



TattleTails & Tidbits



Spring Farm CARES Animal & Nature Sanctuary Journal

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Coco - Mini-Donkey

Contributors:

- Bonnie Reynolds, SFC Pres/ Co-founder
- Dawn Hayman, SFC VP/Co-founder
- Christine Schneider, DVM cVMA, SFC Director of Animal Welfare
- Matt Perry, SFC Conservation Director

Welcome To Our New Publication!

We are pleased to introduce you to our latest endeavor to bring the animals and all of Spring Farm CARES right to you! We hope that you will enjoy this new journal, find inspiration, and share in the peace and joy that is Spring Farm CARES.

We aim to make this a bi-monthly journal filled with a variety of stories, articles, and photos from multiple contributors, including the animals. Topics will range from animal communication, news from the farm, health and behavioral articles from our on-staff veterinarian, the stories of miracles and hope that you have come to love from our books and newsletters, and stories from our nature sanctuary.

This will be available in electronic form only at this point. We will send it out to our email list, post it on our Facebook Page, and you will be able to find it on our website as well. It will be in PDF form so that you can download it, print it, and share it with others.

To learn more about Spring Farm CARES, to sign up for our email list, and to download a copy of any of our publications, go to www.springfarmcares.org

Miracles and Angels

by Bonnie Jones Reynolds



At Spring Farm CARES we believe in miracles and angels. Those who have been with us for a while know that very well. And we have good reasons for our beliefs. Spring Farm CARES itself is a miracle, having been shepherded and protected by angels every step of the way. We used to be amazed if we did not witness at least one miracle a day here at Spring Farm.

But the last couple of years have been strange. During those years the world, and Spring Farm, have been forced onto 'Pause.' We distanced, washed hands and doorknobs, masked, observed mandates, listened to one confusing report after another, and lived with the nagging fears that we were being incessantly directed to feel. Our doors were closed to all but employees and delivery people. The animals missed their visitors and the many caressing hands of volunteers. In short, we stopped living the lives that we were supposedly protecting.

And we stopped looking for miracles. Oh, miracles happened. Animals always manage to pull off miracles every once in a while, miracles apparent enough to get our wandering attention. But we stopped looking for them, stopped expecting them.

And we stopped asking the angels for help. Because there on the pause

button, in a world obsessed with fear of something that we were told was there but which we couldn't see, we forgot about the angels who we know are there but cannot always see. Sucked into the panic and frenzy around us, it didn't seem that even the angels could help us return to Life, and to being Spring Farm CARES again.

Well, on January 3rd, the angels finally said "Enough!" And I am here to tell you that 2022 is going to be a Year of Miracles! Of Openness! Of Joy! Of Freedom from fear! A year during which we are all going to have to dodge flights of angels all day long.

January 3rd was a Monday, the first mail day of 2022. And we began that day with one miracle that we certainly could not miss. Because in the mailbox was a fall-down-in-a-dead-faint bequest from a recently deceased friend of many years, named Gerry.

That woke us up. We observed that this bequest began a New Year, and we realized that the angels were signaling to us that, with this New Year, Spring Farm CARES would come alive again, put away fears, open again, share again, touch hearts again, in ways that the heart of our friend Gerry had been profoundly touched. We vowed to again keep watch each day for a miracle, and to talk non-stop to the angels.

But the moment you invite the angels, they just go bananas. A physical miracle was about to occur...a miracle so improbable that it could not be denied.

At two in the afternoon of Monday the 3rd, I drove to Clinton and to the grocery store. As I returned and turned into the driveway, I glanced over at our sign.

Sitting beside it was a cat carrier. 'What in the world?' I thought to myself. Had one of our employees set a cat carrier there for some reason? Then the horrible realization. "It can't be!" I cried. I hopped

out of the car and ran to the carrier. God! Yes! There was a cat in it. I cried out over the walkie talkie for people to meet me at the door of the hall, and I raced there with the ice-glazed carrier and its hopefully meowing contents.

Eager hands met us, warm blankets and heated towels were applied. Employees came from all directions to help, to exclaim and to marvel.

Because the cat—a female brown tiger about a year old, who we quickly named Gerry—seemed to be in good condition!

But how could that be? The fact that the carrier was glazed with ice meant that that carrier had been sitting there for quite some time. Whoever had left it probably thought that they were leaving it in a place where it would quickly be spotted, and the cat gotten to a warm place. Unfortunately, however, that driveway by the sign is seldom used. Had I not decided to go to the grocery store, the carrier would still be sitting there.

And, at that moment, the temperature was about ten degrees above zero. The preceding night's temperature had been about eight degrees above zero, and the day and night before that had been not much better. We were in the middle of the coldest days and nights of our winter so far, bitter cold, with an intermittent smattering of icy snow. There had not even been a blanket in the carrier. A dish of food was frozen solid. Surely that cat had been there in the cold for hours.

Dawn got onto the surveillance camera footage. And we were in for an even greater shock. I rescued Gerry at 3:15 pm on Monday, January 3. The surveillance footage showed what appeared to be a woman stopping on Route 12, jumping out and putting the carrier by the sign, then quickly driving away.

That had occurred at 5:20 pm on Saturday, January 1.

Gerry had been there in that carrier, in single digit temperatures, for 46 hours, in light and in darkness, and, in addition to the cold, right beside busy Route 12, with cars and trucks roaring past day and night throwing up slush.

What a terrifying, frozen Hell little Gerry had endured.

Yet, she was not even hypothermic. She was shivering, yes, and she had peed all over herself, probably repeatedly, and was wet all over. But no hypothermia. No sign of frost-bite. Her body was actually warm, except for her feet, and her temperature, which we took immediately, was 98.2. Just about normal.

On top of that, she was so composed, happy, friendly, not at all alarmed by the

noisy strangers who swarmed around her, poking, cuddling, and caressing.

It took me many hours to come to a realization of the enormity of all of this. Yes, we all kept saying, "It's a miracle that she survived." "It's a miracle that she's not hypothermic." "It's a miracle that she's so warm, and in such good shape."

Yes, definitely a miracle.

But it was more than a miracle. It was a sign. A sign from the angels.

Something had protected Gerry. During those frigid forty-six hours, something had surrounded her, and kept her warm, kept her calm, kept her hopes up. Gerry had been protected.

Had the protecting angel been our friend

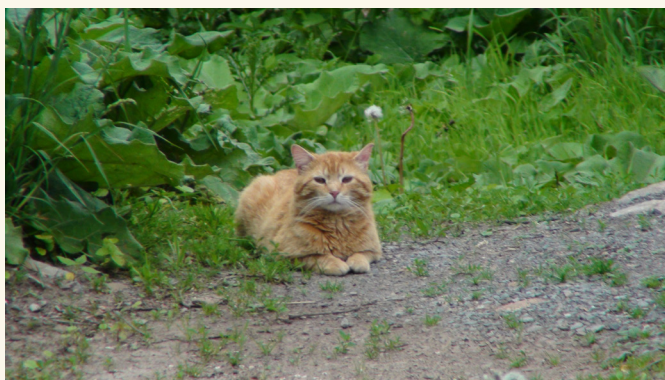
Gerry, whose life-changing experience had been with a cat adopted from Spring Farm CARES? Or, someone joked, had it been Betty White, who had become an angel only hours before, herself, and who then seized upon a chance to help an animal yet again?

Whoever or whatever, the angelic protection of little Gerry presented us with a major miracle to usher in the New Year – 2022 – during which year Spring Farm CARES, and, we think, the whole world, will remember why it is living, and put away the hysterical fears that have kept it, for two years, from living.

Thank you, angels. Thank you, Gerry, our old friend. Thank you, little Gerry, our warm and purring new friend.

What To Do If You Find An Abandoned Animal

by Christine Schneider DVM, cVMA



Whenever an injured or abandoned animal is found, our first instinct is to scoop him/her up and bring to safety. However, there are important steps that should be taken to allow the best outcome for the animal, their possible owner, and yourself.

First, if the animal is not in imminent danger, you should assess your surroundings to see if the animal wandered out of their yard, property, etc and ask anyone available if they recognize the pet. According to the ASPCA, 66% of lost pets are found in the direct vicinity of their home and 29% were found less than a mile away from their home.

If you cannot find the animal's home, you should try to safely contain the animal without causing injury to yourself or the animal. You should always call your local Animal Control Officer (ACO) to assist the situation, as they have the ability to transport and house the animal. If you are unable to reach your ACO but can safely catch the animal, check for any form of identification on a collar or tag and contact a local shelter or veterinarian to have the animal scanned for a microchip. If there is no identification or microchip, the animal should be brought to your local shelter or humane society as this gives the animal the best chance at being reunited with his or her owner.

Above all, please make your safety your top priority while trying to help a lost animal. More often than not, the animal is frightened and stressed and may react strongly to any attempts of capturing. Bites and scratches from lost pets are a serious health risk and may be dangerous for both yourself and the animal due to quarantine and public health laws.

How Do You Know If Your Cat Is In Pain?

by Christine Schneider, DVM, cVMA

Editors Note:

Cats are very good at hiding discomfort and illnesses. This is a natural survival instinct and they are very good at it. Here at Spring Farm we use many modalities to help our aging animal population. Along with western medicine, Dr. Christine offers our animals laser treatments and acupuncture. Proper pain management is a key component in a good quality of life. Dr. Christine talks about Degenerative Joint Disease in cats and how to spot it.

Degenerative joint disease (DJD), also commonly called osteoarthritis, is the irreversible damage of the protective surface (articular cartilage) within joints that can cause pain and discomfort. Recent studies have shown that approximately 90% of cats over the age of 10 have radiographic changes consistent with DJD. Due to the stoic nature of cats, some of the symptoms of DJD may be very subtle to spot at home and may be difficult for your veterinarian to assess while in the clinic for an exam. Cats with degenerative joint disease will often hesitate before jumping on or off of a high surface, slow down and take periodic breaks while playing or climbing up/down stairs, or have changes in their personality and social interactions. (I would recommend video recording any abnormal symptoms you see at home to show your veterinarian as cats will often disguise pain or abnormalities during an exam as a defense mechanism.)

While DJD is irreversible, the goals of treatments are to decrease pain and inflammation and improve the quality of your cat's life. One of the first (and most effective) recommendations is to modify your cat's environment. This can be as easy as adding steps to their most favorite perching spot so they no longer need to jump up or down. You may also want to consider purchasing a litterbox that has very low sides; older cats with DJD will begin to inappropriately urinate or defecate outside of the litterbox when it becomes too painful for them to step over the high ledges of the litterbox. It is also incredibly important to ensure your cat is not overweight as the excess pounds will cause additional stress on your cat's



already painful joints. Glucosamine/chondroitin supplements can be extremely beneficial for improving joint health and maintaining fluidity within the joints. There are also several different types of prescription pain medications that your veterinarian may prescribe to help your cat feel more comfortable. (Please don't ever give any human or OTC pain medication to your cat as they may be toxic and fatal!) Rehabilitation methods, including stem cells, acupuncture, and laser therapy, are also effective methods at controlling pain and inflammation with minimal side effects.

Have a Cat with Litterbox Issues?

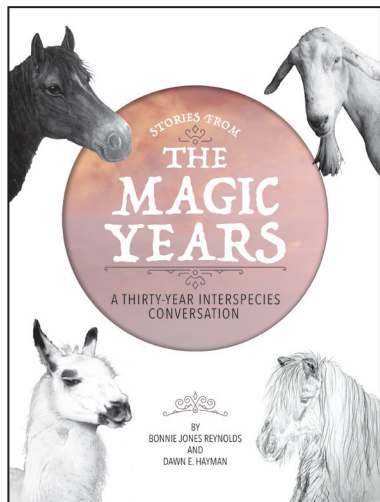
by Dawn Hayman

In my experience as an animal communicator, I learned from cats that the most common reason cats had litterbox issues was due to discomfort and pain. Many times the boxes were located in places (such as the basement of a home) where aging cats had problems getting up and down the stairs. Litterbox placement and the type of litterbox can be crucial to successful use of the litterbox. Many times we don't understand that cats have a physical issue for which we need to make accommodations.

I commonly heard from clients, "she always used the box for years without fail, until all of a sudden out of nowhere she started going in other places around the house." Frequently these issues don't come from "out of nowhere" but it is just that we are not seeing and understanding the problem.

Around the Farm

What's New?



The Magic Years

The Magic Years, celebrating our 30th anniversary, has been getting 5-star reviews. You can buy it on Amazon, or read it on Kindle, Smashwords, or soon on Nook. It's 484 pages with 345 photos. Enjoy!



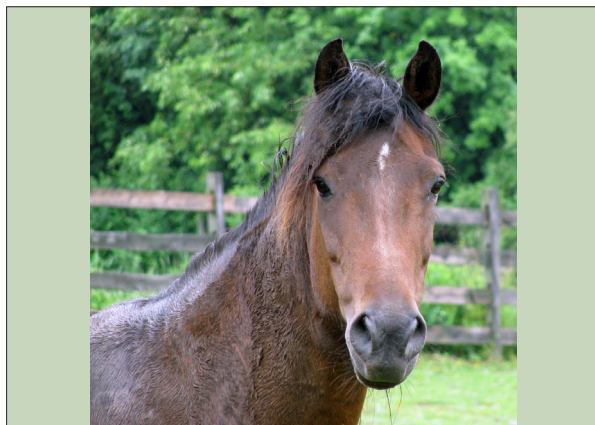
Our New Learning Center Will Soon Be Completed!

Construction continues on our new Learning Center – a conference room for in-person workshops and meetings as well as technology for hosting remote events. We are very excited to have this project nearing completion. We are planning to host in-person workshops again this year and will be releasing dates soon. This has been a major project for us with many setbacks at the beginning. However, it has now all come together and we can't wait to welcome you to this new space on the farm.



Re-Opening Soon!!!

Due to COVID, we have been closed to the public for 2 years. We will be re-opening in some fashion in 2022, hosting in-person workshops and giving tours. Watch for details!



In Memory of Belle

On Christmas Eve, we said good-bye to Belle, the last of our original horses. She was 31, and lived here for 28 years. She will be greatly missed. But we know that the Spring Farm Ghost Brigade was there to welcome her. With them, she now watches over our farm.



Lucy Turns 25!

Lucy Goose turns 25 years old this year. That is very old for a goose! Lucy has been with us since she was 19. We treasure her energy and wisdom and obvious love of life.

The Spring Farm Beavers & The Unexpected Visitor

by Matt Perry



For over two decades we have been fortunate to have an active beaver colony at the Spring Farm CARES' Nature Sanctuary. During that time, we've learned a lot about beavers and the habitat they create. We have also gotten to know each of our beavers as individuals and as the unique beings they are. Tippy and GenLo, the colony's current Matriarch and Patriarch (respectively) are the grandchildren of Morton and Sarah, the first beaver pair to inhabit the Sanctuary. Each year, the beaver parents produce a litter of kits which, following a two-year apprenticeship, become independent wetland engineers and disperse from the colony. Beavers are known as a keystone species since the wetland habitat they create is critical to the survival of so many other species. Birds, turtles, amphibians, and many mammal species are able to inhabit the Sanctuary thanks to the work of our industrious beavers. In the fall of 2021, our beaver habitat hosted a couple of particularly interesting visitors – including one we won't soon forget.

In mid-October, the foliage around the beaver ponds reached peak fall color. Lemon yellow, brilliant orange, and

scarlet leaves adorned the trees of the little valley to the west. At the same time, the amount of precipitation had been increasing. Along with it came the threat of flooding. The beaver dams were tested by the excess of water, but fortunately, they were not stressed to the breaking point. During this period, the beavers were coming out of their lodge in the mornings. This was a little unusual for animals more apt to be active in the late afternoon and overnight hours. Of course, the early emergence time was better for our schedules. It made it easier to monitor the colony and to provide them with food tributes – something we had been doing for years to help encourage them to remain on the property. On October 18th, GenLo emerged from one of the lower ponds where he had been working. He climbed over the dam and plunged into Julia's Pond. He then swam over to join the rest of the beaver work crew which were enjoying a short siesta. Tippy walked out of the water and waddled up to the bench where I was sitting. She stood up on her hind legs and happily accepted a sweet potato from me. A young beaver kit was in line right behind her. He also took a potato. All seemed normal at the pond, but that

was about to change.

When I stopped back a couple of hours later, I saw what I thought was a yearling beaver out by the main food cache. Although not unprecedented, late morning was an odd time for a beaver to still be out. As it happened, it was a river otter and not a beaver. Indeed, it was the first of its kind to be confirmed on the property. It's remarkable how much otters resemble beavers, especially when seen at a distance. The color of their fur, their body length, and their streamlined shape is all decidedly beaver-esque. However, the otter is a member of the weasel family, and beavers are rodents. Any resemblance between the two species is due to convergent evolution. Their physiologies were sculpted in similar ways as they pursued similar lifestyles in identical environs.

As the otter investigated the beavers' food store (called a "food cache"), one great difference between the two species became clear; the otter had no interest in eating tree bark or leaves as beavers do. Instead, he was seeking out fish hiding in the tangle of branches that made up the cache. Otters are carnivores and opportunists. It's likely that he would have accepted a small muskrat or turtle if one presented itself. Otters often coexist with beavers in beaver-made ponds – sometimes even raising their own families in abandoned beaver lodges. Otters generally don't prey upon beavers, but young beaver kits can be in jeopardy in areas where otters are active. Earlier that morning, none of the beavers I saw had behaved in an anxious manner. Most probably, this meant the otter had only just arrived on the scene. Had he been there earlier, undoubtedly, I would have encountered a more wary beaver colony. At the very least I would have heard some tail slapping,



which is the beavers' standard alarm call. As it was, I could hear the beavers casually conversing inside the lodge, and I'm certain the otter heard them too.

After his thorough exploration of Julia's Pond, the otter went over the dam and disappeared downstream. In the early afternoon, he was encountered again, this time at one of the older beaver ponds. There he exhibited similar investigative behavior. The resident ducks did not appreciate his presence. All maintained a state of high alert and kept out of the water. Whenever he would swim near them, the ducks would flush into flight, or they would move further up onto shore. The otter did a lot of diving as well as some curious underwater circling. It reminded me of what beavers do when they dredge a channel. Of course, the otter's aim was to flush fish out of hiding. He did manage to catch a few minnows using that method. Upon surfacing, he was seen munching on them. As he fed, I was able to get a look at his teeth which all appeared well-pointed and specialized for eating flesh. When he was underwater, a trail of bubbles gave away his location. When he would resurface, he popped up like a periscope, looked around, and quickly rolled headfirst back into the water. He showed a keen interest in the old beaver lodge and dove in and around it at least a dozen times. Was he hunting for the young muskrats

that lived there? Some of the muskrats were out and feeding on shore by the dam. They weren't behaving in their typical carefree manner. They knew that something wasn't right. They began taking circuitous routes back to the lodge. Later in the afternoon the otter was back in Julia's Pond. Once again, he was exploring the habitat and seeking out fish.

On the morning of the 19th, the beavers filed out of the lodge to get their treats as normal. GenLo couldn't find the sunken potato that I tossed to him, so I threw him a replacement. All the other beavers including Tippy took their treats from my hand or from my trusty ski pole. No one was acting like you'd expect when a large, predatory, water-weasel was active in the territory. Right before the beavers emerged, I had seen the otter swimming in the east section of the pond. At one point he got on top of the food cache. This didn't escape the notice of GenLo, who by then had finished eating and had begun work on the dam. His reaction was instantaneous. He made a direct course for the otter, slapping his tail on the water as he launched. With GenLo barreling towards him, the alarmed otter did a double take, spun around, and quickly withdrew to the east. Half swimming and half running, GenLo scrambled over the cache and kept in hot pursuit. Beaver hyperdrive is something I rarely see. He chased the

otter to the northeast and presumably out of the pond. It's important to note that an adult river otter weighs about eighteen pounds. Compare that to an adult beaver like GenLo, that weighs well over sixty pounds. Beavers are known as gentle giants, but when they need to, they can be intimidating. After all, a beaver possesses an arsenal of long claws and supersized teeth; formidable weapons if they choose to deploy them. After the otter was gone, GenLo and one of the yearlings spent time swimming back and forth and patrolling the east side of the pond. They occasionally slapped their tails as a warning to the predator not to come back.

Directly following the otter encounter, the beavers acted normally and seemed untroubled. Later that same morning, I went back down to the old main pond and, sure enough, the otter was there. Once again, he was swimming around the pond and trying to scare up fish. He also entered the lodge several times, likely upsetting the poor muskrats inside. Two Great Blue Herons also seemed less than enthused about the otter's presence. Both left the water – one perching briefly in the high branches of a tall dead tree. From her high vantage, the heron issued a few disapproving shrieks before flying off. Shortly after that, the otter was gone. We didn't see him again for the balance of the season. Likely, he had recently dispersed from his own family and was looking for a new territory where he could set up housekeeping and spend the winter.

With beavers and their habitat, we've come to expect the unexpected. Whether it involves a new animal, or a novel plant species discovered in a silted-up beaver meadow, it's all worthy of our attention and appreciation. The beavers remain an integral part of our ongoing habitat restoration projects at the Nature Sanctuary, and we hope they will continue to be with us for a long time to come.



Question and Answer with Animal Communicator Dawn Hayman

Q: What are some things we should or shouldn't do if we have adopted rescued animals who have been through trauma?

A: It is important to understand that animals, just like humans, go through trauma each in their own way. No two animals or people will process things the same way. But while there are many similarities between animals and humans on how we survive trauma, there are also some significant differences. There are things that we as animal caretakers can do to help animals through their healing process. And there are things we can also avoid doing, that I see humans do a lot.

First, let's talk about the differences between humans and animals that I have noted over the years. Animals are hardwired to hide their trauma as a survival mechanism (although many would argue that humans are too). I have seen many animals who had more traumatic injuries (both physically and psychologically) than they ever let on to. Having said that though, I can tell you one key difference that I notice about animals. While animals experience trauma in the same way that we humans do, they may process trauma much differently. Animals are great at living in the present moment. When an animal is safe and out of the trauma, they accept that they are safe and start the healing process a lot quicker than humans tend to do in the same circumstances. Humans tend to dwell more on what happened or even what could have happened (even when it didn't) than animals do. Thus, it tends to take a lot longer for humans to address their trauma and allow the healing. Animals much more readily accept the fact that they are safe now and willingly move on with that new information.

There are things that we can do to help them. And one of those is actually something we can stop doing. There is a strong tendency for us as "rescuers" of animals with traumatic pasts to identify and define them by their tragedy.

Do You Have A Question You'd Like To Ask Dawn?

You can submit your questions for consideration for future issues by emailing Dawn@springfarmcares.org. Please type "Ask Dawn" in the subject line. Please keep your questions to general topics regarding animal communication and how animals view the world etc. Dawn will not be able to answer specific questions that would be more suited for a consultation with a communicator.

While Dawn is focused now on teaching workshops, writing, and tending to Spring Farm CARES, she is no longer available for private consultations.

Please visit www.springfarmcares.org for details on workshops

"This is Teddy, he is my starvation case," one woman told me as she introduced me to her very much over weight Labrador Retriever. Teddy looked at me with a little gleam in his eye. "Don't tell her I'm ok now. There are lots of extra treats involved." I laughed out loud as this was such a typical Lab answer.

While that story illustrates the comical side, there's another issue to think about. When we define our animals by their traumas, we keep those traumas alive within them. It can become an even more embedded part of who they are. The trauma was something that happened to them at one time in their life, but now they are safe and loved with you. They no longer need to carry the energy of being the "starvation case" or the "abused animal I rescued." Their trauma is not who they are, it was just something that happened to them. We need to acknowledge that and let them heal.

In the case of Teddy above, if you wanted to say something about his past, it would be better to say something like, "This is my dog Teddy. I got him after he went through some hard times, but look at him now! Doesn't he look great now and so happy!"