

"SAMMI"

8th February 2009



With best friend Johnnie



Relaxing with Gingi



A loving moment with Fred



A snuggle with Eric

Believe it or not, this gentle soul began life at BrightHaven as a feline of the feral persuasion – invited in from the wild to have her life enriched by us..... Funny, as it turned out, ours were the ones enriched!!

Sam was a special soul, sent to this world to give love, light and comfort to all beings who crossed her path and I know it will be agreed that everyone who met this feline princess knew themselves to be a better person from their encounter.

It all began back in 2002 when, after weeks of feeding, blinking, coaxing, tempting, talking and the many other things tried to show this wild girl my friendship, came the final revelation. One windy and darkening night, the ground wet and creek flooding to threaten our grounds, I was in despair for her safety and future. After feeding her, I bade her goodnight and turned to the house. She then raced ahead of me, turned, told me her name was Samantha – and ran through the door into the house. WOW! That led to many days under the bed in fear of her new household and humans, but, courage grew, love was given and gradually returned and voila' – the journey began.

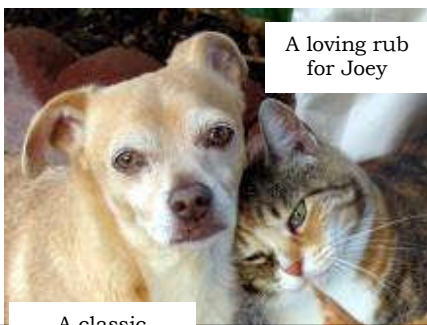
It is difficult to recount the numerous stories of her friends, both human and animal, as this girl adored everyone and each felt themselves singled out to be her special favorite. Ssssh – never another soul to be told!

Sammi grew fat and blissful, and luxuriated in her new found happiness. There was never a care in the world – well yes there was – she always worried and came to offer love, compassion and company to those in need. Her arrival was to herald the beginning of a very special friendship with another youngster from the wild - Johnnie, who came in to live with us just months before and who looked so much like her, with a sweetness almost indescribable, but that is yet another story to be told.....

After the move from Kenwood to Santa Rosa, our new abode, Sammi settled right in, having inspected thoroughly to find many suitable places for a comfortable snooze. Of course her very own special first residence of choice was in prime location in one of the prestigious kitchen baskets – cozy, comfy, warm and close to the action at dinner time!

During the last several years goodbyes have been said to many of the BrightHaven old-timers – cats and dogs alike. Sammi has been there for us all each time throughout the process with a shoulder to lean on and a loving smile.

Volunteers grew used to spending precious time with Samms. They said she needed company, but she knew better. She paid attention to their joys and sorrows and shared in their lives. She poured affection freely into them all – and us too.



A loving rub for Joey



A classic moment with Mr. Woody



Oliver whispers a secret!



With Beau Woody, Charlie & Patti



Sammi regularly appears in paintings by Colleen Caubin – here with Fred in “Sweet Nothings”

Sammi’s health was always good. A young girl, we saw no reason for concern – until she caught the dreaded and very familiar dis-ease “feline plasmacytic lymphocytic stomatitis”.

Her mouth hurt in the beginning although she paid scant attention to her problem and never allowed it to affect her “healthy” appetite! After several dental procedures Sammi found herself happy, comfortable and toothless and with the aid of classical veterinary homeopath extraordinaire – our own Dr Adriana, she was to remain that way.

During the last several years BrightHaven has offered classes for Kathleen Prasad in all levels of Reiki tuition. Hundreds of students have passed our doors to fall fast in love with the chubby calico lady who quickly became Kathleen’s friend, ally and willing instructor. Sammi soon found herself gracing the pages of Kathleen’s first book “Animal Reiki”, along with many of her BrightHaven friends, and just today I was proud to hear that dear Samantha is to grace the cover of Kathleen’s new booklet about her Reiki shelter project, SARA. Nothing could have pleased Sammi more to be honored in this fashion. (See picture next page).

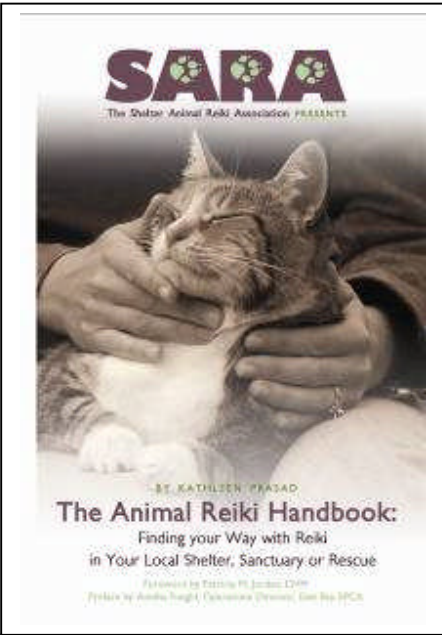
In the last months we suspected nothing to be wrong, as Sammi went about her work of giving and receiving love to all who crossed her path.

It was really during Barney’s death, in April last year, that I noticed young Sammi watching closely and realized that she too had been with us on numerous occasions in recent weeks, as had her best friend Johnnie. Sammi approached me as I was tenderly holding Barney after death. She leaned in close to look into his face and then lifted hers to mine, looked deeply at me and kissed me on the forehead. I wondered then if perhaps we were seeing the beginning of a new generation of caregivers to follow in old footsteps and traditions to carry the torch that is the spirit of BrightHaven.

As we look back on the last several days of her life we see she enjoyed each and every moment, and possibly a thrombosis or tumor may have simply grown to touch that one place it could affect her life. She left so quickly – in hours - although it seemed like moments, as we could not believe our eyes or stem the ebb of her life.

That last day was Sunday: the day of our Rose Ceremony – a time to honor those recently departed as BrightHaven said farewell to the old soul and motherly Lucy, as well as Cindy, our chicken girl and Anubis the dog. Sammi curled on the couch with me throughout the ceremony in memory of her friends and after, laid comfortably in my view with my Mum at her side to watch over her, as I fed everyone their dinner.

Later, with the blow up bed in place and Dr Adriana standing by – as she had been there for us all day - we settled down to pray the night would bring new healing.



There were a few more minutes before I needed to arise and disturb the many on the bed. Of course, Vancouver was under the covers, with Stefanie sprawled lazily across him. Suzy Q sat worried as always at the foot, with Joey snoring lightly in the middle. Blue on my head as usual, kept watch – with dearest Johnnie sitting anxiously by the bed.

I turned my head one last time to see if any change could be observed - and, no – and yet something did not look quite right.....?

I pulled Sammi closer and, as I did - she slipped away. I looked into her eyes, but she was not there. I held her close and felt her leaving. Stunned, I yelled out loud for Richard and soon he rushed to join us all, and we sat motionless and crying for the sweet soul who left this world too soon.

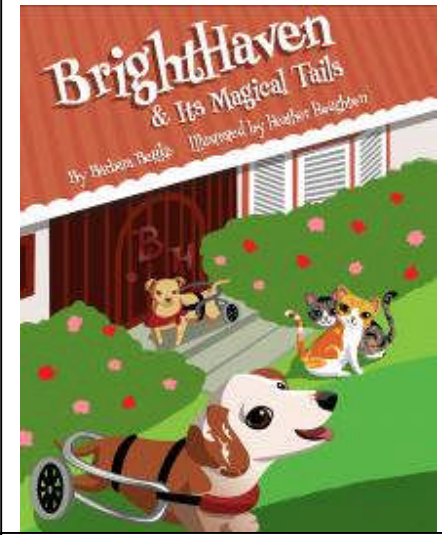
Too soon for us, at any rate. I am sure she had things important to be done, and just maybe sweet Anubis, who only left 3 days ago came here to renew a friendship and escort her to their next life's work.....a comforting thought indeed.



Yes undoubtedly, ours were the lives enriched.

*In everyone's life, at some time,
our inner fire goes out.
It is then burst into flame by an encounter
with another (human) being.
We should all be thankful for those people who
rekindle the inner spirit.*

- Albert Schweitzer



This children's book – coming soon by Barbara Bettke will be yet another posthumous honor. Featured on the cover: Ollie, Joey, Johnnie and Sammi – ready and waiting to invite the reader in for a tour.



At the rose ceremony with Stefanie



At the end: Sam, Blue and me



Oliver Vancouver Gingi Johnnie Sammi Trevor Fred