

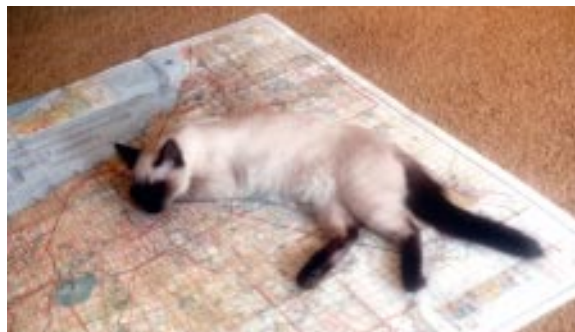
**MEMORIAL CELEBRATION OCTOBER 11, 2004
LOUISE ARNOLD HILLIARD**



JUNE 18, 1926 - SEPTEMBER 5, 2004



RIKKI TIKKI TAVI



JANUARY 13, 1981 - SEPTEMBER 14, 1996

My Photograph Album

Louise Arnold



Quincy & Dear



Martha, Mammy holding Louise
August 7, 1925



Martha,
Augusta &
Louise at the
beach with
Dad 1936



Martha, Augusta,
Louise 1937

1938



Martha & Louise



1942

Louise Arnold Hilliard died on Sunday, September 5, 2004 in the Orange County Nursing Home, Orange, VA. She is survived by her husband of 57 years, Robert, daughter Kerry, son Kirk, grandson James, two sisters, Martha and Augusta and two cats, Cubby and Yo-Yo.

Born in Atlanta, Georgia on June 18, 1925, Louise Arnold attended elementary school and graduated from high school in Hapeville, GA. She subsequently attended North Georgia College in Dahlonega, GA.

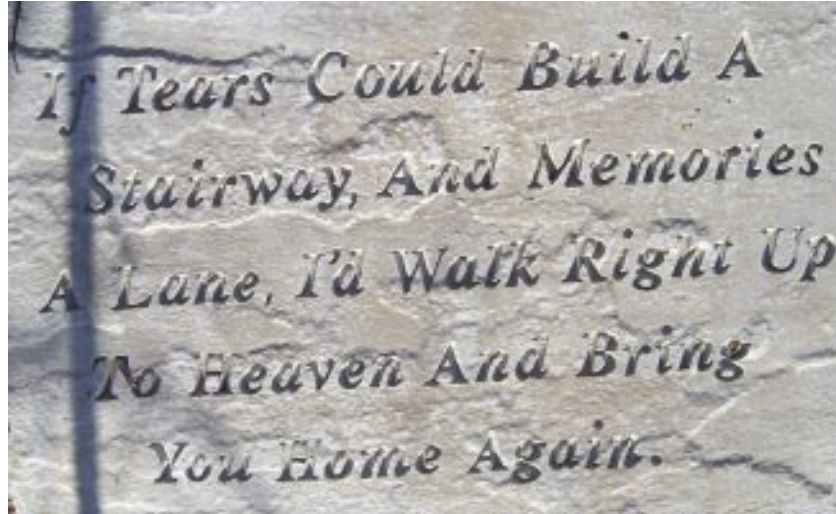
She was employed as an actuarial assistant by Life Insurance Company of Georgia until her marriage to Robert D. Hilliard on October 22, 1947.

She lived in Georgia, New York, South Carolina, Tennessee, Ohio, Pennsylvania, Michigan, Virginia, Florida and Illinois, as well as Iraq, Turkey, and Pakistan before moving to Stuart, FL in 1984.

She was skilled in, and enjoyed, needlework, but, except for her family, her greatest interest was cats - her pampered pet cats and cat-shaped knickknacks. She read extensively on the subject, and was an authority on feline behavior and on the different breeds of cats.

Her lifelong love for animals, especially cats, led her to donate 331 acres to establish Rikki's Refuge, a no-kill, all species animal sanctuary in Orange, VA.

Memorial Service October 11, 2004 at Rikki's Refuge. In lieu of flowers, please make donations to Rikki's Refuge, PO Box 1357, Orange VA 22960. www.rikkisrefuge.org 540-854-0870





Rikki, born Jan. 13, 1981, was a new breed - a Balinese, a Siamese mutation, same body shape, grace & disposition, but with silky long hair. My daughter gave Rikki to me in April 1981. He was greeted by our 11 year old Siamese, who let Rikki know, "I'm top cat." Rikki, who was always happy, was satisfied to be "bottom cat".

The only thing Rikki ever regretted was not having wings! He would climb the drapes, walk across the valence and look for something high to jump to, like the top of the china cabinet. He darted this way and that in perpetual motion. My husband said, "He darts around like a mongoose". So Rikki was named after Rudyard Kipling's Indian mongoose story, "Rikki Tikki Tavi".



Rikki was 4 years old when the Siamese cat died at the age of 15. Rikki was lost. Who could he follow around? Rikki needed a companion cat. My husband suggested a kitten - so "Rikki could be boss for once." When the kitten cried for its mother, Rikki laid down and the kitten suckled Rikki's paw while Rikki washed him. Although Rikki was a bachelor, the kitten could not have had a better mother. The kitten grew up to be "top cat".

Rikki would get up on my knick-knack shelves, and with a graceful paw movement would push a cat statue off, then lean over and watch it fall to the floor. This was great fun and Rikki would stop only temporarily when I said, "NO NO". Rikki always hated water far more than the typical cat. One day while playing this game, I wet my fingers and tiptoed near enough to flip my fingers so a few drops of water hit him. He never played that game again!



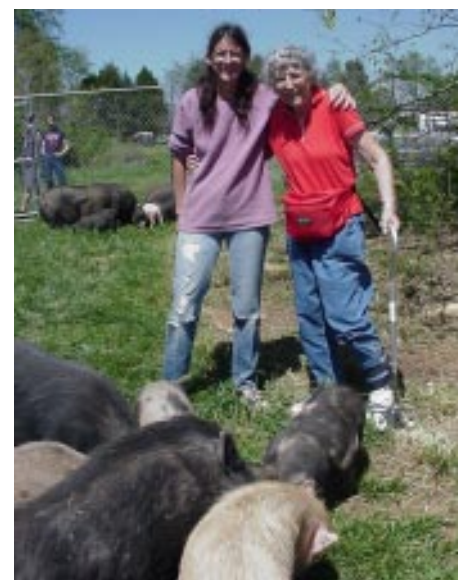
My children grown and gone, my husband's business keeping him out of town, Rikki was my loving, loyal, joyful companion. With me almost always - he slept with me, sat on my lap if I read or sewed, rode on my shoulder out to get the mail. Rikki never did a mean thing to a person or another cat. He was all softness and love. All he ever wanted in life was to be hugged and loved.

Rikki died in my arms in September, 1996 of kidney failure. He had become like a toddler in his illness - never letting me out of his sight. My grandson said, "Rikki was all love without a mean bone in his body."

I still grieve for him, crying as I write this. What could be a more fitting memorial for Rikki, always so full of kindness & love, than to give comfort & love to homeless and unwanted animals. So I donate this land for Rikki's Refuge as a perpetual memorial to Rikki for the love and happiness he gave me for 15 years. And so

others, less fortunate than Rikki, may know love in their lifetimes. I know Rikki would approve.

Rikki's Refuge's Benefactor, Louise A. Hilliard



In the third chapter of Ecclesiastes it is said:

1 To every thing there is a season, and a time to every purpose under the heaven:

2 A time to be born, and a time to die;

Four days before her death, Dr. Connelly discussed her options with Louise. She told her she could be admitted to the hospital for diagnostic testing, with subsequent treatment that might prolong life, or she could remain in the nursing home, and receive appropriate treatment for her heart condition, and everything possible to make her comfortable. She emphatically rejected hospitalization, and said "If it is my time, I am ready to go."

Ecclesiastes continues, in the eighth verse:

8 A time to love, . . . , and a time of peace.

Her heart overflowed with love, and she had 79 years to love. Now she has her time of peace.

Robert Hilliard

CELEBRATING 57 YEARS TOGETHER



Eulogy for Louise Hilliard from Martha

My earliest memory is of my sister, Louise and me making mud pies in the yard of the house in Hapeville. Mammy was sitting on the steps watching over us and my paternal grandmother was looking out the window, supervising Mammy. Although I was a year and a half older than "Sister", she could keep up with me and make as many mud pies and as fast as I could. Sister was born with a lot of energy and responsiveness into a stately Southern family. It wasn't always easy for her. I was a platinum blond with blue eyes and Sister had black hair with bright dark brown eyes. We were described by a cousin as looking like two little dolls.

Sister, Louise, with my sister, Augusta and I used to love to have Aunt Isabella read the Sunday comics to us. We loved the family summer vacations at the Florida and Georgia beaches. Sometimes my mother's parents would join us at the beach. Sister was especially fond of "Grandpapa" who was very genial and enjoyed his grandchildren.

When Sister sprained her ankle one summer and had to wear a cast, my grandmother taught her needlepoint. She made needlepoint covers for several chairs. She kept her interest in needlepoint, and later enjoyed doing needlepoint pictures of Siamese cats. .



Sister was a very generous person. When I had major surgery, she came to California to care for me during my convalescence. When she was recovering from a stroke, I stayed with her while her family took the boat to the Bahamas. At that time she had four cats. She told me the story of "Titi". Titi was an older Siamese cat whom sister saw walking around in the veterinarian's office. When she asked the vet about her, he told her that Titi was healthy except for arthritis. Her owner had brought her to the vet and asked that she be put down since she now needed arthritis medication. The vet didn't have the heart to do it since she was a healthy cat. Sister said, "I know that I could make her happy. Would you give her veterinarian services?" Sister adopted Titi, and Titi lived to a very ripe old age. Besides cats, Sister was very fond of children. She enjoyed having her grandson spend the summers with her. She taught school for a short time in South Carolina.

Rikki's Refuge could not have a better benefactor and exemplar than my sister, Louise Hilliard.



Sister



From my earliest memories my immediate family members were Mama, Daddy, Martha, Sister, and me, Augusta, I must have been about five years old when I found out that Sister (or Suster as my Southern accent called it) had another name-Louise. She was called Sister to distinguish her from our mother who was also named Louise.

There is probably no pest any worse than a little sister who wants to follow older sisters around, especially when the big girls were playing with their friends.

But there were the good times when we were alone that she helped me learn to read, taught me to play Old Maids card game, and showed me how to cut out and color paper dresses for our paper dolls.

When I started school my sister was already in the fifth grade. She would meet me at recess and organize me and my first grade friends in games. We loved having an "older girl" pay attention to us and it made me somewhat of a first grade celebrity.

Our family always owned a family dog and several cats. Townspeople knew they could drop off unwanted kittens at our house and we would keep them or find a home for them. Sister begged to keep them all.

She also had an aquarium. She tried to save any newly hatched baby guppies from being devoured by the adult guppies.

Once she tried to nurse a baby bird back to health but failed in this attempt.

When I remember Sister, I think of the line of a hymn we sang as children at Sunday School.

"All creatures great and small; the Lord God made them all".

My sister loved them all. Augusta Arnold Blount sister of Louise Arnold Hilliard



Bob begins his training for what lies ahead.





I am very fortunate to have wonderful memories of my Grandma. I am honored to have been a part of her life and will always carry part of her with me. She taught me many valuable lessons of compassion and humility. I will always think of her with the same love and sweetness she was so gracious in giving to me. James



Louise Hilliard and Rikki

A lot of people are here today to say goodbye to Louise Hilliard. But, look around! She'll always be with us — all this beautiful land, and the differences it's made in so many lives, are all because of Louise Hilliard.

How many lives were saved because of Rikki's Refuge? Hundreds? Thousands? Of course, those were animal lives. Not quite the same legacy as Florence Nightingale or Mother Teresa. But, you know what? How many human lives were made happier because of their interaction with the animals here at Rikki's? How many humans felt relief that their animals, or their loved ones' animals, would be cared for when they were no longer able to provide that care?

This is what Louise Hilliard leaves behind. But, ironically, it's not called Louise's Refuge. Or Hilliard Haven. Or even Arnold Acres. Because Louise wanted to remember a companion animal, her cat, Rikki. Story has it that Rikki came to her in a dream, told her to provide this sanctuary for posterity. And so, both Rikki and Louise are becoming one with the land this afternoon, so they can continue to provide inspiration and love for those that come after us.

As I'm sure you all know by now, it was Louise Hilliard's donation of this land that made Rikki's Refuge possible. And, I'm sure that Louise is right now thanking her husband Bob for continued financial and logistic support of the Refuge as well. And her daughter Kerry for shepherding the Refuge from an overgrown, neglected, deteriorating plot of land to this miracle you see before you. And all the employees, volunteers, and supporters over the years, who have made this land one amazing memorial to Louise.

On a personal note, Louise was the only Mama I had for the last twenty-one years. Thank you, Mama, for the way you welcomed me into the family. Thank you, Mama, for always making me feel at home, never out of place. And now, Mama, finally, goodbye. We'll always love you.

— Fred Friedman





I've written many memorials to my many animals over the years. But this is the only time I'll ever write one for my Mom. She passed over the Rainbow Bridge Sunday, September fifth. My folks had just moved up here to Orange and we'd hoped to be able to build or add on to this house so there would be a wheelchair accessible section. I'd thought my Mom would love to live here amidst all the fun and activities going on at Rikki's day in and day out. I'd planned to get her a golf cart so she could give tours and show off the cats she loved so much - and the other critters too. But she was at heart a true Cat Lady.

My Mom was in Orange County Nursing Home getting physical therapy, and some days it seemed, getting stronger. Then she'd have a bad day. But it looked like overall she was headed uphill. On the morning of September first, my Dad and I went to visit and she seemed very tired but asked us to take her out to dinner that night. Right on schedule. Every three days she'd ask for an outing. Then need two days of rest to

catch up. We were back working at the refuge when her doctor called and said she was having heart problems, could we come over and talk.

I was shocked. Mostly, I guess, because I so desperately wanted to see her get well enough to come live at the refuge and have fun and be happy. And because we'd see a little progress here and a little there. The doctor explained that all the medications that could be used to get the heart working properly again were being used. My Mom had asked not to be sent to the hospital for extensive testing and procedures that would not heal her but might only prolong her discomfort. I could understand this, it's a decision I have to make with the animals all the time. I just didn't want to face that such decisions needed to be made with my Mom. Either the meds would work, her heart would get regular and strong, or it wouldn't. Peaceful rest was needed to try to help her heal.

She barely woke up that afternoon. That evening she woke up a bit and was able to talk a little. She was terribly tired and kept falling asleep. Thursday she'd wake up enough to have sips of water and speak occasionally. I was getting encouraged and really hoping. That evening she woke up and asked for help to sit up a little and said she was feeling much better and was going to be ok. YES !!!!! By Friday she was having difficulty breathing and by that afternoon she would no longer respond to being touched. I kept hoping it was just a bad day but was starting to think maybe, just maybe, her doctor and nurses were right. They'd keep telling us, "there's the slightest chance she'll come thru, please remember it's very slight." And I kept holding on to that slight chance.

Saturday morning I knew we'd lost that chance. And my Mom made her passage over the Rainbow Bridge at 3 am Sunday, September 5.

My Mom was a terrific person. She loved kids and wanted a dozen of her own. I'm sure there are folks out there who think that's why she started out with lots of cats. When she, a lovely Southern Belle from Georgia, married my Dad, she was the first in her family to cross the Mason-Dixon line and marry a Yankee, she planned to have a dozen kids. Now a days it



probably would have happened, probably all at once with what they do in fertility clinics! Yikes, imagine if there were 11 other mes running around Rikki's. Now if they'd all do litter boxes

Ten years after my folks were married, I was finally born, under what my mother always described as pretty hideous conditions in a primitive Baghdad, Iraq. Kirk was born 7 years later during our stay in Florida, before moving on to Turkey.

My Mom wasn't perfect, they don't make such things. But she put in one heck of an effort and did a damn good job. The more I know of other people's parents the more thankful I am for mine. Most parents pass all their worries and fears along to their kids. My Mom had plenty, what if, what if, and spiders, snakes, water, sharks, and other wild animals, motorcycles, boats, nighttime and dark and traveling to scary places. She worked hard at not passing those fears along to her kids. Even though she was always terrified of water and drowning and usually avoided even swimming pools, she made her kids learn to swim not long after learning to walk. Imagine how a worrying Mom, terrified of water, must feel handing her two year old to a swimming instructor? But she did it. She didn't let us grow up afraid of anything.

Then she'd say, "How could I have raised scuba divers?", "You just walk up to animals, I don't understand why you're not afraid of them?", "Don't you worry you'll kill my only grandchild on the back of that motorcycle?"

She also gave me the gift of believing I could do anything. No matter what I wanted to do, she always told me, "If you try hard enough, you can do anything." I don't know if she believed it or if it was a way to keep me out of her hair spending the afternoon running, jumping up on a tree stump, "flying" off and flapping my wings while I "tried" to fly. But I know that to this day, if I'm willing to put in that effort, and sometimes it's one heck of an effort, I'll be able to do it. That's why I never know how to answer people who say, "but can you do that?" Well yeah, me and you and anybody else, if we're just willing to try. I still practice my flying on alternate Wednesday afternoons if it's not raining!! Actually, I know that if flying was still the priority it was when I was seven, I'd get a light plane, Orange airport is only 3 or 4 miles away, and Rikki's has room for a little run way. Sometimes you have to be inventive and change your plans a bit, but in the end if you really want to and if you really try, you can do it.

And if she was a great Mom, she was an outstanding Grandma. Perhaps her one fault as a Mom was that she was too trusting that I was a good little girl and didn't spank me often enough. But then if that had been different she might have never gotten her one beloved grandchild! Jimmy, my little "baby", just turned 30. My how time flies. I raised him on my own for the first five years before Fred came along and joined us for ever after. And Grandma lived right down the street for the first two years and got to baby sit - a lot. She and Jimmy were inseparable for life. He spent much of the last ten years caring for her. When he was knee high to a grasshopper with long blonde ringlets, she once hugged him and said, "You're my favorite Grandson." He hugged her back and said, "and you're my favorite Grandson too." To differentiate her from other Grandmothers and Great-Grandmothers she became "Grandson Grandma".

My Mom understood kids and she could talk to them and really feel with them. She had a gift for teaching. She loved to teach little ones to read. I always urged her to volunteer at a school or library or Sunday school or kids hospital. Instead she "borrowed" grandkids from the neighbors. Half the young adults in her neighborhood back home in Florida, think of her as their Grandmother.

And she loved cats. Cats, Cats and more Cats. She collected knick knacks of cats for over 50 years. And I mean collected! Last year when we went on our vacation together we spent two weeks driving from the Refuge to her home in Florida and we must have stopped at 4,762 shops looking for cats. And it was Halloween time, so black ones were everywhere. I think we visited 864 Big Lots alone. And we packed that van full. I mean full, every night I was rearranging trying to make room for the next day! She had almost as much fun unpacking it all once we got home. She'd forgotten about half of it and was delighted as we unpacked boxes and crates. It was like shopping twice for the same thing!

I remember sitting in her living room, the walls lined with shelves full of cat things from all over the world, the needle work cats she'd done, her permanent Angel Cat Christmas Tree and her saying, "I wonder if you have more cats than me now?" I have 450, of the real variety. We began counting, one wooden cat, two brass cat, three soft sculpture cat, four

When we got to 100 and still had three walls and the Christmas Tree to go, we gave up, and declared her the winner. God help me if I ever catch up!!

In 1981 my Mom was facing extensive and unsure surgery. Living in Illinois, she flew to Virginia to visit with me, telling me that she wanted to spend some time with me one last time in case she did not survive the surgery. There was a Cat Show nearby and she, always the fan of Siamese Cats (and owner of Ittyboo, the international cat) wanted to see a new breed, a



Balinese. They have Siamese markings and body shape but have long hair.

Backtrack to Ittyboo. He was of authentic Thai (Siam) heritage. His parents had been strays on the streets of Thailand and now were pets of a family who lived on the same project we were on in Pakistan. They had a litter of kittens. I thought it was so cool that I got one cuz one of their daughters was a good friend of mine. These exotic kittens were in high demand. Ittyboo was about all Kirk could say for kitty cat when we got the kitten and the name stuck. He (Ittyboo) lived a long life and traveled from Pakistan to Virginia to Illinois and finally to Florida with my parents.

My mother always had a very thick southern drawl. No one ever mistook where she came from! When I was in high school, in Pakistan, it was boarding school. We'd go on a bus Sunday night and come back home Friday night. The bus came around to our houses, where parents would always come out and kiss their teens good by and cause a great deal of embarrassment. Remember when you're a teen and it's so embarrassing to have your friends see your parents? And how in turn your parents are so embarrassed for their friends to be see you!

Well you know what my Mother would do? Every Sunday I'd try to run and get on the bus without being seen and she'd come out, Ittyboo in her arms, climb on the bus, and make me "Kiss Ittyboo good-by". Knowing how cruel human children are, do you know what all my friends would do with that line?

Back to 1981, my Mom is visiting and we go to this cat show and we see Balinese cats and kittens. And she falls in love. She wants one so bad she can't stand it. But for no price are any available. I'd have mortgaged my house to any price to get her one if I could have. It's a new breed (and I'm not going into details of breeding here, I'll just say, please get your animals from shelters, and that all the rest of hers have come as rescues) and the next half dozen generations are spoken for. When I took her to the airport to fly home, she hugged me and said, "I sure hope I live thru this surgery. I'd like to live long enough to have a Balinese."

She was in the hospital for over two months. At one point she wasn't doing well. My Dad called me, worried that she might not make it. I decided that if I got her that Balinese, it just might give her something to live for and she'd pull thru. I called all over and begged and pleaded and told every breeder why I "needed" a Balinese. One place said they had a kitten that was "defective" and not show quality and they were going to keep it as a pet but they'd sell it to me instead. I rounded up all the cash I could find and took off on a road trip to pick up that kitten.

Then I got plane tickets for me and that kitten and we flew to Illinois. The hospital had a very strict no animal policy. I begged the nurses and they said no, they better not see me with a cat in their hospital. The nasty things were dirty and covered in all kind of germs and that was the last thing my Mom needed. They thought I was nuts that maybe it WAS the last thing she needed and it would give her reason and strength to fight and to get well and come home.

So the next day I loaded that kitten up in the car and drove to the hospital. I tucked him under my jacket and slipped into the hospital and headed for the nearest elevator. The thing was purring up a storm and I sounded like I was rattling. I kept stroking my chest and coughing to cover up the sound. The elevator arrived. I got on with half a dozen doctors and nurses and started to have horrible coughing fits. The kitten got fidgety on the long ride up to my Mom's floor. It mewed. It struggled to get out of my grasp and out of my jacket. I clenched my chest tighter and coughed horribly. I'm was afraid I'd be hauled out of the hospital, suspected of harboring an infectious disease. Not to mention a cat. Finally, the elevator doors opened. I bolted just as the damn cat got far enough out of my jacket to stick it's head over my shoulder. Someone behind me yelled, "She's got a cat!" I took off at a run and hid. When the coast was clear and the cat was tucked away I got to my Mom's room.

She could not believe she now had that Balinese kitten she'd dreamed of. Something waiting at home for her to take care of. She got well and came home. She spent the better part of the next year in a body cast, but it was worth it to have her Balinese kitten. The kitten was a live wire and earned the name Rikki Tikki Tavi, Rikki for short. Ittyboo was less than thrilled to have to share his home, but eventually they made friends. Rikki became my Mom's best friend ever. He died of kidney failure when he was 15 1/2, in 1996. My Mom was devastated.

In ancient history times I used to host a radio show (with my close friend Patti) called Animal Update - A program dedicated to the health and well-being of animals everywhere - especially the ones in your life. We shared what we'd learned living with animals, interviewed holistic practitioners, rescue workers, and those crazy people who ran sanctuaries. My Mom was so proud to have her daughter on the radio. When ever I'd visit she'd introduce me to her friends, "This is my daughter, she's on the radio!" You would have thought it was an internationally syndicated show, not just a little, local am, one hour a week show. She had all the tapes and would call into our 800 number and listen live while on hold.



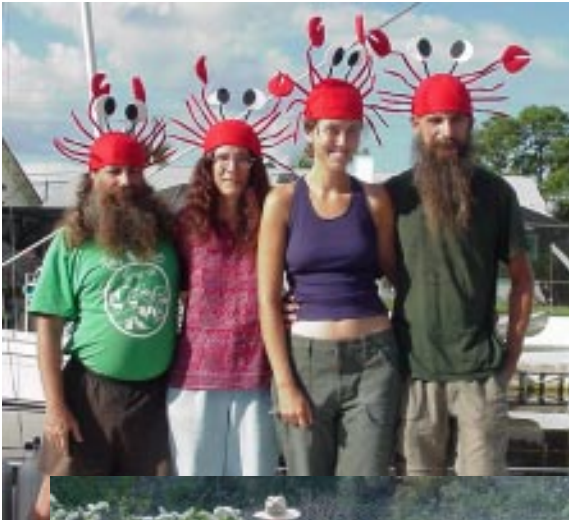


Patti and I talked on Animal Update about this wonderful piece of land I'd found. 330 acres, 260 in woods for the wildlife, 3 creeks, 70 acres open in the center that could be for farm and domestic animals. Not too far away but not too close to city problems. It was more whimsical than real. If we could raise the money (ha-ha), we could run a sanctuary. Rikki, who'd passed over the Rainbow Bridge a year and a half ago, came to my Mom in a dream and told her to share the love they had shared, with other homeless animals, who without that help, would never have a chance. My mother bought the land and donated it in memory of Rikki.

Rikki and my Mom have saved the lives of thousands of animals, many of them cats, elderly, handicapped, with leukemia or fiv. Animals that would have died without that special love.

And why did she refuse to take credit for her beneficial action during her life? She wanted the attention focused on the animals not on her. So she made us all promise to be silent and let her be the anonymous benefactor until after her death. I wish she could have remained anonymous much longer.

I miss you Mom, and I'll love you forever. Thank you for being my Mom, you were the best I ever had. KERRY





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 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 to them, who had to be 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 quivers. Suddenly he begins to run from the group, flying over the green grass, his legs carrying him 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 the trusting eyes of your pet, so long gone from your life but never absent from your heart.

Then you cross Rainbow Bridge together.... Author unknown



Unlike most days at Rainbow Bridge, this day dawned cold and gray, damp as a swamp and as dismal as could be imagined. All of the recent arrivals had no idea what to think, as they had never experienced a day like this before.

But the animals who had been waiting for their beloved people knew exactly what was going on and started to gather at the pathway leading to The Bridge to watch.

It wasn't long before an elderly animal came into view, head hung low and tail dragging. The other animals, the ones who had been there for a while, knew what his story was right away, for they had seen this happen far too often.

He approached slowly, obviously in great emotional pain, but with no sign of injury or illness. Unlike all of the other animals waiting at The Bridge, this animal had not been restored to youth and made healthy and vigorous again. As he walked toward The Bridge, he watched all of the other animals watching him. He knew he was out of place here and the sooner he could cross over, the happier he would be.

But, alas, as he approached The Bridge, his way was barred by the appearance of an Angel who apologized, but told him that he would not be able to pass. Only those animals who were with their people could pass over Rainbow Bridge.

With no place else to turn to, the elderly animal turned towards the fields before The Bridge and saw a group of other animals like himself, also elderly and infirm. They weren't playing, but rather simply lying on the green grass, forlornly staring out at the pathway leading to The Bridge. And so, he took his place among them, watching the pathway and waiting.

One of the newest arrivals at The Bridge didn't understand what he had just witnessed and asked one of the animals that had been there for a while to explain it to him. "You see, that poor animal was a rescue. He was turned in to rescue just as you see him now, an older animal with his fur graying and his eyes clouding. He never made it out of rescue and passed on with only the love of his rescuer to comfort him as he left his earthly existence. Because he had no family to give his love to, he has no one to escort him across The Bridge. "

The first animal thought about this for a minute and then asked, "So what will happen now?" As he was about to receive his answer, the clouds suddenly parted and the gloom lifted.

Approaching The Bridge could be seen a single person and among the older animals, a whole group was suddenly bathed in a golden light and they were all young and healthy again, just as they were in the prime of life.

"Watch, and see" said the second animal. A second group of animals from those waiting came to the pathway and bowed low as the person neared. At each bowed head, the person offered a pat on the head or a scratch behind the ears. The newly restored animals fell into line and allowed him towards The Bridge. They all crossed The Bridge together.

"What happened?" "That was a rescuer. The animals you saw bowing in respect were those who found new homes because of his work. They will cross when their new families arrive. Those you saw restored were those who never found homes. When a rescuer arrives, they are allowed to perform one, final act of rescue. They are allowed to escort those poor animals that they couldn't place on earth, across The Rainbow Bridge."

"I think I like rescuers", said the first animal. "So does GOD", was the reply. — Author Unknown

.....
 ● I'm so sorry about your Mother. Although I never met her, I feel like I knew
 ● her because I knew so much about her through you. Even if you had
 ● never said anything about her, I would have known what a truly remark-
 ● able person she was because you are truly a remarkable person, and that
 ● kind of thing has to come from somewhere. It has always been com-
 ● pletely obvious how much you loved your mother and how much she loved
 ● you. You will never be separated from that love—never. Please give my
 ● condolences to your Father and the rest of the family. Love, Sally
 ●

Lend Me A Kitten

I will lend to you for a while
 a kitten, God said.

For you to love while he lives,
 and mourn after he's dead.

Maybe for twelve or fourteen years,
 or maybe two or three.

But will you, 'till I call him back,
 take care of him for me?

He'll bring his charms to gladden you
 and should his stay be brief,
 you'll always have his memories
 as solace for your grief.

I cannot promise he will stay,
 since all from earth return.
 But there are lessons taught below
 I want this kitten to learn.

I've looked the whole world over
 in search of teachers true,
 And from the folk that crowds life's land
 I have chosen you.

Now will you give him all your love,
 nor think the labor vain?
 Nor hate me when I come to take
 my kitten home again?

And my heart replied,
 "My Lord, Thy Will Be Done."
 For all the joys this kitten brings,
 the risk of grief I'll run.

We'll shelter him with tenderness,
 we'll love him while we may.
 And for the happiness that we've known,
 forever grateful stay.

But should you call him back
 much sooner than we planned,
 We'll brave the bitter grief that comes,
 and try to understand.

If by our love we've managed
 your wishes to achieve,
 in memory of his sweet sweet love,
 please help us while we grieve.

When our cherished kitten
 departs this world of strife,
 Please send yet another needing soul
 for us to love all his life.

I am so sorry to hear about the passing of your mum - a wonderful woman
 who I'll always remember fondly - and what a surprise to reveal that it was
 she who bought the refuge!! I would never have guessed! What a great
 thing to do, for the animals and for her daughter! Amazing how well parents
 can know their kids!

We've got a dog now - a rescue puppy who needed a home, and she has
 really changed things around here! We're all a lot more active - lots of
 walking going on every day! She's a real joy - puts the cat to shame! (our
 cat is very grumpy - always has been, but now even more so! she can't
 understand why we let that smelly clumsy idiot in the house!)

I think of you and your projects often - all the best, and I'm really sorry
 you lost your mum. It must be hard, and good thing you have so many
 needy creatures to keep you busy! Greetings to Fred and Kirk and Jim and
 your dad! Love Anne.

I know you're going through
 a difficult time

right now ...

and you can be sure that God knows it, too.

I wish I could do something to make
 everything all right for you, but since I can't,

I just want you to know that

I'm praying for you.

Sometimes we wonder

why things like this happen.

I don't have the answers,

but I do know this much ...

God won't let you go through

this by yourself.

He'll be with you all the way.

He's always there

when you need Him.

and he wants so much to comfort you.

He'll give you the courage to carry on
 the strength to handle

whatever comes.

If there's something

we can do for you,

We want to help

in any way we can.

So please remember

that you're never alone

for God cares ...

and so do we.

we all love you very much,

Marie, Asim, Omar, Merjan & Rick

I am always moved by your Update Letter. Specially so this time, sharing your life story of your wonderful loving Mom
 and all those loving animal stories and episodes—they are all so real and refreshing in this life (away from all the other
 sad events in the world). My deepest sympathy for your loss and may God bless you, your family and Rikki's Refuge, a
 sanctuary of God's house. Affectionately, Barbara

No one else can understand
 the way you're feeling now,
 though family, friends
 and memories

will help you through somehow ...

But time will ease

your Mother's loss,

for your sorrow may remain,

but the love she left

inside your heart

will take away the pain.

Deloris & Mike

I am so very sorry to hear
 about the loss of your mother.

My own mother passed away

14 years ago and I still feel the

loss daily. Your thoughts about

your mother and her obituary

are a beautiful tribute to her

spirit. Thank you so much for

sharing her life, your grief, and

I hope, your healing. Please

know that my thoughts and

prayers are with you.

Beth Lee

Just wanted to let you know how beautiful the update was. It made me sad
 and reminded me how much I miss my mother. Warts and all they are very
 special to us. I still miss her every day and wish I could talk to her and just
 hang out sometimes. I am really glad you got to take that trip with your
 Mom last year. I think that will be a great memory for you and one that you
 will always cherish. Mary Ellen

**Wishing You Peace
At This Sad Time**

Tenderly... may time heal
your sorrow,
Gently ... may friends
ease your pain,
Softly... may peace
replace heartache,
And may
warmest memories
remain.

With Sympathy and Love,
Maureen

What a wonderful legacy
Louise left behind!
Loretta & Bill

Here's a short note from your old friend and classmate Louise.....My heart went out for you when reading your letter about the death of your mother. My mom died earlier this year and I can feel the pain you are going through. Even after seven months I still miss my mother every day. She was also an amazing woman: full of energy and life, always caring and fun to be with, a wonderful grandmother to my children, a great lady to be around. She became ill with a neuro-muscular disease ALS and died within four months.

Like you, I was torn between hope and anguish, but I finally had to let her go. More important that missing her each day, is the wonderful memories I treasure. My mom still puts a smile on my face each and every day. Sometimes she was silly, other times she was crazy, but above all she was my mom and I am very very proud of her. I am now mother of three children ages 16, 13 and 10. Every day I reflect back on the lessons I learnt as a child, and remember how my mom used to deal with the problems of adolescence. At the time I couldn't appreciate her efforts and her patience but now, in retrospect, she has taught me a lesson. I hope to reflect upon her many life's lessons as long as I live.

I hope that once the pain subsides you will have a wealth of fond memories that will give you strength and love for the years to come.
Take care, and with a great big hug, Louise

MISSING BIBLE PORTION

... the following addition to the Book of Genesis was discovered in the Dead Sea Scrolls. It sheds light on the question, "Where did pets come from?"

And Adam said, "Lord, when I was in the garden, you walked with me everyday. Now I do not see you anymore. I am lonesome here and it is difficult for me to remember how much you love me."

And God said, "No problem! I will create a companion for you that will be with you forever and who will be a reflection of my love for you, so that you will know I love you, even when you cannot see me. Regardless of how selfish and childish and unlovable you may be, this new companion will accept you as you are and will love you as I do, in spite of yourself." And God created a new animal to be a companion for Adam. And it was a good animal. And God was pleased. And the new animal was pleased to be with Adam and he wagged his tail.

And Adam said, "But Lord, I have already named all the animals in the Kingdom and all the good names are taken and I cannot think of a name for this new animal." And God said, "No problem! Because I have created this new animal to be a reflection of my love for you, his name will be a reflection of my own name, and you will call him DOG." And Dog lived with Adam and was a companion to him and Eve and loved them. And Adam was comforted. And God was pleased. And Dog was content and wagged his tail.

After a while, it came to pass that Adam's guardian angel came to the Lord and said, "Lord, Adam has become filled with pride. He struts and preens like a peacock and believes he is worthy of adoration. Dog has indeed taught him that he is loved, but no one has taught him humility."

And the Lord said, "No problem! I will create for him a companion who will be with him forever and who will see him as he is. The companion will remind him of his limitations, so he will know he is not worthy of adoration. And God created CAT to be a companion for Adam. And CAT would not obey Adam. And when Adam gazed into Cat's eyes, he was reminded that he was not the Supreme Being. And Adam learned humility.

And God was pleased. And Adam was greatly improved. And CAT did not care one way or the other.

Sorry for your loss
but it sounds like
she lived a long and
full life. Ann

Sorry about your mom.
Sounds like she was a
great lady. Animal lovers
usually are. Sam

That was such a beautiful letter, Kerry. Your
mother is so proud of you. Me too.
Big tight hug, Patti

You and your family have
our deepest sympathy.
Very nice, very moving.
Vicki and Joe

I've just finished reading your update and I know your mom must be very proud. I can't imagine a more lovely tribute than the one you have written to your mom. I felt as if I knew her by the time I was done. You have my sympathy and prayers. I was hoping that your mom's move to Virginia would allow her to visit with you and she would do well, but I know that isn't always the way it happens. I was shocked when I read your opening paragraph.

After reading your letter, I am more motivated than ever to support my daughter's desire to help animals. She has been wanting to volunteer with animals for over a year now (she's 9). She has an absolute passion for them. Although we were trying to contact Luv-a-Pet to help at Petsmart with the cats up for adoption, I think that she would enjoy Rikki's. I had hesitated to choose Rikki's because it is a further drive and I am already having a hard time fitting the kids' schoolwork in our busy schedule! After reading how your mom encouraged you in your vision, I would like to encourage her in hers. We could probably only make it about once a month, but if you have room for some more folks to clean litter boxes, we can help. (I also have a little experience medicating livestock if you need it while I'm there - I'm not great at it, but I've given goats shots and wormed goats and sheep regularly. I know how to clean a mean chicken coup, too.)

Thanks for the uplifting tribute to your mom and I'm sorry for your loss. Warm regards, Mary Ann

I read your eulogy to your mother and cried. It's so beautiful! It's so wonderful to learn so much about her that I never knew. Makes me cry to think she's gone . . . although I didn't know her well, I know what a sweet, lovely woman she was. I know that my mother thought she was wonderful. What a special love you shared — for each other, for your son, and for cats. How poignant to find out that she is the benefactor behind Rikki's Refuge.

My own mother died in December 2002. Seems that generation is slipping away. Wonderful that you still have your Dad, and that you have him right with you, where you can be with him and see him every day, and where he can enjoy and experience the wonderful legacy your Mom and you have created.

Just want to let you know I'm remembering and thinking about you all, and wishing you comfort and peace as you learn to accept your loss. Love, Janice

You have our deepest sympathies, and will be in our prayers even more than usual. God bless. Lois

Some lives are like a song -
every note rare and precious.
We fell lucky
to have heard the music.
In Deepest Sympathy,
Love, Pat and Dan,
our prayers are with you.
What a beautiful tribute you
have written for your mother!
I am so sorry for your loss.
Sharon

DOGS IN HEAVEN

An old man and his dog were walking down this dirt road with fences on both sides, they came to a gate in the fence and looked in, it was nice grassy, woody area, just what a 'huntin' dog and man would like, but, it had a sign saying 'no trespassing' so they walked on. They came to a beautiful gate with a person in white robes standing there. "Welcome to Heaven" he said. The old man was happy and started in with his dog following him. The gatekeeper stopped him. "Dogs aren't allowed, I'm sorry but he can't come with you."

"What kind of Heaven won't allow dogs? If he can't come in, then I will stay out with him. He's been my faithful companion all his life, I can't desert him now."

"Suit yourself, but I have to warn you, the Devil's on this road and he'll try to sweet talk you into his area, he'll promise you anything, but the dog can't go there either. If you won't leave the dog, you'll spend Eternity on this road."

So the old man and dog went on. They came to a rundown fence with a gap in it, no gate, just a hole. Another old man was inside. "S'cuse me Sir, my dog and I are getting mighty tired, mind if we come in and sit in the shade for awhile?"

"Of course, there's some cold water under that tree over there. Make yourselves comfortable"

"You're sure my dog can come in? The man down the road said dogs weren't allowed anywhere."

"Would you come in if you had to leave the dog?"

"No sir, that's why I didn't go to Heaven, he said the dog couldn't come in. We'll be spending Eternity on this road, and a glass of cold water and some shade would be mighty fine right about now. But, I won't come in if my buddy here can't come too, and that's final."

The man smiled a big smile and said "Welcome to Heaven."

"You mean this is Heaven? Dogs ARE allowed? How come that fellow down the road said they weren't?"

"That was the Devil and he gets all the people who are willing to give up a life long companion for a comfortable place to stay. They soon find out their mistake, but then it's too late. The dogs come here, the fickle people stay there. GOD wouldn't allow dogs to be banned from Heaven. After all, HE created them to be man's companions in life, why would he separate them in death?"

We can't know

why some things happen ...
but we can know that love
and beautiful memories
outlast the pain of grief.
And we can know
that there's a place
inside the heart
where love lives always ...
and where nothing beautiful
can ever be forgotten.
If I've learned anything
down through the years,
it's that nothing beautiful
in this world
is ever really lost ---
Those we cherish
will always live on
in memory,
Mike and Kathy

I know it has been a long time since we talked but I do keep up on your happenings through the news letters and Jim. I am sorry to hear about your mom's passing. I know that she will be missed a lot. Please pass on my condolences to your father and Kirk as well.

Your memorial letter was wonderful! I enjoyed reading about the cats and I actually remember the bus good-bye's. I know that she really appreciated having Jim there with her so much too. He is very special.

I was interested in your flying. Although I don't have a license, I have friends that do, and I fly every chance I get (I take occasional lessons too). I imagine that your neck of the woods looks pretty cool from the air.

Take care, Jim

I've just had time to sit down and actually start to read the newsletter. Now I know what people (folks here at work I forward the letter to) meant when they said this was the most beautiful letter they'd ever read.

My Lord Kerry, what a shock. I must be the last person to read your letter. I thought your Mom was going to go on forever.

But, really, she is. Through you, your Dad, Kirk, Jimmy and Rikki's. You two really were soul mates weren't you. In all the ways that mattered.

God bless you all; and the memory of your Mother, and God bless all your good works. With much Love, sympathy and admiration.

Dean

I was so sorry to hear about Louise. I really enjoyed the time I got to spend with her. She was such a sweet southern lady with so many stories to tell. My sympathy to you all. I'll miss her too. Thinking of you, Amy



Hopi Prayer

Do not stand
 at my grave and weep
 I am not there,
 I do not sleep.
 I am a thousand
 winds that blow.
 I am the diamond
 glints on snow.
 I am the sunlight
 on the ripened grain.
 I am the gentle
 Autumn's rain.
 When you awaken
 in the morning hush,
 I am the swift
 uplifting rush
 of quiet birds in
 circled flight.
 I am the soft stars
 that shine at night.
 Do not stand
 at my grave
 and cry:
 I am not there,
 I did not die.
 Teresa

Rikki's Refuge was named an all species sanctuary, not only because all species of animals will always be welcome. But because it's also here for us, the humans, because after all we're just another one of the animals.

THIS OLD CAT

I'm getting on in years,
My coat is turning gray.
My eyes have lost their luster,
My hearing's just okay.

I spend my whole day dreaming
of conquests in my past.
Lying near a sunny window,
Waiting for its warm repast.

I remember our first visit,
I was coming to you free,
hoping you would take me in
and keep me company.

I wasn't young or handsome,
two years I'd roamed the street.
There were scars upon my face,
I hobbled on my feet.

I could sense your disappointment
as I left my prison cage.
Oh, I hoped you would accept me
and look beyond my age.

You took me out of pity,
I accepted without shame.
Then you grew to love me,
and I admit the same.

I have shared with you your laughter,
You have wet my fur with tears.
We've come to know each other
Throughout these many years.

Just one more hug this morning
Before you drive away,
and know I'll think about you
Throughout your busy day.

The time we've left together
Is a treasured time at that.
My heart is yours forever,
I promise you that,

This Old Cat.

Though I've only gotten to know you through your newsletter and your love of animals, I share your grief in losing your beloved mother. I am so sorry. Your love for her is so evident in your description of her and her impact on your life and the life of so many others. That's such a comfort, even in your loss, to know she touched so many in such an important way.

My own dear mom died 2 years ago, just a little over a year after we suddenly and tragically lost my dad. I miss them every day. They, too, were wonderful grandparents, and I had to smile reading about your 30 yr. old "baby" boy and his precious relationship with "Grandson Grandma".

Telling and retelling these stories and sharing how much your mother meant to you is what will ease the grief somewhat and keep her spirit alive in this world where you remain until we can all be with those who've gone on before us.

Please know you aren't alone, and I'll be praying for comfort and ease of your sad heart during this difficult time. It doesn't really get easier...just different. Hugs to you, and thanks so much for all you do for those wonderful animals friends.
Sincerely, Kathi

In spite of the fact you don't know me, please accept my condolences on the loss of your mom. My mother passed away in February so I know how you feel. The cruelty of fate can be very disillusioning. Regards, Tom

Thanks for the lovely story about your mom! How beautiful a legacy. I hope you print it out and save it! My mom had a ton of fears also and water was one of them and she walked me to the YMCA for lessons. Sent me off to Day Camp so I could experience the woods although she didn't even like bushes close to the house and there wasn't an insect that didn't terrify her. Moms are the foundation of our life and world and it's good to pay tribute to them!

Love and Hugs, Donna

I am so sorry you lost your wonderful Mom. My heart breaks for you and your family. And we now know who the generous person is who provided the land for your refuge. Please accept my heartfelt condolences. Sincerely, Cheryl

It took me a few minutes to wipe the tears from my face after reading your story about your mother. She sounded like a wonderful woman and you living out her dream makes you a very loving person. Last Monday my boyfriend lost his boss and very close friend to cancer. We too are going through loss. I feel as if he hasn't had time to grieve. The animals need you. And I know you'll always be there for them, in your mother's memory. Take care and please keep in touch.....Toni

Thank you for sharing your Mother's story and especially for working as hard as you do every day for the animals at Rikki's in her honor. You are in my prayers.
Patricia

RE: Still practicing my flying on alternate Wednesday Afternoons
Me Too Kerry

Sorry to hear about your Mum though, sounds like she was a bit of a star, keep those critters safe n sound now, you're my bulletin of tranquility in an otherwise crazy life, Cheers D

That was a beautiful memory of your Mom. I am so sorry and know how painful missing her is and always will be.....My Mom died 3 years ago last month and my Dad died a year after her. I have their beautiful cat Bella who is 17 and almost died from a depression that we both shared in their unexpected deaths. Bella lives separated from my 2 indoor kitties TaTa and Micio because she isn't social w/ animals...she'd rather eat them, because she spent most of her life enjoying the outdoors w/ my Mom and Dad and bringing her trophies home (a leg or head of some poor animal).

Thanks for all you do, Lisa

A thousand blessings to you and your family during this time. I am so sorry to hear about the loss of your mother but am grateful you were able to be so close to her at a time like this. If only the loss of our four-legged family members could prepare us. I, too, am a Northern, married to a Southern man so I smile when you speak of your mother and her relationship. Obviously your parents were able to instill in you remarkable values and respect for all of God's work in its entirety and I bless your mother for that. May she be at peace and may you find your peace as well through this difficult time in your life. Hail Mary. KC

My deepest sympathy to you and your family. Thank you for sharing your memories and thoughts of your mom. God's blessings, Forrest

Dave and I are very sorry to hear the sad news about your mom. Your family will remain in our prayers and we are hoping to make it to the memorial service. I personally was very touched by the story of how Rikki's Refuge came to a new beginning. Particularly since the donor was your mom. How tender of a heart your mom had and she must have truly been a very Godly woman to give so much for you and His creatures. Blessings, Alayna

Linda and I were very sorry to hear of your Mom's passing and you have our heartfelt condolences. You can have peace of mind that she is in a better place, although you must miss her terribly. Pete

I am very sorry to read about your wonderful mother passing.. My eyes are filled with tears as I am writing to you. Kerry, I have always enjoyed your newsletter and LEARN a whole lot from you. But what I learned about your mother today will be with me forever. As you know, we are all growing older and our parents are departing us in this world, but you sharing a part of you mom with us was sweet. God Bless you Kerry, not only are you an incredible woman you are an inspiration to EVERYONE!!!! Dawn

I was very sorry to see the e-mail about your mother. When I was down last Friday no one had told me. I thought your letter was a great tribute to her. Tom

I am so very sorry for your loss. Mom's are such special people, and when they are gone there is an immeasurable void. Thank you so much for sharing this memorial of your love and grief for your mother, and the wonderful friendship she shared with Rikki. It made me cry and remember my own mother and animal family members that have passed over the Rainbow Bridge. Your mother was a wonderful human being, and through you and Rikki's Refuge her legacy lives on. Janet

We offer our deepest sympathy to you and your family and our prayers that you may find the inner strength to cope with this difficult time. Sincerely, Steve

Let me express my sincerest condolences and empathy on the passing of your mother. She was terrific! It's obvious she had a can do attitude. You've led an extremely interesting life with her and the various places you've lived worldwide. I like particularly that she didn't pass on her fears to you. My own mother has given me my lifelong love of water and swimming. It was the one activity she never learned as a city kid. I know when she moves on I will be crushed. I will keep you in my prayers as you experience this hard loss. MacKenzie

What a wonderful tribute to your mom! My mother is 88 years old & has a pacemaker; we almost lost her to a failing heart seven years ago. She has gifted me with a deep compassion for animals, for which I will forever be grateful. Thank you for sharing. Cynthia

So sorry to hear of your mother's death. this is a very sad time to endure. Your mother was kind, a very caring person. You can tell about a person's character - how they treat the animals on this earth. Continue to think of happier moments and not concentrate on her final days. I know how much you miss her. My mother died of MS on Sept. 23, 1987 and I miss her so. It was wonderful your mother dedicated the land so other animals would have a place to live and receive care. Marge

I am very sorry for your loss. You and your Mom are amazing people! My thoughts and prayers are with you during this time of family transitions. I can only image how hard it is to lose one's primary family anchor... and then still move on. Take care, Lisa

I'm so sorry to hear about your mom. Please forward my condolences to your dad. Glad to hear your dad's e-bay adventure (for the mobile home) worked out for the best. I can't believe it's been so long since I've been down but that may change as Christine and I are planning on moving to the Staunton area in 2005 so we'll be much closer <grin>. Cheers, Dale

I am so sad to hear of your news. Your letter to all of us was very touching. Please let me know if there is anything I can do other than keep you in my prayers. Many thank yous to your Mom for giving you to us and your dear animals. Much love, Jan

Thank you so much for sharing your mother's life and her death with those of us who look forward to your regular Updates. She was an amazing woman and has a daughter to match. My love and support to you and your family as you strive to settle into your mother's transition. She will surely be a guardian angel over your Rainbow Bridge. Much love, Charlee

No words can assuage the loss of a parent, but if you judge them by the quality of the children, she was a fine woman indeed. She shared your love of animals and other interests, and I know she was proud of you. May time lessen your feelings of loss and accept our wishes of sympathy and support for the time ahead, Jim & Daill

I'm terribly sorry to hear of your loss. You and your family will be in my prayers, chants, meditations or whatever seems appropriate at the time. I'm sure you're receiving all sorts of mail so I'll keep this short and save the rest for the next time I see you. Dana

I'm speechless with sorrow. Your beautiful, eloquent description of your Mother was touching beyond belief. Words can't make it stop hurting, only time will... Just know that you have many folks sending their warm thoughts your way. Hugs, Bonnie

I am so sorry to hear that your mother died. She is at peace. My husband is at peace. We will both miss our loved ones but the suffering and inability to have a fairly normal life is gone. I know you will find grace and comfort knowing that all your friends are praying for you and your family. Helen

I am so sorry about your mother's passing—especially, because it would have been so nice for her to have been able to enjoy the animals at the Refuge for a while. That was so wonderful of her to acquire the property for you to commence your good works. Take care, love and kisses to all of the creatures! Linda



I'm so sorry about your mom. I lost my mom almost one year ago and I know what you're going through. Obviously, your mom was a caring person who passed that on to both of her children. What better legacy than that! Remember her with pride and love; she thought the same of you. Please pass on our condolences to your father too. Kristin

I am so sorry to hear of your loss. Your mother was a truly great person to all of God's creation. She truly practiced what God said, humans were to have dominion over his creation, that is to be provider and caretaker. May she reign in peace in Heaven. Alan

I was very sorry to hear that Aunt Louise had passed away. I know that it has been many years since I have seen all of you but I wanted to remember my Aunt in a way that I believe she would have approved of. I would therefore like to make a donation to the animal refuge that I know she so much supported. Love, Patty

