Bella’s Story

When the call came in about Bella, that she had been rescued from a yard where the family children were beating her with a 2x4, many reactions flared, one of the first being WHERE were these children’s parents? And then found that the parents themselves had set these children to abusing her.

Pain and fear are universal. Bella’s needs were the same as yours or mine would have been; a need for immediate medical care for suspected broken legs, for pain relief and for sanctuary. And on that sleepy Sunday, a North Carolina rescuer, over 500 miles away from the Mississippi town where Bella lay in pain, kept making calls and sending emails until she found help. A local animal lover got Bella to safety. Ethel, a rescue transporter, drove 800 miles to get Bella to the University hospital, and a well wisher from Nevada helped with her medical bill.

Bella got what was needed.

Bella’s injuries date back some time. Her abuse did not begin in 2009. But it ended there. Though she will never walk even remotely normal, Bella’s future is a promise that she can live without fearing people’s approach or ever again feel the pain of abuse. She no longer flees if I toss an apple her way, and yesterday, for the first time, she took food from Denise’s hand.

She is on the road to her new life.
**Shepherd's Green Sanctuary**

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**Swine Flu.** As most of you already know, this name was attached by the media because swine flu is a component part of the H1N1 seasonal flu this year. It is the combined result, a unique strain of H1N1, that makes you sick, not the individual parts that went into it. Real Swine Flu, the one pigs get, is a disease of its own and not what is circulating.

H1N1 flu does not come from pigs but a pig can get it from you! So that's a whole new slant on flu viruses. For that reason we closed our sanctuary to all non essential visitors in April and hold our meetings off site. We recommend that you keep people sick with the flu away from your pigs. I have been happy to hear from other sanctuaries and private homes taking great care to protect their pig-kids.

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**News**

**The Painful Truth about Teacup Pigs**

*Teacup, mini, micro, pocket..* All the names in the world cannot change the genetic size of these little pigs. It takes hundreds of generations to develop a viable, healthy sub species of anything. It's the law of genetics.

And the corollary for fads is the law of greed; people will be told *whatever it takes* to get them to buy a product.

Armed with these two bits of information we can stop the latest wave of reprehensible marketing of these living, thinking, *suffering* beings before they are the newest group of unwanted cast offs, being killed in shelters and dumped along the roadsides. *Speak out* against the fads when you hear them.

These pigs will either grow to normal size or be victims of dwarfism and other congenital diseases that cause them suffering and early death. The only pigs who stay tiny are mutants who suffer greatly from that irresponsible inbreeding; pigs like Wesley, one of the Marshall, NC rescue in 2002. At 7 years of age he is about 40 pounds and has outlived nearly 50% of his herd mates. Wesley’s brother, Little Doc, euthanized when all hope for him was gone, was but one of the many who died of congenital brain dysfunction. Wesley has had several surgeries for abnormalities that threatened his sight, his breathing and his life. His brother Wick, has had cancer, another brother, Wiggin, died young of lymphoma. Of over 100 pigs in that rescue, in several sanctuaries, most will be dead before they reach pig middle age. In most cases, a healthy life for a pig under 50 pounds is a myth. Take that to the bank. I have enough tiny ones here to know the heartbreaking first hand.

So when people say Wesley is “cute”, I have to explain to them what a price he pays for that title. The breeder of these pigs saw nothing but dollar signs.

Want factual information about basic genetics or other topics? Try Wikipedia, the on line resource, a layman’s textbook. Have specific questions about genetics, nutrition, diseases in pigs? I have found some of the best and most available people to be on the Staffs of vet schools and Universities with strong Agricultural programs.
Dear Friends of the Sanctuary,

Despite the economic shadow we live under, it’s been a good year in many ways, with new endeavors being successful and old friends standing by us. Our barn cost many thousands of dollars less than the plan when we bought a “down” barn from a neighbor and rebuilt it, our gardens grew like weeds, the fall mast of nuts and the persimmon crop is huge. All things which mean a better life and cost savings to the sanctuary. And our summer matching donation was a great success. Thank you all for being there for these pigs. We couldn’t do it without you. It appears that the recession is turning around slowly. It will take us several years to climb out of debt. But the pigs have traveled through this hard time unscathed so I count us very fortunate indeed. With so many good people in their camp, they will continue to thrive.

Since I began my life with rescued pigs in 1987 with my first pig Lefty, I have imagined myself (and other women who dedicate themselves to sanctuary operations) as pioneer women hiding their children behind their skirts when danger threatened, armed with a single shot rifle and a handful of bullets. As time moved on, and more and more pigs were abused, forsaken and needing protection, the skirt kept getting bigger with many more folds. While the picture may be romantic, the underlying need for protection is very real and keeps people like me constantly trying to come up with a ”bigger skirt”. With or without that huge skirt, the image speaks to the mission shared by all those who serve the helpless, the very personal and certain knowledge that we will do whatever it takes because if we fail them, they are lost.

Thank you for making our sanctuary strong enough to keep our hundreds of pig-children safe.

for the Pigs

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In 2002 I first met Janie, who was to become one of my dearest friends and a source of continuing inspiration in my life. Janie asked if she could come and volunteer for a week. She had volunteered at other pig sanctuaries in times past and loved the pigs. As we talked we found that we were both from New England and as children were both figure skaters and had many other common interests. I asked if she would be driving or flying in from her home in Florida. She said “neither”, she would be taking the bus, flying she didn’t like and she couldn’t drive because she was blind.

I was taken aback but amazed at her fearlessness in traveling to a strange place and living with a couple hundred pigs and one pretty crazy pig herder. I looked forward to meeting her. As we drove in from the station I filled her in on some of the idiosyncrasies of Shepherd’s Green, starting and ending with Hoku, the “man of the house”, a 280 pound piggy boy who ruled the roost and did not take to strangers. Visitors found me shoeing them quickly away from the entrance and into an area where he seldom came. If they overstayed his patience he would march in and walk up to them, grunt at them in a hostile voice and pee on their feet.

Hoku was a pig like no other I ever knew. He arrived 3 days before my husband died in 1996 and during the first few weeks he was there he was in a deep depression and so was I. After his five years of being petted and babied and flown back and forth seasonally from Hawaii to New Orleans, this sad woman and a cold wet spring in Georgia was not his idea of a new life. Once we moved back to the farm in Tennessee he and I became good friends and he started visiting me in the house, but continued to live outside with the other pigs.

Then, one Christmas Eve, I had given up hope that my friend Sharon, planning to spend the holiday with me, would make it in through the horrid ice storm we had that day. Phones were out and I could only hope she was safely holed up in a warm hotel. Three inches of ice coated everything, and made steps and porches and paths treacherous. As I sat by the fire reading, I heard the front door rattling and thought it was impossible but it must be Sharon! I went to the door and there was Hoku. How he had made it up the steps to the porch and across the ice, not to mention getting across the yard from his barn in pitch dark, I will never know. But Hoku had come to stay and he lived in the house from that night forward. And in his opinion, that 3400 sq ft old farmhouse was just big enough for.

Into this environment Janie arrived and confessed later she was not without some worries. He met us at the door and I introduced Janie to him. She talked to him quietly but made no move to touch him. He grunted once and went on to his room to bed. It has always been an amazing thing to me that while us humans need 100 words to express something as simple as hello, prattling along like a bubbling caldron, a pig can give you a full length lecture in one grunt. His single grunt and a swish of his tail said “welcome, you seem different, I won’t pee on your foot. Don’t stay too long.”

As the days passed and Janie’s voice became a regular sound in the kitchen and living room I could see an unusual affection developing with Hoku. She would talk and he would respond as he did with me. He would seek her company for “hanging out”. He was very much a friend to Janie by the time she left. Janie visited once a year, to Hoku’s great pleasure. And often she would call. I noticed Hoku would come from wherever he was when I talked to her. One day I said “here, talk to Hoku” and put the phone to his ear. The look on that boy’s face was one of joy and awe. His friend was here.. hidden somehow but here!! From that time on until his death in 2006, Hoku never missed a phone call from Janie. When he became too crippled to come to the phone, he grunted until I brought the phone to him. His life was greatly enriched by every “conversation” with Janie, someone he loved very much.

Hello, my name is Hoku.
I live here. You don’t. Staying long?
A gentler, happier pig would be hard to find. His life has been hard and his troubles still plague him. But he smiles and eats his morning oatmeal, then spends his busy day grazing and exploring, and of course, napping.

Becoming a herd pig after years of obesity

A hill and you will find Peter, looking for nuts.
When a Picture is worth 1000 Words

Seems to be working  ... Pokey

Go hungry? Not as long as I can fish for my dinner!
It’s not a fallen tree, it’s a hideout! … Jeff

My name is Honey Pot because I am very sweet

White Shamrock: 20 years young

Until next time
Winkie says..
“Life is short
Eat more cookies”
Winterizing in a temperate climate like Tennessee means plenty of Orchard Grass hay. It’s a costly hay but these long strands of fluffy sweet hay give them something to nibble on and then nest in. And it holds up well to their nesting. They love making their beds “just so”. Here Fibber and friends plump up the hay for bedtime in the remodeled implement shed. It’s now a 4 stall barn, housing up to 60 pigs and 100 bales of hay to make winter comfy.

Mud:
If you have many pigs entering and leaving an area or milling about, you have mud. It takes very little rain to turn it into a mire, difficult for them to walk in and a real problem when it pulls your boot off and you fall into it on a cold day.

This year I was convinced to try the agricultural fabric, Geo textile. We put it down under rock just about everywhere that normally got muddy. Despite almost daily rain this fall, it’s been goodbye mud!

And for a base for the new Elder barn, (shown here from the inside) for those old arthritic legs and to prevent dampness, a few inches of rock, then the Geo textile, then about 10 inches of sand. Easy on the old legs, and the sun through the skylight warms it, proving some bonus passive solar heat.

Saving Sweetie
a real life winter tale
It was a dark and stormy night. Oops, wrong story!! Actually it was a cold and blustery winter day. Mona had heard at the feed store that a feral pig had been seen in the swamps near her home. Mona knew no ferals lived near her place in northern Ohio, and so suspected it must be a lost potbelly. It was bitter cold with temps expected to be near zero when Mona set out to find the little pig, walking through the woods (only later realizing they were filled with deer hunters), calling “here piggy, piggy”. And unbelievably, after an hour or so, as she was getting hoarse from piggy pigging, a small female pig came running to her, followed her out of the woods, hopped into her car and went home to a warm supper and bed. A few days later her owners were found and much joy was shared by all. Little Sweetie had wandered nearly 2 miles!! (And it was obviously time for her to be spayed!!)

An amazing love for the helpless pulled Mona to the woods that cold day with nothing to guide her but hope.

Piggie’s Winter Basics
• Water: be sure if your pigs are outside that they get to drink fully and long, a minimum of twice daily.
• Extra calories for outdoor pigs can help with fighting the cold, adding “good oils” like salmon oil and sunflower oil is one way to add the calories that’s easy, healthy and very well liked.
• Bedding: they will pulverize it and push it out the front of their house as they stop drafts in the doorway. Check it every few days to be sure it’s full and fluffy. It’s not to lie on but to bury themselves under, so it takes plenty.
A year ago we brought you pictures of the roadway being cleared to the area designated for future habitat development. Today 18 of the planned 20 elder pigs are living in comfort in that new area. Grass, clover and some special pig forage covers the ground for easy grazing, the small pond has been full since the first rain, and the wonderful new barn is everything I hoped it would be. Roomy, cool in summer and easy to keep warm in winter, cushioned well for old legs and backs, an isolation room for healing and treatment, a level loading dock for trips to the vet; it has all the things I have wanted to incorporate in a barn. Thanks to all of you who gave us financial help and encouragement and to the volunteers and interns who tackled various jobs. And very Special thanks to Randy, our able assistant here at the Green, who spent his days converting my often vague ideas to real wood, and who shared the satisfaction of watching it grow from boards, posts and roofing to comfort and security. He has an amazing ability to create just what is needed.

Elders Habitat
Completed

As has always been the case when a barn was being built here, the pigs started moving in while it was still under construction. Tinker was the first, and spent many nights sleeping under a tarp while the roofing waited for dry weather. Soon Sheree, Big Rosie, Jazzbo and White Wilbur joined him and claimed the other side of the growing piggy hotel. Next came Wilbur T, Rocket and Merle. We worked around them and tripped over them and they forgave the noise of nail gun and chain saw. By the time the leaves started turning last week there were 18 very happy residents. All that’s left to finish are the front doors when the next wood is milled.
Dear Santa,

Please remember us at Pig Christmas. We have been very good all year!

A feast on Pig Christmas. $5 each gets us a buffet of fruit, cookies, baked potatoes, popcorn, cheese, pasta and lots of other goodies. It’s our special day.

- **Rubber Stable** mats for our special needs and elder houses (Tractor Supply, the Co-ops or Southern States all carry them. A gift cert will make it easy)
- **Stanfield heaters** to keep us warm when the snow flies (Nasco Agricultural supply or Enasco.com)
- **Fruit** from our local produce company, JR Gaw. $20 buys a nice box of fresh fruit for the handicapped & elder pigs
- **Rubber backed bath mats** for our winter doors. There are some great discontinued ones at TJ Max and other discount stores. We have over 70 doors, each needing inside and outside door flaps replaced every year to keep the drafts out.
- **Adequan** for our arthritis. 25 of us need it every month. Buy one of us a month of comfort for only $30.

*******See our names and faces on line @ [www.9sites.org](http://www.9sites.org) on December 1st.

THANK YOU!!

And yes!! Santa takes credit cards!! Just call in to our office at 931-498-5540.

And we love to get gift cards and holiday greetings in the mailbox too.

For the past 15 years we have celebrated once a year in true pig style.. an all they can eat buffet of everything they love. At the end of the day they go to bed with fruits and cookies still left for an early morning snack. It’s the best day of the year. Our board and a few old friends of the pigs start early chopping and cooking and loading up so that at noon the food carts arrive to fill every pig’s expectations. Some of the pigs who have had this event every year seem to know just about when it’s due and a look of expectation is in their faces every morning..

“Is today Pig Christmas?”

Making it possible are the many supporters who send $5 per meal. I convert the funds to a truckload of fruit and veggies and boxes and boxes of cookies and other goodies.

Join us this year in making 2009 a feast to remember. Send your pig feast by mail, call it in on a credit card or send it on line by clicking on the Pig Christmas link that is on our website from the first of December until Pig Christmas. It’s one day we stop worrying about electric bills and vet expenses and just cater to the joy of pigging out!
And now a Word from our Sponsors

It takes all kinds of support to make a sanctuary strong; funds, time, and the kind of mission reinforcement that supporters often give in just a few words. Here are some of those remarks from our sponsors that make Shepherd’s Green the kind of sanctuary we hoped we could be.

In 2000, my first trip to Shepherd’s Green changed my life forever”
Juanita

“Volunteering at the sanctuary has been a great experience. The coming together of people from different backgrounds and communities for the common good is pretty amazing.” Paul

“since getting the newsletters our family has quit eating pork”
Carol wrote:

“the support, information and encouragement have been tremendous in making sure the pig got everything needed ..”

Jackie recalls “the support, information and encouragement have been tremendous in making sure the pig got everything needed ..”

And from a professor who changed my life 30 years ago, a leader in religious tolerance among nations, these inspiring words:
“I am especially proud of your concern for one of nature’s miracles. Transcendence involves much more than just human to human relationships but also our relationships to the rest of life and the environment. Were the Buddha alive he would be very pleased with your love, compassion and commitment to the sacredness of life.  Allah yisallimak (God keep you safe), Bert “

“So, I got online & checked out as many websites as I could find... I FINALLY found your site & haven’t gone to any other since then.. Vic

“I keep my calendar in my kitchen so I can see those sweet faces every day” Hope