last time I’ve been asked to help out in such circumstances.

So one Sunday morning I found myself meeting a woman, who was a complete stranger, in the main street of a small country town, about an hour away. We then driving onto another small country town where we then proceeded to round up three peacocks, three hens, three doves, two geese, two ducks (see pics below and next page) and two galahs and brought them back here. These were the survivors of a situation which had got out of hand where apparently food had been denied and gates weren’t secured at night leaving them open to predation. We were told many had died as a result. The galahs and doves, have since moved on to another safe forever home, while the others are beginning to make friends at their new forever home here.



My contact later posted: *“The relief I felt helping to unload these wonderful creatures into their new sanctuary home where they will receive care, love and never want for anything was, after a stressful week, enormous.”*

The long weekend, which has just passed saw us return to daylight savings, which I always welcome because it extends the day. However, it will probably be a little while until I get to enjoy it as I have sanctuary-related speaking engagements for the next three weekends.

I am nervously approaching next Saturday's TEDx Canberra event, which will either be one of those 15 minutes of fame or flop moments. The day after I will spend with many friends and hopefully make a few new ones at Canberra's Living Green Festival. The following weekend I'm in Sydney to speak about one of my pet subjects – sustainable activism and how to avoid burnout at the Animal Activist Forum. Unfortunately due to work and sanctuary commitments it is only a flying visit to my old home town of Sydney and I'll only be there for my talk on the Saturday. However I'm back in Sydney the following weekend for the annual Cruelty Free Festival and hope to be able to catch up with Sydney friends proper then. I hope that at some of the events our paths may cross. ●

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