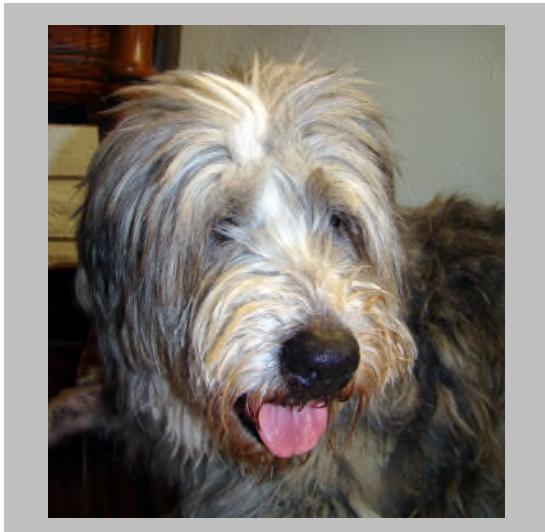


# BRIGHTHAVEN'S FEBRUARY UPDATE

Heavens above!! Was that another month that flashed by in an instant?!! The inception of our BLISS program has filled our days with new projects, challenges and the resolve to save even more lives....BUT, before I get to our exciting month in BLISS, I would like to take a moment or two to regale you with a little of the life and times of the BrightHaven family of animals.

## PART 1 – BRIGHTHAVEN NEWS

This has been a busy month – a time filled with happiness as we bid welcome to our new, and dear old lady, “Mollie” and sadness as we bade fare-thee-well to my darling boy “Fred” and also a cat we really knew not well – for only a day or two, but loved already....”Georgie”.



MOLLIE is 16½ years old and a splendid, if somewhat scruffy (ssssh – don’t tell her!) Bearded Collie!

She spent her younger years well ensconced in family life with children and other animals - as such a sweet and gentle, loving and playful girl should.

These days her tired old body is showing signs of wear and tear and lets her down more than she would like – so embarrassing for a lady to not make it to the bathroom on time, or topple over one’s own feet as if having imbibed a little too much punch the night before!!

Yes Mollie’s dear body has its share of troubles – She is deaf and losing her sight, prone to seizures, back end collapse, allergies to all manner of things which cause an awful itching sometimes, not to mention all the old lady things to which she would rather not again refer for the sake of common decency!!

Mollie’s loving guardian Dan realized the time had come when he could no longer care for his girl and sought frantically for help...Euthanasia was his only choice it seemed, and he could never face that. Hmm what to do? Dan, ignoring the facts making his girl not a suitable candidate for adoption by any sensible human, decided to ask the BrightHaven network to try to find her a home.

Upon reading of her plight and fragile health I was somewhat leery of sending out the lovely flier Dan made for her – it also showed me he was dwelling somewhat in past memories as it portrayed her as maybe around 10 years younger than she is!!

At any rate, she is now a member of our family and settling in fast. Happily for all, Mollie loves cats, dogs and humans too, especially the smaller ones. She fits in well and has been lucky to secure the services of classical veterinary homeopath Dr Jeff Levy, who has accepted the challenge to help her return to a little better health. In just a short time Mollie is laughing more and finding a new spring in her step. We pray for the continuation of her wonderful start!

PS–She would like to make mention of the fact she adores chicken casserole and is not too keen on her new fangled “all natural raw meat based diet!!” Darn it she says – I really thought this hotel served cheese, and I would find chocolate on my pillow at night. No, we answered – just a cat!!



AND NOW TIME FOR A VERY SPECIAL TREAT. As you know it is my intention to gradually introduce you to all the BrightHaven residents – the old and the young, the ill or special needs and the hospice ones too. To date I have not yet made introduction to our horse girls, and so this month I thought I would begin by inviting Jessica to tell you the story of our beloved Nicki who would argue she is not well and certainly disagree she would ever qualify for the term “special needs” or hospice – Pouff she would say – I am a young filly yet – just watch me run.....and run she will.....

## THIS IS NICKI'S STORY:

PRESENTED BY JESSICA ANDERSON



It doesn't take long for those who come to the BrightHaven stables to have their heart captured by our feisty, spirited, horse girl, Nicki, who is living in an aging and small, quarter horse body that continues to function miraculously in her maturing years. Nicki became a member of the BrightHaven family when she was 25, bringing with her very special health circumstances. She is still with us at 34 and, spirited as ever, contributes to our lives at BrightHaven by touching and teaching us in her unique way.

When Nicki was born at a commercial riding facility, she had deformed knees, which calcified as she aged. To a horse, whose purpose for thousands of generations has been to contribute in a partnership with humans, retiring at an early age in captivity can be devastating to his/her psyche. In the wilderness, the stimulation of interacting with humans is replaced by vast open terrain to explore, or mountains and valleys to climb.

Fortune though, was smiling upon Nicki's spirit and knew of ways she could dedicate herself to life at BrightHaven. She would come here to open the minds and hearts of many, making use of her twisted legs and frail body by demonstrating important lessons for all.

Falling once or twice a month, Nicki never wonders if she will be able to get up. The only question in her mind is “when will I get up?” When we see her frail body fallen to the ground, unable to hoist herself back up to a standing position, we are inclined to feel sorry for her state, and for a life lost to the constraints of her deformed knees, but Nicki does not accept pity or commiseration—she simply waits until we are in action and in support of her standing again. With a halter, a rope and a bit of muscle, we come to her aid. When she knows her team is ready, she will hoist herself up again, mustering and channeling what strength she can, through her body. Once standing, Nicki snaps her lips together, and moves straight ahead at a fast walk, taking her human at the other end of the rope with her, as she stretches out her muscles and re-circulates her blood.



Nicki's miracles do not stop at her eagerness to rise, time and time again, but continue in her role of healer for a selected few. Sciatica problems? Nicki will profusely rub against the area of your muscle spasms, offering a few outward spills of warm horse breath, and you are likely to experience the pain disappear. This is what happened to one of our holistic practitioners, Bella Stoltz, whose back pain vanished after Nicki took this approach with her.

Nicki is also aware, as we can observe with all horses if we pay attention, of the energy systems running through our body, known in Chinese medicine practice as meridians. She is my fellow



acupressure practitioner, and when my chi is low or thrown off, she traces the energy of the pericardium meridian that runs from behind my ear all the way down my arm to the tip of my fingers, releasing hot blowing breath until my mind clears, my body warms, and I feel regulated once again.

Making use of one's body is done with a willful state of mind that is open to the energetic systems that run through us. Nicki innately understands this and shares her knowledge with the world. A deep soul, with wisdom of the ages, compassion and lively sense of humor, Nicki has come to teach us of that "space between" that our senses most often fail to grasp, sending us the message, "Wait, listen, watch—there is more to our time together than meets the eye."

Humans have used the horse over many decades as beast of burden and has taken far more than their fair share from these beautiful and spiritual creatures.

Nicki, like most horses does not tally this debt but freely gives as much as we will take. We must strive for enlightenment and learn from Nicki and her equine species.

## PART 2 - BLISS NEWS

### A BUSY AND BLISS-FUL BEGINNING!!

In the last few weeks since Bliss became an official part of BrightHaven, we have received a literal flood of emails and calls about at risk animals. From cats to dogs to a thoroughbred horse, we have worked to find foster homes, forever homes, and hospice homes for these beautiful creatures.

The horse was rescued and taken to a sanctuary in Sonoma County. Mulligan Macgill, a one-year old Tuxedo whose left leg was amputated after being hit by a car, went to Sebastopol to live in a community of young cats who are FELV positive. Simba's personal story is in this *Update*. We found a foster home in San Rafael for beautiful Eliza. Corona, a German Shepherd Basenji mix, is now living on a ranch near Santa Rosa. Daniel, an orange male, is being boarded while he awaits a decision on whether cancer surgery is appropriate. He's been going home with Karen in Contra Costa for the weekends.

Many, many others need our help.

Just the other day, we learned about Caramel, a fourteen-year old Tabby with dental problems. And a nameless older pug, who was left to die in a ditch in Niles Canyon. Then there are five feral kittens—each one more beautiful than the next. The person who has been feeding and socializing them can no longer do so.

ALL SAVED!



## WE DESPERATELY NEED FOSTER HOMES.

Taking in one of these animals can give us more time to network and find forever homes. Fostering is a responsibility, but the dividends are huge.

### **Have you ever wondered what's it like to foster an animal?**

Well, it's quite rewarding. You provide a temporary home for an older or disabled animal until a forever home can be found. This could be for two weeks or two months, we can only approximate the time.

### **Here's how it works**

BLISS identifies an animal in a shelter who is too old, too disabled, too scared or shy, or too ill to be deemed "adoptable." Usually, the animal is given a date for euthanasia at that time. We get in touch with the people who have indicated an interest in fostering and describe the animal in need. Some candidates require only socializing and affection. And they give back their own love and appreciation. If the animal needs medicating (pill or injection) we will discuss the required care with you. If you cannot take this animal, we will call another potential foster parent. If you wish to stay on the list, we will try again the next time an animal needs fostering.

We bring the animal to you, along with bedding, food, litter box and litter (for a cat) and leash or harness for a dog. You will need to keep your own pets separate from the foster animals, so an extra bedroom is helpful. After an initial period, your pets may be curious and want to check out the foster animal. You will need to monitor their behavior. Sometimes, a foster fits in well with others, sometimes she/he needs a longer period of privacy.

The most important aspect of fostering is making the animal feel safe and loved.

We will call you weekly to see how things are going.

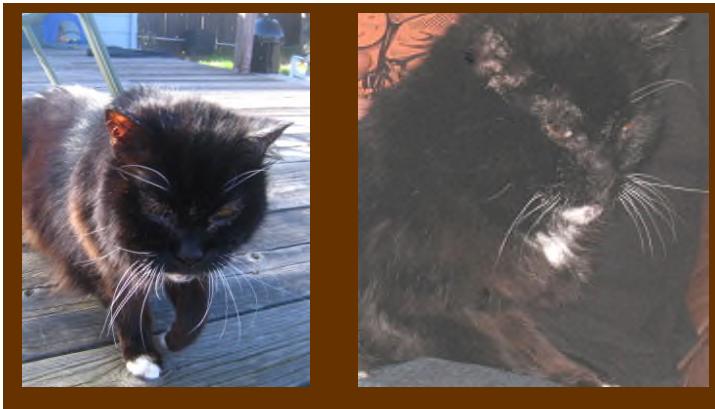
You can call us anytime if you are worried that the animal needs medical care beyond what you may be providing.

Just think of it. You will be rescuing an animal whose only crime was the aging process. Make a huge difference in the life of an animal—be a foster parent.

More detailed information is available when you decide to take in an animal.

Email us at [www.info@BrightHaven.org](mailto:www.info@BrightHaven.org) or call 707-578-4800.

### And now for the story of “SIMBA” – THE LION KING!



When Karen Watkins dropped by the shelter, she saw an older cat with a head much too big for his skinny body, and she thought "Simba." He was emaciated, and his eyes were weepy. But he purred when touched. Simba also had two abscessed teeth and wobbly legs. Not a candidate for adoption, the shelter said.

Karen called Gail and asked if BrightHaven could take him as a

hospice case. Of course, the answer for this boy was yes. The following day, Simba was seen by the county vet before being assigned "rescue" status. His abscessed teeth were pulled, some ointment was put on his eyes, and as he was eating wet food with gusto, he was pronounced fit for rescue or adoption. We had already arranged to pick him up and bring him to BrightHaven, so no foster home had been arranged.

One of our wonderful volunteers here in Santa Rosa, Megumi, agreed to foster him until *all* his medical problems could be evaluated. Megumi fell for him right away. Just a day or two of food he could eat without pain had made him stronger. With his wobbly legs, he followed Megumi and her husband everywhere, wanting to be petted, wanting to thank them for bringing him home.

Simba is getting medical care now—it's expensive, as he has Feline Infectious Anemia, and we are trying to help Megumi with the expenses. (Maybe you would like to help, too?) But the best thing is that Simba is safe and happy after what looks like months spent on his own.

Perhaps his people moved away, maybe they just dropped him off somewhere far from home. He survived, and as Megumi said: "I hope he will live long with us."

## SEEKING "BOUNTY" FOR BLISS

Last month when we first told you about Bliss, we mentioned the high cost of necessary medical visits, treatments, surgeries, and medications for our Bliss rescues.

**And here we are again asking for your help.**

A donation would be lovely, but what about holding a fundraising garage sale for Bliss? Or inviting friends for wine, cheese, information, and having an envelope for donations? Are there other ideas you might have to help us defray these expenses? Tell us about your ideas for fundraising, and we'll provide information, case histories, and photos to back you up.

Thank you in advance for thinking about ways to help.



Every week brings more stories of animals in danger of being euthanized because they are simply too old, too disabled, too scared or shy, or too overcome by their surroundings to be held in a shelter for adoption.

**Would you help us?**

Any donation you can make will benefit BLISS (and be tax deductible)

Please go to [Brighthaven.org](http://Brighthaven.org)

or send your check to BrightHaven. P.O. Box 1743, Sebastopol, CA 95473

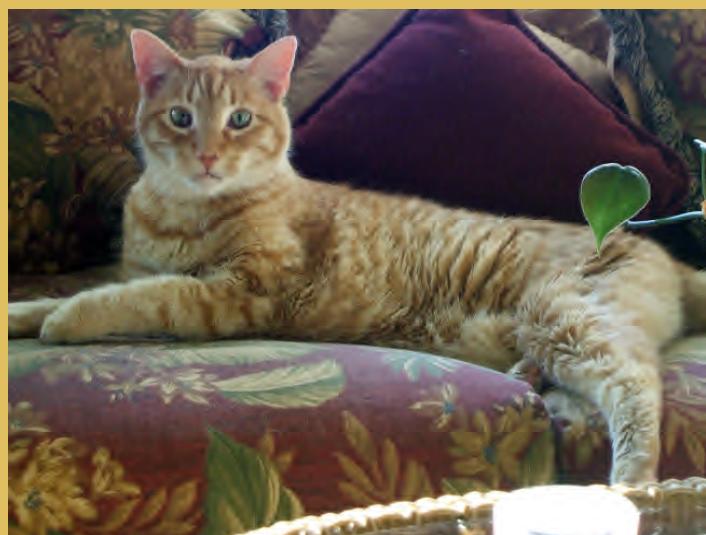
.....AND, AS WE WERE TALKING OF BLISS,

DO YOU REMEMBER EDIE, who came to us so ill a couple of months ago?



Well here she is, in all her royal glory, demonstrating the true meaning of the word **BLISS** is a comfortable basket, with a cute comforter to show off one's looks, a fresh cat-nip toy to drool over and then all to be topped off by a wonderful nap – in Bliss!

### STOP PRESS



This morning, February 26, 2010 at 330am saw the death of my darling **FRED**, who had lived here at BrightHaven since his very early days as a feral cat, and the inception of Cats Are People Too!

As Fred was “tamed” in those early days a relationship developed between us to which none other could ever compare and his loss at the age of twenty is a milestone in my life.

I will soon write more of his life and times.

To finish, just a little about our “GEORGIE” – a cat who came to us Monday morning, dying.

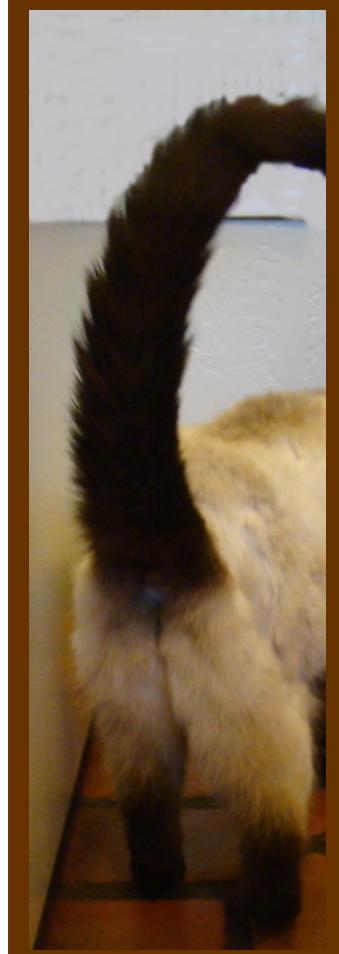
BrightHaven friend Darleen, awoke Monday to find a starved, frozen and dying cat on her doorstep and made the decision to come to us for help.

His temperature was only 92 degrees and he was almost comatose. We worked around the clock to save this clearly feral young man with clipped ear, and awful lice infestation.

On Tuesday he sat up and ate a little on his own. We were so happy to see him looking at us with interest, curiosity and showing his enjoyment at being carried in the garden.

His blood panel revealed the worst – with his starvation and Aids status not helping his situation. We remained optimistic, but then on Wednesday he failed fast, leaving us so sad not to have been able to save his sweet life.

Georgie died in our arms in the grass in the great outdoors where he asked to be.  
Scared of us on Monday, he accepted our love by Tuesday!!



EDIE SAYS...

PHEW -THAT'S THE END!

MORE NEXT MONTH  
FROM THE  
BRIGHTHAVEN FAMILY

WITH LOVE AND  
BLESSINGS  
GAIL  
XX