

Readers worldwide rally to save Lisa's bacon

By Sanne Specht
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Lisa the pig and Sanctuary One manager Sansa Collins. Photo by Bob Pennell.

You have to love a gig where your day cycles around a drive through the scenic Applegate Valley and your assignment is to tell the tale of a 700-pound Yorkshire pig named Lisa.

It's been a month since Mail Tribune photographer Bob Pennell and I headed out to Double Oak Farm to document Sanctuary One's latest domestic animal rescue. Little did we know the story of this particular curly tailed porker would be a gift that keeps on giving.

Bob and I pulled through the gates at the 55-acre ranch and met Sansa Collins, caretaker extraordinaire. We patted shaggy ponies and waded through a herd of curious goats on our way to meet the wayward swine who'd been rescued in January from an irate Washington farmer and transported to Sanctuary One on May 10.

The huge white pig emerged from the barn's murky shadows and headed straight toward me. A slightly frothy porcine smile was plastered on Lisa's big pink mug. I stood my ground, but my heart skipped a beat or three. After all, that was a whole lot of hog on the hoof tiptoeing in my direction.

I knew Lisa was newly arrived at the sanctuary. But I didn't know whether anyone other than Sansa would be welcome in her new digs. I scrambled to say something reasonably intelligent.

"Look at the size of her ears!" I said. "They're bigger than my head! And I have a huge head!"

Lisa overlooked my rude comments due to the fact that I was a potential bearer of treats. My reporter's notebook received a wet snuffle. I was prepared to fork it over when Lisa's keen nose sniffed out Sansa's party snacks — a pocket full of peanuts and some apple slices.

Lisa snuffled up her bounty, then snorted when I suggested we paint her toenails a pretty pink. Once the last morsel was consumed, Lisa plopped on her side so Sansa could give her a postprandial belly rub.

Bob took a great shot of the two canoodling, which perfectly illustrated the May 18 cover story for the Mail Tribune. "Oohs," "aaahs" and the inevitable bacon-on-the-cloven-hoof jokes ensued.

The tale of the wayward porker's rescue trotted across the nation — and around the globe. Sansa said a clipping of Lisa made it all the way to Afghanistan. Someone from the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers wrote her after reading about Lisa's plight in a newspaper called "American Roundup."

Donations found their way to Sanctuary One to help support Lisa and her playmates. Two siblings, ages 3 and 5, saw the article in a Seattle paper and sent handmade cards to Lisa — along with two crumpled \$1 bills from their piggy bank, Sansa said.

The current tally of donations for Lisa's care is \$1,160, said Patty Davis, a Sanctuary One volunteer and board member.

"I guess you saved her bacon," Davis said.

For more information, visit sanctuaryone.org.

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