

Tripod Runs on All Fours

By Maggi Hall



Tripod crossed over into Heaven September 16, 2018, a very special dog who'd been tossed about frequently until he found his perfect "forever" home.

His journey began after he'd been hit by a car and taken to a rescue facility in Jacksonville FL. His right front leg was amputated and eventually he was adopted by a man who lived in DeLand. The family had several dogs and cats but it was discovered Buggy didn't like cats so he came to live at FloridaWild Veterinary Hospital, my daughter's place.

People tend to veer away from pittie breeds but this American Bull dog was special. Pitties are bred to need people; that's why they're used as bait dogs and fighters. They'll do anything to please their owners. From Buggy's first encounter at our adopt day he displayed a genuine interest in people. The first photo reveals his soul – a smile that radiates outward from his heart. It's contagious. One couldn't help smiling at him in return.



Everyone was curious about the three-legged dog with the huge smile. Eventually he was adopted by a couple; the wife needed an emotional support animal and hoped Buggy would fit the bill. He did – *perfectly*. He got along with their other dog, ran the huge yard like a galloping horse, learned tricks, and behaved beautifully. His intelligence was admirable. When he snuggled with his mom she found deep comfort.

Then it happened as it so often does. A baby came into the family and when the child turned two she'd hit Buggy or try to take his toys and he'd growl; he never bit or even tried to. Rather than teach the child the "do's and don'ts" of relationships – and yes, a two year old child can be taught – they sent Buggy packing back to FloridaWild.

In the meantime – small world – the first owner who gave him up for his own well-being was now employed at FloridaWild. Buggy relaxed because he remembered Kristen and adored her. Kisses and hugs from her and the FW staff kept him relaxed, happy and spoiled.

A few weeks later a woman called me because her granddaughter (now living with her) had been brutally abused by her parents and needed an emotional support animal. We gathered under a shade tree at FloridaWild and watched love bloom. Bugsy, a smile on his face, seemed to know the little girl needed him. So away he went with his new mom and ten year old sister.

A week later the grandmother called me. Bugsy nipped at the child and needed to be returned. Was Bugsy a biter? No. Was he aggressive? No. The grandmother admitted she had no idea what happened because the child refused to say. The woman wasn't angry with Bugsy and didn't consider him a biter. Neither did I.

Back to a cage at FloridaWild, again without an owner but loved by the staff, especially Kristen. I advertised that Bugsy nipped at a child though we didn't know the entire story so he had to be in a home without kids or cats. Bugsy waited patiently. Remember, he was a pittie – the most difficult breed to rehome and also THE MOST EXECUTED AT SHELTERS WITHOUT BEING GIVEN A CHANCE AT LIFE.

Two months....three months....nothing. Then I had a call from a friend who'd adopted from us over the past six years, always selecting elderly beaten down, rejected dogs. Once at Cary's home they would blossom, living the *"good life"* until their earthly journey was complete. Then Cary would call and ask for another. His last call led to Bugsy.

Interested I asked? "Yes," he promised, "as soon as I get back from vacation." When Bugsy and Cary met that was all Cary needed. And as for Bugsy, well he got a new name: TRIPOD. My heart burst with happiness because I knew Tripod finally was home – forever. When Tripod got a sister, Bonnie, he'd watch with maturity and patience from his "personal chair" as this new rescue misbehaved. When Bonnie finally settled in they became great buddies.

Then several years later I received a call with Cary's heartbreaking message: *"I am so sorry to have to inform you that our beloved Tripod lies near death at FloridaWild from an unknown medical condition. I am just devastated."*

My heart broke. I couldn't stop crying. Tripod had a perfect life and now it was ending after his long, frustrating search for permanence, acceptance and contentment. Thank goodness Kristen hugged and kissed him continually throughout the hours he was there, the amazing veterinarians doing all they could. But Tripod was exhausted and his dad made the sad decision.

I wasn't brave enough to go to FloridaWild to say good-bye. I also didn't want to interfere with Cary and his buddy at the end. They needed their alone time. FloridaWild has a special room, attractively decorated with large comfortable chairs and an oriental carpet, a statue of St. Francis looking down from the window ledge, a place where a family can be together at the end. They can stay there undisturbed as long as they need - both before and after.....

The next day I received the following message from Cary:

***"He left quietly and peacefully this afternoon.
The last I saw of him
he was running joyfully across the Rainbow Bridge
... on four strong legs."***