

## Won't you be my buddy?

When visiting the Sanctuary, many people are surprised to hear that more than seventy feral cats reside at **PIGS**! No one knows for sure exactly how many feral cats live in the United States, but it is estimated in the tens of millions. They live on farms, abandoned buildings, in parks and alleys . . . everywhere. Many of these cats were once abandoned or lost from their human families and join a colony with other forgotten felines. They scrounge for food and learn to fend off predators and humans. Sadly, unaltered females spend their lives producing litter after litter of future feral cats.

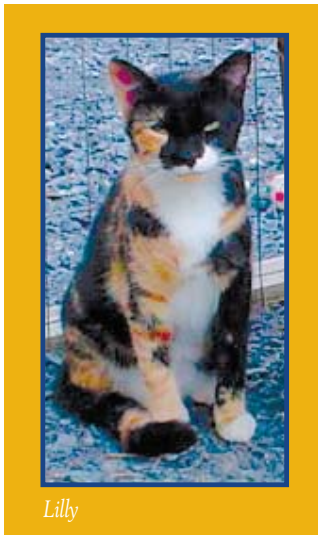
Many colonies are cared for by TNR (Trap, Neuter & Release) programs offered by many animal protection organizations. This program has proven to be a great success in lowering the number of feral cats and caring for the ones on the streets. Sometimes, however, colonies are in danger of losing their "home." In a few of these situations, the cats come to **PIGS**.

When new ferals arrive at **PIGS**, we ensure that they have been spayed or neutered, vaccinated, and are given a clean bill of health by our veterinarian. We have a feral cat barn with lots of good places to hide, food to eat, water to drink, and soft bedding. New arrivals are confined for a period of up to eight weeks. They learn that we are committed to caring for them and the Sanctuary is a nice place to live.

After the holding period, we open the doors and allow the cats to roam on our sixty-acre farm!

The cats come and go as they please. Some are learning to trust humans to the point that they are in clear view during the day. Others hide until there are no humans in sight. We never force ourselves on our feral cats and instruct visitors to respect their wishes by staying at a distance. Sometimes, however, we get a feral cat like Lilly. She hangs out around the **PIGS** staff all day, keeping her eyes on us and hoping for an occasional kitty treat.

Even though most of our feral cats prefer not to interact with us on a daily basis, they still depend on us for their basic needs. If you have a soft spot in your heart for feral cats . . . for the forgotten felines . . . please consider sponsoring one for just \$10.00 a month. By doing so, you will allow us to provide for Lilly and all her feline friends!



Lilly

## Daisy No-Nose (from page 5)

nose. At this advanced stage, there is no treatment. We took her to two vets to confirm the diagnosis and prognosis. Both agreed that her condition has progressed too far to be successfully treated.

Though it appears that her time may be limited, Daisy will stay at **PIGS** as long as her quality of life allows. We don't know Daisy's

history nor can we predict how much time she has left. We do know, however, that from this day forward Daisy will be warm, safe, fed and loved beyond her wildest dreams. Each day for Daisy is a miracle. We will make the most of it – for her and for us.

PIGS, Inc., a Sanctuary is a 501(c)(3) tax-exempt organization. Donations are tax deductible to the full extent permitted by law. West Virginia residents may obtain a summary of PIGS's registration and financial documents from the Secretary of State, State Capitol, Charleston West Virginia 25305. Registration does not imply endorsement.

304.262.0080

6

WWW.PIGS.ORG

ADDRESS SERVICE REQUESTED

Merchandise and donations  
available at our website

304.262.0080 • www.pigs.org

1112 Persimmon Lane  
Shepherdstown, WV 25443



# Pigtails

PIGS, INC.

SEPTEMBER 2005

## Tumbles:

### *The Special Kitten Who Stole Our Hearts!*

Tumbles is a 10-week old kitten born with Cerebellar Hypoplasia (CH). Cerebellar Hypoplasia is a defect in the brain of young kittens that results in a loss of fine motor coordination. The condition is caused when a kitten is infected with the feline distemper virus in utero or shortly after birth. Vaccination against distemper during pregnancy can also cause this disease.

Kittens affected with CH may not grow as large as "normal" kittens. When a cat has CH, the cerebellum area of the brain is affected, an area involved in fine motor control. Typical symptoms are poor coordination, gait abnormalities and tremors. Affected cats are wobbly on their feet and have distinctive head tremors, especially when they try to focus on an object. A CH kitten's gait frequently appears as if her head is going in one direction while her back end is trying to go elsewhere.

CH kittens learn to compensate for their disabilities and adapt to the challenges of everyday life. Tumbles is no exception. When we cannot give her our full attention, she hangs out in her softly padded playpen playing with her toys. When we can supervise, Tumbles comes out and plays with the other cats and dogs in the Sanctuary house. She loves to snuggle on a lap and just adores getting kisses all over her beautiful face!

Tumbles is truly an inspiration to everyone who meets her. What would seem like an unbearable disability to humans, Tumbles takes in stride. When she falls (or tumbles!), her dignity is bruised rather than her body. When Tumbles falls over in front of visitors, we gently inform them to let her pick herself up. We do not want to add to her embarrassment by helping her unless it is obvious she needs assistance.

Due to Tumbles special needs and the fact she stole the heart of everyone at **PIGS**, she will not be available for adoption. Instead, she will live out her life in the Sanctuary house – Queen of the Castle.



Tumbles

## Director's Note

Dear Friends of **PIGS**,

I typically use the Director's note to inform you of the day-to-day happenings at **PIGS**. I write about the weather, upcoming events, progress we have made, and financial needs.

I recently realized, however, that I have never discussed the single most important responsibility I have as the director of **PIGS**. The hardest part of my job is deciding when it is time to humanely end the suffering of one of our beloved animal residents. After consulting with the Sanctuary staff and veterinarians, the decision ultimately lies with me.

I am with every single animal as they take their last breath. I whisper promises of pain-free days softly in their ears as my hands caresses their tired bodies. I tell them how much they were loved and how I am so proud to have been able to provide them care for the days they were with us.

We have a caring staff at **PIGS**. However, many of them find that they just cannot be around when it is time for an animal to go. The staff says their own goodbyes, perhaps bringing their animal friend one last special treat, offering a belly rub, or a tender moment filled with their own whispers. Yet, when the time comes, I find myself with our veterinarian, holding the animal in my arms and holding the weight of the world on my shoulders. I tell myself it is time to let our special friend go peacefully. I know I am right, but it never dulls the ache in my heart.

When I close my eyes, I picture countless faces of animals we have loved and lost over the last few years. It is distressing to realize that I lost track of the exact number, even though I see every face in my mind. Last year, I received a beautiful curio cabinet for a present. Some people think it is morbid that I have filled it with photos and mementos of the animals who have crossed the rainbow bridge since the day I started working at **PIGS**. I do not find it to be morbid. Instead, I see it as a tribute. After all, aren't curio cabinets made to display our most precious memories?

Below is a poem I read from time to time. It helps me face each moment of finality with a little bit of courage, reminding myself that I am doing what is best for my beloved friends.

The animals at **PIGS** rely on me to end their suffering when the time is right. I urge you to read this poem and keep it tucked away somewhere special. You may draw strength from it when you need to face some of these decisions in your own life. And know that you have given your last, most precious gift to your best friend.

Until next time,



Melissa Susko  
Executive Director

### The Last Battle

If it should be that I grow frail and weak  
And pain should keep me from my sleep,  
Then will you do what must be done,  
For this -- the last battle -- can't be won.  
You will be sad I understand,  
But don't let grief then stay your hand,  
For on this day, more than the rest,  
Your love and friendship must stand the test.  
We have had so many happy years,  
You wouldn't want me to suffer so.  
When the time comes, please, let me go.  
Take me to where to my needs they'll tend,  
Only, stay with me till the end  
And hold me firm and speak to me  
Until my eyes no longer see.  
I know in time you will agree  
It is a kindness you do to me.  
Although my tail its last has waved,  
From pain and suffering I have been saved.  
Don't grieve that it must be you  
Who has to decide this thing to do;  
We've been so close -- we two -- these years,  
Don't let your heart hold any tears.

— Unknown

At the time this newsletter was going to press, Hurricane Katrina had just hit the gulf coast. **PIGS** would like to express our sorrow about the huge loss of human and animal life resulting from this disaster. The Sanctuary has pledged our support to various rescue groups working directly at the site of Katrina's onslaught. We expect to permanently shelter homeless animals being evacuated from New Orleans and the surrounding area. **PIGS** is donating animal food and supplies to shelters on the front lines. We have also donated clothing and toys left over from our summer yard sales to families that have been relocated to West Virginia. Our heartfelt sympathy goes out to everyone directly effected by this tragedy.

## Taggart

After a four-month investigation, Taggart was seized by animal control in December 2004 due to extreme neglect. When taken into custody, the estimated 30-year old roan gelding was hundreds of pounds underweight!

Since the county animal control department did not have housing for equine or livestock, they paid to board him at a local facility. They gave Taggart medical care and lots of TLC to help nourish him back to health. Finally, the day came when the owner signed Taggart over to the county. The county then determined they could no longer pay for his boarding. Luckily, the animal control officer who seized Taggart paid for horse's boarding expenses for the next few months out of her own pocket. Unfortunately, it just was too expensive for her to continue. Taggart desperately needed a safe, permanent home.

**PIGS** received the call asking if we could take in Taggart. At the time, Willow the horse was in a large field by herself due to special feeding and daily hoof treatments. She seemed lonely, though. We thought Taggart might be the perfect friend for her. Both horses were very gentle and were facing a long road to recovery.

Taggart arrived at **PIGS** and started to settle in. However, just three days after arriving, Taggart began to develop large oozing sores over his entire body. Then, all of his hair fell out! We summoned our veterinarian. Dr. Joyce just shook his head, wondering why **PIGS** always seems to rescue animals with such uncommon illnesses!

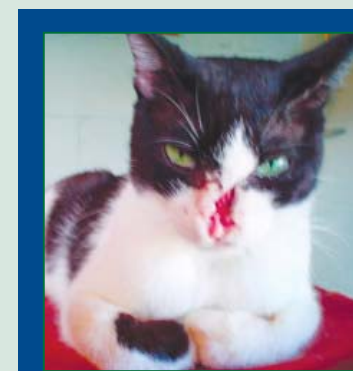
We collected blood samples and skin scrapings for Taggart. Dr. Joyce dispensed antibiotics, steroids, pain medicine, massive dewormers and medicated shampoo. Our daunting chore of bathing Taggart every other day began! Two weeks later, we still do not have a definitive diagnosis. Taggart's blood work was normal and skin scrapings negative. We now suspect that poor Taggart is allergic to something at

the Sanctuary! We are beginning the grueling process of eliminating factors from his environment in the hope of finding the culprit.

Although Taggart's care requires a tremendous amount of work, we do not regret taking in this sweet, elderly gent. Taggart has befriended sweet Willow. The two are now inseparable, sweet souls who found each other to love.



Taggart



Daisy

## Daisy No-Nose

Sweet Daisy found herself at a local animal shelter shortly after giving birth to a litter of kittens. She was turned in as a stray, but no one really knows the truth. It is a sad reality that people will say anything when they drop off animals at a kill shelter.

Another heartrending reality is that the world is over-populated with millions of homeless animals. Because of this, the shelter euthanized her tiny, healthy babies due to lack of cage space. By law, they had to keep Daisy for a five-day stray hold period. During those five days the staff fell in love with the sweet cat that was missing her nose.

**PIGS** received a call from the shelter asking if we could take in this noseless cat. The shelter staff did not know if her condition was due to a traumatic injury or birth defect. But, other than not having a nose, she seemed healthy. They said that she could eat just fine and the absence of a nose did not seem to bother her. We had an opening in the feline isolation room (and we were a bit curious about the noseless cat), so we agreed to take her.

Daisy arrived a few weeks ago. We were initially taken aback by her appearance. We quickly saw how gentle and loving she was, however, and fell in love with the noseless cat. Although a bit shy at first, she has blossomed here at **PIGS**!

Our happiness came to an abrupt halt when the vet diagnosed Daisy as having Squamous Cell Carcinoma, a cruel cancer that is quite common in pink-nosed, white-faced animals. The cancer probably began as a type of skin cancer that quickly ate away her

(continued on page 6)

# Harvest Fest



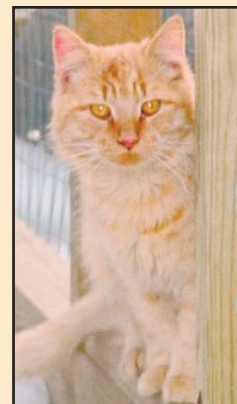
**Saturday, October 15, 2005**  
**Noon to 4:00 pm**

Come to **PIGS'** Annual Open House!  
 Tour the Sanctuary and meet the animals!

**A fun filled day is planned for everyone!**



- ☀ Face painting and children's activities
- ☀ Enjoy live music
- ☀ Silent auction & raffles
- ☀ Savor vegetarian and vegan snacks
- ☀ Purchase **PIGS** merchandise



For more information or directions, call **304-262-0080** or e-mail [FarmManager@pigs.org](mailto:FarmManager@pigs.org)

For the safety of our residents and your animals, no pets please!

**PIGS, A SANCTUARY**  
 1112 Persimmon Lane • Shepherdstown, WV 25443

## We'll Always Remember . . .



*Patrick*

**PATRICK**, the farm pig who fought to rid himself of the horrible bone infection that plagued his body for months on end. Despite our veterinarian's best efforts and massive antibiotics, Patrick lost his battle this summer. This special pig was greatly loved and will always be missed.



*Hamlet*

**HAMLET** the potbelly pig has been a familiar face at the Sanctuary for years. Hamlet was an amazing pig who always enjoyed his belly rubs and hanging out in the pig field with his trusty friends. However, when his folks would show up, he would come out of the woods as soon as he heard their voices. My favorite memory of Hamlet was during one of the recent events when his human parents, Tom and Malissa, volunteered to make and sell treats for the animals. They set up a table inside the potbelly pig barn and sold their treats all day long. Hamlet, who adored his parents, sat right at the fence next to them, happily waiting for his share of treats.



*Precious*

**PRECIOUS** the turkey lived at the Sanctuary for years. On tours, we would be asked how old she was and we would respond, "older than dirt!" Though we did not know her real age, that was okay with Precious, a woman who never liked to reveal such intimate details about herself. Precious was a loving, sweet turkey who played an instrumental role in changing the general public's opinion on turkeys. She showed people that turkeys have personalities and can bond with people. Precious was also a turkey with strong preferences – particularly about which cereals she preferred. Precious would love to "gobble" Honeycombs cereal. Only after she finished the Honeycombs would she eat any other cereal that remained. We will never be able to look at a box of Honeycombs without thinking of Precious.



*Ernie*

**ERNIE** the domestic pig came to the Sanctuary from Penn State. He was one of the most handsome, gentle, loving pigs in the world. Ernie would lie down for belly rubs and never tire of them – even though our hands would go numb. Ernie loved running up to us during watering for the chance to drink straight from the hose. Sadly, Ernie was diagnosed with Squamous Cell Carcinoma last year. We removed a tumor, praying it would buy him some time. Ernie recovered from the procedure and lived for another eight months. Sadly, the cancer spread to his brain in the last few weeks of his life affecting his ability to walk or stand. It was a terribly sad day when we had to say goodbye to Ernie.

## Hobo, the Nomadic Piglet

It never ceases to amaze us how many pigs are picked up by Animal Control as strays. Such is the story of Hobo, the three-month old domestic farm pig who was found wandering the streets in Maryland. Once secure in a dog kennel, Animal Control quickly called **PIGS** to see if we could accept him after the five-day stray hold period. Luckily for Hobo, we had an opening in our isolation pen, so we said "yes."

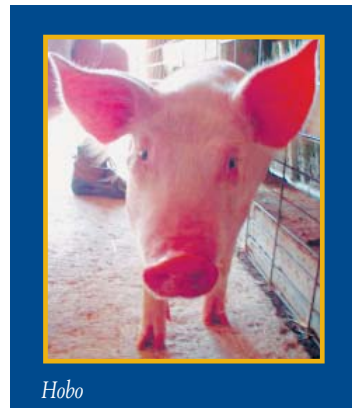
A veterinarian examined Hobo while he was being held at animal control. Hobo had an infection so he was prescribed antibiotics. After the five-day hold, a shelter employee drove Hobo to **PIGS** on her own time. We unloaded the little pig who was filthy and covered in cuts and scrapes. While reviewing the paperwork the shelter employee left, we read the note on the bottom of the veterinarian's report – "Strongly recommend euthanasia after the hold period!"

We immediately called our vet and asked him to do a complete examination of Hobo. We discovered that Hobo's right front leg had a bone infection. This was sad news for Hobo and for us. However,

Hobo is young and otherwise healthy. He has a slight limp on the front leg, but is by no-means lame. He has an enormous appetite and is growing every day. Hobo is extremely mischievous and enjoys playing with the staff. For example, when the staff tries to clean his pen, Hobo steals the rake or hose!

It is our greatest wish that we caught Hobo's infection at its beginning stages and that he will thrive with love and proper veterinary care. We are optimistic that Hobo will be at **PIGS** for a very long time!

Hobo would love a special pal to be his sponsor. If you would like to be that person, please contact us!



*Hobo*