

Home At Last . . .

On September 7, 2002
Sammy Jo went home.

Sammy Jo came to the Sanctuary about a year ago when she was just a puppy. She was found wandering the neighborhood of one of PIGS volunteers.

Sammy is one of the happiest, most easy-going dogs I have known. She loves every person and animal she's ever met. Sammy's favorite past-time is playing with big sticks.

Deb, a friend of PIGS, fell in love with Sammy and adopted her as one of her own. Sammy will not be lonely in her new home. She now has two cats, two birds, fish and Pique-a-potbellied pig- to play with.

It was a bittersweet moment when I watched the car drive down the long lane of the Sanctuary with Sammy in the front seat next to Deb. We will miss her very much, but we know that Sammy deserves her very own family to love and spoil her. *Good-bye Sammy Jo- have a good life!*



Sammy Jo & Deb

Dr. Jane Doyle, DVM

Dr. Doyle started working with the Sanctuary in July. She comes at least once a week and spends many hours checking our residents. She pitches in and goes above and beyond the call of duty to ensure that each animal is healthy. PIGS could not maintain its level of care without a dedicated and loving vet such as Dr. Doyle. On behalf of all the animals—THANKS for caring!



Crossing the Rainbow Bridge

Nguyen was only with us a short time when he made his journey across the rainbow bridge. It was the beginning of July, when PIGS received a call from adoring caretakers, Bill & Teresa Dubbs, asking if there was any way Nguyen could come and live at the Sanctuary. He was twelve years old and very arthritic. He no longer had the strength to make it up the steps in his backyard. We gladly accepted Nguyen and he arrived on July 16. Nguyen made a friend here, Amos. They lay together in the mud hole and in the barn.

On the morning of August 2, Nguyen came out to eat his breakfast as usual. When we checked on him around lunchtime, he was lying next to his mud hole. Nguyen had died in his sleep.

The phone call I had to place to his parents that afternoon was one of the hardest things I've ever had to do. While his time here was short, Nguyen was content. He will always be remembered at PIGS. In his memory, we hung a plaque up in the memorial garden. Everyday when I walk past it, I think of Nguyen and picture him lying in his mud hole with Amos.

We didn't know how old Amos was or where he came from. All I know is that Amos was a very gentle pig who loved to be scratched behind his ears. I fell in love with him instantly, as did anyone who had the pleasure of meeting him.

On Monday, September 16, 2002, Amos passed away. He had been under vet care for a few months, diagnosed with cancer.

It was a terribly sad day here at PIGS when we had to say good-bye to our 'little, old man'. We're just glad that Amos knew love in his life and that he can rest in peace.

The staff and volunteers of PIGS will always remember Amos and Nguyen.

Rainbow Bridge

Just this side of Heaven is a place called Rainbow Bridge. When an animal dies that has been especially close to someone here, that pet goes to the Rainbow Bridge. There are meadows and hills for all of our special friends so they can run and play together. There is plenty of food, water and sunshine and our friends are warm and comfortable.

All the animals who had been ill and old are restored to health and vigor; those who were hurt or maimed are made whole and strong again, just as we remember them in our dreams of days and times gone by. The animals are happy and content, except for one small thing: they each miss someone very special, someone who was left behind.

They all run and play together, but the day comes when one suddenly stops and looks into the distance. His bright eyes are intent; his eager body begins to quiver. Suddenly, he breaks from the group, flying over green grass, faster and faster. You have been spotted, and when you and your special friend finally meet, you cling together in joyous reunion, never to be parted again. The happy kisses rain upon your face; your hands again caress the beloved head, and you look once more into those trusting eyes, so long gone from your life, but never absent from your heart.

Then you cross the Rainbow bridge together . . .

—Author Unknown

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4

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PigTails

PIGS, INC.

FALL 2002

Florida Pigs Arrive

One year ago, PIGS agreed to take in fifty pigs from the G.L. Davis Sanctuary in Florida, which was due to close its door. Many months of planning and preparation went into this major undertaking. The new pigs arrived just weeks after I did. When I heard that we were getting ANOTHER fifty pigs, I was overwhelmed by the prospect. How wrong I was! Now, that they're here, we don't see the pigs as being extra work, just more hearts to love!

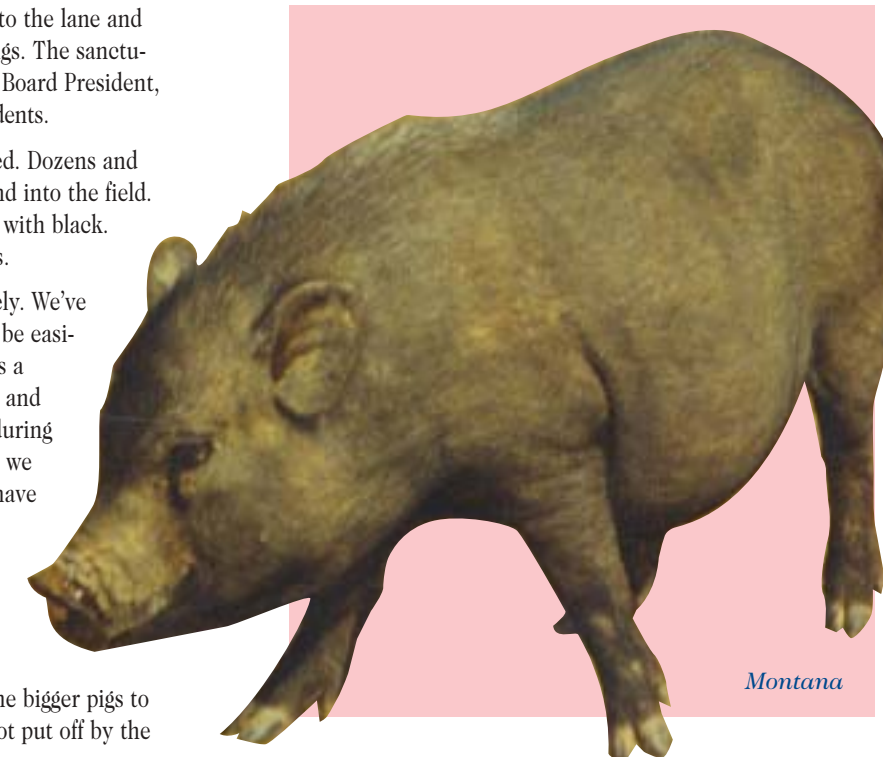
It was a hot summer afternoon when a trailer pulled into the lane and drove back to the barns that were set up for the new pigs. The sanctuary staff were all here, along with a few volunteers and Board President, Laura Knox. We were all anxious to see our newest residents.

And once they began to unload, we weren't disappointed. Dozens and dozens of the most adorable pigs ran down the ramp and into the field. Black ones, white ones, black and white and even pink with black. One by one they filed out of the trailer, running past us.

They've been here two months and have settled in nicely. We've named them after the fifty States. After all, what could be easier with fifty pigs? My favorite little guy is Montana. He's a young one who came without a tail. He's the friendliest and the smartest so far. He knows how to follow the truck during feeding time. He's always the first and last in line while we scoop out the feed. We're now at the point where all I have to do is call his name and he comes running up to me, looking for treats!

Then there's West Virginia, a big ol' girl who just sits back and watches everything. Her favorite past-time is lying in the mud hole. We cannot forget little Alaska. A tiny, all white piglet who zooms in and out among all the bigger pigs to get the best spot for food. She's a brave little girl and not put off by the bigger and older residents.

When the Florida pigs arrived, they were frightened and tired from the long trip. And although most of them were wary of people, they have come so far. Even though we still do not attempt to touch any of them (except Montana), they no longer scatter when they see a human being. Because of your generosity, these wonderful animals now have a permanent home, plenty of good food, mud puddles, shady grass for snoozing and lots of love.



Adopt A Pig

We are desperately seeking sponsors for our new residents. If you would like to "adopt" one of our new arrivals- they are being named after the fifty states- please indicate which pig you would like to sponsor on the enclosed donation card. At \$20 per month, sponsors receive a picture of their pig and updates on his or her progress. Your donation will help give these pigs the lives they deserve, with mud puddles, plenty of food, all necessary veterinary care and lots of love and treats.

Volunteers Welcomed and Appreciated!

Spend a little time at the farm.

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1

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Dear Friends of PIGS

Have you ever had a lifelong dream become reality? My dream to manage an animal sanctuary came to life on July 1, 2002. The last few weeks have been a whirlwind of emotions: excitement and frustration, gratification and disappointment, heartache and joy. I have never worked so hard; day in and day out, sunrise to sunset.

I thought I was prepared for the responsibilities of a Sanctuary Farm Manager. After all, I've had many years of experience working with all different species of animals. But no amount of experience could've prepared me for this task. To say the transition has been hard would be an understatement. The easiest part of my job is the animal care. I knew it would be. Truth be told, I have to drag myself away from the barns and these wonderful animals to do my paperwork. I'd much rather be outside mucking and spoiling all those critters. Isn't that why I'm here?

But my job is more than taking care of the animals. It's hours of paperwork, answering e-mails, returning calls, researching the best price for hay, straw, grain, etc. It's ensuring that we have enough staff to care for the almost 500 animals. It's mending bridges and building new ones. It's reaching out to other sanctuaries and animal rights groups to introduce myself and assure everyone that I am doing my best to provide the proper care and quality of life for these animals.

It's also worrying about funding and donations; pinching pennies here so I have a few extra dollars to spend there. It's doing community outreach to let our neighbors know about PIGS in hopes of building a vital core of volunteers. And, sadly, it's turning away dozens of animals that need to find a home; or helping to direct them to other facilities.

I've done small animal rescue for years and had become accustomed to the number of dogs and cats that needed to find a new home. So I thought I was prepared for the number of calls I would receive asking if I could take in just one more pig. To my shock and amazement, the number of homeless or unwanted pigs equals that of dogs and cats. So many people still do not do their research before making a commitment to the life of an animal! So now, I'm faced with the same questions as before. How can we educate the public, and how am I supposed to say no day after day, knowing what the alternative will be for this pig?

As I plant roots here at **PIGS**, my hope is that the fruit of my labor will blossom and flourish by building volunteers and increasing donations, and that one day soon, I will not have to say no. And at the end of the day, as the sun sets over the beautiful mountains of West Virginia, I draw in a deep breath and become overwhelmed not only by the beauty of the Sanctuary, but the enormity of its unfulfilled promise. I never need a reminder of it, but when I'm having one of those tough moments, I just go out back and call out to Libby or Alaska or Hamlet. It is then that I'm ready to face another challenge.

Until next time



Melissa Susko



Many Thanks

Volunteers:

We wish to thank the volunteers who take time out of their busy lives to help out at the Sanctuary. Especially those from Shepherd College, which brought two large groups here for two days in August. The students were eager to pitch in and help with whatever needed to be done. They worked hard in the hot summer sun. We accomplished so much on the days they were here. We can't thank them enough!



Melanie comes every Friday. She shows up and pitches right in doing all the dirty work of mucking and cleaning. It is only through the dedication of people like Melanie that enables **PIGS** to succeed.

Star Silva has a household of her own, both children and animals, yet finds the time to volunteer full-time at the sanctuary. Her family also takes time to come whenever they can. It's wonderful to see a family volunteer together.

Board of Directors

Talk about a thankless job! We are blessed to have four wonderful people who care so much that they volunteer countless hours to ensure that the Sanctuary exists. The four members of the board are overworked (and unpaid) and do more than any board member should do. They have been patient and understanding during the transition period. It's been very overwhelming since I joined the sanctuary, but it's easier just knowing that each and every member is just a phone call away.

Staff

The ultimate thankless job! Imagine spending forty hours a week knee deep in pig manure. The most admirable quality of our staff is that they wouldn't want it any other way. And we're thankful for that, because people don't work here for the money! Our staff truly loves each and every animal here and gives 150% to ensure the animals are fed, watered, cleaned, and loved! The simple truth is that PIGS wouldn't exist without the hard work of the staff. You can read more about our staff (and see pictures) on our website—www.pigs.org. And the next time you visit the Sanctuary, take a minute to thank these wonderful people!

Little Orphan Annie



Annie

Around 4:30 p.m. on Monday, August 26,

Maria was leaving the Sanctuary on her way to class at Shepherd's College. About 1/2 a mile down the curving road she spotted something. As she slowed down, she noticed it was a kitten. The gray tabby lay lifeless in the middle of the back country road. A few yards away stood a dog staring at the helpless creature; drool practically dripping from his jowls. Maria scooped up the kitten and drove back to the Sanctuary. She didn't mind being a few minutes late for class as long as she got the kitten to safety.

She came into the house with this lifeless body in her hands. About ten weeks old, this kitten was so emaciated that every bone stuck out. Her eyes were glued closed from layers of drainage. Her breathing was audible and rattled every time she labored for a breath. Two front legs were curved beneath her with bones so rigid that we couldn't straighten them out.

We didn't think Annie would make it through the night. We cleaned her up, gave her some antibiotics and started subcutaneous fluids. It was touch and go all night. I set my alarm and woke up every three hours to syringe feed her some liquid food and give her more fluids. The next morning she was still alive! A miracle in itself, according to the vet. At 10:00 a.m., when I was syringe feeding her, she began to purr. At 4:00 p.m., she opened one eye. The following morning, she made a huge turn for the better. She actually stood up and took a few wobbly steps. It was then that we realized that Annie was deaf. Poor thing couldn't hear a sound. But what she lacked in weight and hearing, she made up for in love. Just the sight of a person started up that old purring engine. She purrs constantly and just wants to be held.

It was a tough road for Annie, but luckily she pulled through. She is feeling negative and has made a full recovery from the pneumonia. Although, her hearing never came back, she's starting to gain weight.

Our dedicated volunteer, Star Silva, has adopted Annie. The entire Silva family fell in love with Annie at first sight. With them, she will find the love that she so desperately needs. There she has found her forever home. A progress report from her new home states that Annie has adjusted nicely and now has a best friend. Roadside was another orphaned kitten found along the road (hence, the name). They are about the same age and love to play with each other.

Liberated from Death

"We've got some kind of pig and don't know what to do with it," said Debbie, a shelter worker at the Hagerstown, MD SPCA. Fortunately, the woman she was speaking to was a volunteer from PIGS, who had stopped at the shelter to pick up some donated dog and cat food. The volunteer immediately called the PIGS Farm Manager, Melissa, who agreed to accept the pig.

Libby (Liberated) is a five-month old domestic pig. She had been wandering the streets of Hagerstown, for days, when Animal Control picked her up and brought her to the shelter. Her pink body was covered with scrapes and scratches. A mass the size of a melon hung from her stomach, almost touching the ground.



▲ Libby before the surgery

On August 15, 2002, Libby arrived at the Sanctuary. On examination, it was found that she had a fever and that the mass was an umbilical hernia. She was placed in isolation with deep straw bedding to make sure the hernia didn't rub open. On Sunday evening Libby underwent a long surgery. It turned out that she only had a partial hernia, and that the mass was the result of severe umbilical infection that went untreated from birth.

Libby made it through the surgery, but was in guarded condition. She arrived back at the Sanctuary late Sunday evening,

still under anesthesia. The vet warned us gently that there was a good chance she wouldn't make it through the night. It's amazing how a spirit to live is stronger than infection. Six a.m. Monday morning, Libby was not only alive, but up and walking around, patiently waiting for her breakfast.



▲ Libby after the surgery

"She's still not out of the woods," the vet hesitantly cautioned. "The next three days are critical." The infection in her body was bad and it would be a tough few days. But each day, Libby was more alert, cooler to touch and feistier. Yet, she was gentle as she took treats from our hands. She lay quietly, as we cleaned and checked her incision. She stood still as we gave her the antibiotic injections daily.

Despite this poor piglet's short and traumatic life, she is a sweetheart and loves attention. The infection came back and she was in guarded condition again. However, Libby is a fighter. She's coming along nicely and now the biggest problem with Libby is that we created a monster. We have a two hundred pound pig who thinks she's a dog. She'll follow me around everywhere, running with her ears flopping in the wind and squealing her heart out. Now, we are faced with the hard task of teaching Libby that she is a pig and not a dog.

You can sponsor Libby by visiting our website, www.pigs.org, or by calling the Sanctuary, or by returning enclosed card..