



TattleTails & Tidbits



Spring Farm CARES Animal & Nature Sanctuary Journal

Volume 1, Issue 3 - May/June 2022

In This Issue:

- Page 2.** Our Little Brother Merlin
- Page 3.** Wild Animal Orphans: What Should You Do?
- Page 4.** Peaceful Passings
- Page 6.** A Look At Hospice & Palliative Care
- Page 7.** Ask Dawn
- Page 8.** Around The Farm



Ginny and Nell enjoying a spring day

Contributors:

- Bonnie Reynolds, SFC Pres/Co-founder
- Dawn Hayman, SFC VP/Co-founder
- Christine Schneider, DVM cVMA, SFC Director of Animal Welfare
- Julia Sparks, Nature Sanctuary Assistant Director

CONNECT WITH US:

3364 State Route 12,
Clinton, NY 13323
(315) 737-9339
office@springfarmcares.org

Visit our Website and Blog:
www.springfarmcares.org

Follow us on Facebook:
www.facebook.com/springfarmcares

Spring: A New Beginning

There is a rebirth that happens in spring among all of life. It is a reawakening. The dawning of a new day. The realization that light is returning. The sun is feeling warmer. The long dark nights are lessening. It is a time for planting seeds and filling them with the intentions of what we hope they will become later in the season. It is a time to reconnect with the bounties of our planet. It is a sacred time of birth in nature.

As Spring Farm CARES comes out of two years of being closed to the public, spring has an even deeper meaning. A time to renew connections. A time to remember the greater mission of why we are here. The animals beakon us to come back out of the house and join with them in celebration. Grass is coming! Days to enjoy standing in the sun are here. But most of all, people are coming again! We will reunite with old friends and welcome the chance to meet new friends as well.

We are now starting to slowly reopen to visitors. See our website for details. We have missed you. We cannot wait to see you again!

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

Spring Farm CARES is a 501(c)3 Not-for-Profit Organization EIN: 16-1388835

Our Little Brother Merlin

by Bonnie Reynolds

Merlin arrived in 1994, a few months before my mother's death. He was twelve then. Now, at forty, he is the only member of our animal family who knew and can remember "Deanie." He used to sit beside her, whistling little tunes of his own devising, and saying over and over, "Hello! How are you?" He actually, we had been warned, had a more extensive vocabulary. He had been rescued from an abusive alcoholic and had learned every cuss- and off-color word in the book. "So be careful what you say in front of him," we were warned. "Don't remind him."

Since our habitual converse is fairly refined, he never did get reminded. In his 28 years with us, he contented himself with whistling, clicking, mimicking the voices of those who he takes a special shine to, and sound effects...like the sound of someone walking around in another room in sneakers...or startling us through the roof with the screech of a smoke detector going off.

For many years, he shared a room in the farm house where Bonnie lives, with a variety of other animals—Phoebe the Duck and Milky the Hen, rabbits, and various cats and kittens. During the day, his cage was always open. He could visit with the others as he wished, but he particularly doted on the cats. About ten years ago, we moved him up to our small animal facility. There he got to interact with a lot more people, still had his cats, and also a cockatiel named Marty who is convinced that Merlin is God.

Throughout these years, our only sadness in regard to our little brother has been that we couldn't pet him. He had been wild-caught, and his method of showing affection was to bite. Really bite. I developed a nightly "kissy" routine with him, he and I smooching kisses to one another as he offered his head and I gingerly reached through the bars of his cage to stroke his bill and the top of his head, withdrawing rapidly as he went to bite me. He craved the touch. Oh, how he wanted to be touched. But I had to keep my fingers.



Merlin eating an orange slice



Merlin and cat friend Daisy

Up until just a few months ago, he was cage-free most of the time. But then we noticed that he was becoming disoriented, confused and frightened when he was out. He was rapidly developing cataracts. Then he went blind. Were he younger, and did he not have a serious heart condition, we would go for a surgical removal of the cataracts. As it is, he must be confined to his cage. But he feels safe there. He has lots of paper and cardboard to tear up each day, multiple hanging toys with bells that he loves to ring, and, right beside him, is the adoring Marty, chatting in "bird" and serenading.

He can also enjoy more of the touch that he craves. Being blind, he can no longer take aim to bite! It is thus safe to reach right into the cage and stroke his beak and head while receiving bites that have become mere nibbles.

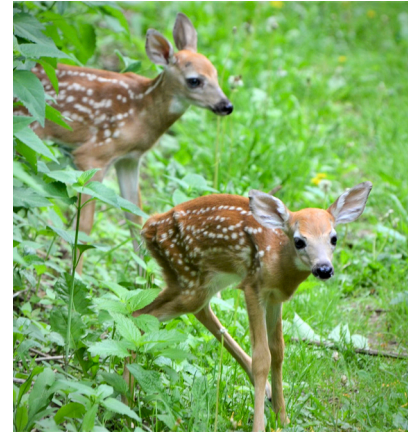
It's heartbreaking to know that he will spend his remaining years locked up. Selfishly, though, our fingers are crossed for many more of those years. He's such a dear little brother. We can't imagine being without him. So we'll make up for his lack of freedom with a lot of "kissy" sessions, and, primarily, with that thing that all living creatures must have, or die...loving touch.

Wild Animal Orphans: What Should You Do?

by Julia Sparks

Baby season is upon us! That means shelters see an increase in puppies or kittens and, likewise, wildlife rehabilitators see a boom in just about everything, from baby birds to baby bunnies. Many of these babies brought into rehabilitation are accidental “kidnappings,” a term for well-intentioned people ‘rescuing’ babies away from their parents. If you are one of the lucky humans to find a not-so-lucky baby wild animal this year, there are some key points to keep in mind to make sure you don’t become a kidnapper:

1. Call a licensed wildlife rehabilitator for advice. Each situation is unique!
2. Be prepared to put an UNINJURED baby back where you found it.
3. If the baby IS INJURED or you have not succeeded in re-nesting with the wildlife rehabilitator’s advice, the baby should be brought in to a rehabilitator.
4. In the meantime, keep the baby in a box placed halfway over a heating pad set to low. Only offer food or Pedialyte as directed by a wildlife rehabilitator.



If any wild animal has been caught by a cat, it needs to be taken to a rehabilitator as soon as possible for antibiotics. Even from the smallest scratch, the bacteria in a cat’s mouth can be fatal to an animal within 12-24 hours without treatment.

Deer: If you find an uninjured fawn, leave it where it is! Mother deer will go out foraging and leave their babies tucked out of sight from predators for hours at a time. Check back the next day to see if the mother has come back and taken her baby away.



Rabbits: If you find uninjured baby rabbits, leave them where they are. Mother rabbits will typically only visit their nest (a small depression in the ground) twice per day, at dawn and dusk to feed them. You will likely never see the mom taking care of them.

Squirrels: It is not uncommon for baby squirrels to fall from their nests, particularly after storms. If the squirrel is uninjured, it is best to try to place it high up where the mother can locate it. You can try playing baby squirrel calls out loud on your phone which may help attract the mother.

Birds: Figuring out what to do for baby birds can be a little tricky. Nestling birds, with no adult/flight feathers, should be put back in the nest or placed high up in a makeshift nest. If the bird has flight feathers and is hopping around on the ground, that suggests it may be a fledgling. Fledglings learn to fly from the ground up while their parents watch over and feed them. It is best to leave them there and to bring in your outside cats. You can then observe the bird from a distance to see if the parents arrive to feed the baby.



DISCLAIMER: Spring Farm CARES is NOT licensed to take in wildlife. Please, contact a licensed wildlife rehabilitator if you need assistance. Please, do not attempt to raise a baby wild animal on your own. Not only is it difficult, it is also illegal in New York to raise most wild animal species. Visit the DEC website to find a rehabber near you: www.dec.ny.gov/animals/83977.html

Peaceful Passings

by Dawn Hayman

Over the past 35 years, as both co-founder of Spring Farm CARES and a professional animal communicator, I have had a lot of experience sitting with and communicating with animals as they passed from the physical realm into Spirit. As animal caretakers, it is something we all dread the most. No matter how long our beloved animal friends are with us, it never really seems to be enough does it?

Death and grief are topics we don't like to talk about as humans. As a result, we end up not knowing much about something that is a natural part of life, or worse yet, fearing it. All of us will face death, our own, our loved ones, and our animals – which for many people is the hardest of all. Animals love us unconditionally and they fill our hearts with joy and love and security. We can count on them. We trust them with the deepest parts of our hearts. And saying good-bye is so incredibly difficult.

“All living things are born knowing how to die. It is not a secret. No one holds the secret key. It is human to think that way I guess. But it is not something we (animals) worry about.” A little pony named Sugar explained this to me 30 years ago. All living things are born knowing how to die. Those words rang so true and over the years I see that play out in front of me over and over again.

There is a sacredness and joy in the moment a soul let's go of a body and moves into Spirit. I've seen and felt that so many times – both with animals and humans. When you allow yourself to be present in that moment, it is so clear to feel it. It is our own grief that gets in the way of feeling that eternal connection with our loved ones who have passed. Grief is also natural. It is also like a passing cloud that temporarily blocks the light of knowing and feeling our eternal heart connections with those we love. It is an illusion that they are gone forever and we can't feel them. The truth is that they are still there connected to our hearts just as they were when they were in a body.



Giselle

Death most often is very peaceful to the being who is departing. In hospice care with our animals, it is necessary to separate out how things look to us from how things actually feel and are being experienced by the animal preparing to pass. With animals we have the gift of euthanasia to help them. But there is also still a place for a natural death as well. At Spring Farm CARES, we approach each of these individually. Every single process is unique to that individual animal. We listen to them. And we try to separate out what it is that animal is actually experiencing and feeling as opposed to what we humans are afraid that they will experience. There will be a death process for that animal regardless if it is a natural death or a euthanasia. The process will look different to us but there is still a process going on even when we cannot see it.

Giselle's story is a perfect example. Giselle is a senior cat who has been declining in condition for some time. Mostly a natural part of aging. Recently she developed a head tilt and her caretakers noticed she was having trouble breathing through her nose. Our veterinarian Dr. Christine examined her. Her lungs were clear. It was all an upper airway issue. Giselle sounded awful when she breathed. Like a very loud and exaggerated snoring. However, her behavior didn't change at all. She was joyful and bright and ran up to visitors meowing and asking for attention or food. She was eating with enthusiasm. She was snuggling with her friends as usual. Clearly, Giselle was happy.

It was thought that Giselle most likely had a mass or a polyp in her ear canal or sinus. If it was a polyp, there

was a chance it could be removed. But surgery was very risky for Giselle. Her age and body condition were not conducive to surgery. But we could see that she was not ready to give up. She wanted to try. Understanding the dangers and concerns, we went ahead and had her sedated so that we could see what was going on. As it turns out, Giselle had a tumor behind her soft palette and nothing more could be done for her. We had a deal with her. She was not ready to go yet. We opted to let her wake up and bring her home. She handled the sedation surprisingly very well. She is strong. But she is also still living her life that she came to live. And Giselle let us know that she was still enjoying every second of that. It wasn't her time to leave just yet.

As of the writing of this article, Giselle is still eating and loving her way through her days. We stay in continual communication with her. She will let us know when she wants help to pass. But she is very clear with us that she still has more to do. Spending even five minutes with her right now, we can easily feel her joy. We have to look past the snoring sound she makes when she is lying down. It is hard to watch that and not think she could be struggling. But she is very clear with us that she is not. And we may not understand what that soul is still getting from this experience. But it is incredibly obvious that she is enjoying every minute of being alive in that body. We will honor her journey and her timing. Clearly, she is not afraid. She is not suffering. And she is also shining a light so bright and leaving us all with the gift of that light before she chooses to leave. That is the gift that hospice care offers to both the dying and to their loved ones. It is one way we can honor the truth that we are all born knowing how to die.

2022 Workshops with Dawn

Communicating with Animals and Nature An Introduction to Animal Communication

All of us have the innate ability to communicate with all of the rest of life. It is so natural for us that we often overlook what information we receive. But we can be taught and reminded how to listen.

In this workshop, you will start to recognize how you receive communications from your animals and start to build the skills needed to practice and get stronger at this communication after you leave the workshop. This workshop will provide you with insight and inspiration and will start the basics needed to develop your communication skills. In fact, many people have found that their communication skills with people improved after taking this workshop as well.

2022 Dates: June 4-5, July 16-17, October 8-9

**Contact our office for more information:
office@springfarmcares.org**

Embracing Spirit/Embracing Life A Conversation on Life and Death

Death is often seen as a great unknown – a mystery. Many of us go through life in fear of this supposed great unknown. Fear creates blockages in both Life and Death and living and dying. When we are living and breathing from our hearts, fear subsides, and truth and love come to the forefront of our experiences. Embracing Death and the journey into Spirit is truly the greatest journey of our Life. Death is not the absence of Life but is a vibrant part of Life.

Animals offer a completely different viewpoint on Death. I will draw on thousands of experiences of working with animals as they transitioned into Spirit and share with you what they have shared with me - a look into the process of dying without the heavy layer of fear that often accompanies the human experience.

2022 Dates: June 25-26 (waiting list), August 20-21 (waiting list)

**Contact our office for more information:
office@springfarmcares.org**

A Look At Hospice & Palliative Care

by Christine Schneider, DVM cVMA



Georgie is 21 yrs. old and has diabetes. He is continually monitored and supported. He is doing great for his age!

Despite caring for all of the animal residents at Spring Farm CARES throughout their entire existence here on the farm, some of the most critical and intense care they receive is at the end of their lives. Hospice and palliative care for our animals with terminal illnesses helps to allow a comfortable end-of-life stage and allows them to pass with dignity. We believe that evaluating each animal on a case-by-case basis is warranted to determine whether humane euthanasia is needed to help with their transition versus allowing a naturally-assisted death.

Veterinary medicine has made significant advancements in the past decade in terms of analgesia (pain control) and treatments of potentially life-threatening illnesses. Previously, euthanasia was an immediate recommendation when cancer or other life-threatening diseases were diagnosed. However, with palliative medicine, your veterinarian can help formulate a care plan that typically involves at home care and the involvement of family members as the caretakers. Palliative care focuses on improving a patient's quality of life after a diagnosis of a disease, whether that disease is terminal or not. Hospice care addresses the physical, emotional, and social needs of a patient after receiving a terminal diagnosis and is carried out until the end of the patient's life. Multi-modal pain management, dietary modifications, herbal therapies, and rehabilitation therapies (acupuncture, laser therapy, etc.) can help mitigate the symptoms of your pet's disease.

When a resident at Spring Farm is diagnosed with a terminal condition, we set up a care plan that helps alleviate any potential discomfort, provides supportive care, and allows the resident to continue with their normal daily activities and interactions as much as possible. For example, one of our old cats suffers from arthritis but also has advanced kidney failure, which affects her ability to receive certain types of pain medications. We administer subcutaneous fluids multiple times a week to maintain hydration, she receives supplements and laser therapy for her arthritis, and she is given a special kidney diet to help with kidney function. When her time comes for her to transition, her comfort level is assessed continuously and closely to determine if we are able to allow a naturally-assisted death (where pain medications are administered to provide comfort but the patient is allowed to pass naturally) or if humane euthanasia is warranted.



Whisper is 30 yrs. old with a prior leg injury that has left her permanently lame. Her pain control meds are constantly reviewed for her quality of life.



Geriatric patients, especially those with concurrent medication conditions, can be difficult to care for in their last stages of life. While palliative and hospice care is not meant to provide a cure for a disease for which your pet has been diagnosed, it does allow for additional treatments to be given that provide comfort and extend the quality time you have with your pet before they pass.

Left: Romeo is a senior rabbit with arthritis. He is kept comfortable with a pain management protocol tailored specifically for him.



Question and Answer with Animal Communicator Dawn Hayman



Q: Do animals have a sense of humor?

A: Just like humans, some animals have a better sense of humor than others. Some are jokesters and pranksters and others are more dignified and feel that sort of behavior would be beneath them. Animals have all different types of personalities just as humans do.

I have watched animals do very elaborate and well-thought-out pranks and jokes both on one another and on me. One summer day many years ago, I was looking for seven of our horses who were out in a large pasture with lots of hills and valleys and trees. It was time for them to come in and usually when I called them, they would come running. But on this day, not a single one of them came. I started to go look for them and as I walked up one long valley back into this 20-acre pasture, I grew very concerned when I couldn't find them. I knew their favorite grazing places. After a few minutes, my concern grew into panic as I was sure they must have gotten out of the fence up in the back of the pasture. I literally ran all the way to the back. The fencing was all intact. So where were they? I was calling and calling for them. Nothing. No response, no head popping up over a hill to say, "Hey, no worries, we're over here." No sign of any of the horses. I knew I had to run back to the barn and ask for help. Now, I was in a full blown panic. Seven of our horses were missing. I decided to take a shortcut back to the barn and headed down a trail that came out on the other side of the pasture. There was a small apple orchard there. But it wasn't apple season so I didn't expect to find our horses chowing down on apples. I looked anyway. Nope, no horses. As I came to the top of a back hill that overlooked the entire front of the pasture, at first I confirmed what I feared. No horses. But then, something caught my eye. The flip of a tail behind a large bush.

Wait just a minute here. My fear quickly began to turn to anger. They didn't expect me to have circled back and come up behind them. They knew my routine and pattern as well as I knew theirs. I had accidentally fooled them. There they all were! All seven of them, each craftily positioned behind bushes and trees watching that trail where I had just torn up looking for them and calling them. I could just hear them talking to one another. "Shhhhhh, don't move. She doesn't see us." They just thought that was the greatest prank in the world. But they didn't see me coming up behind them. I snuck up just a little closer before I yelled, "AHA, gotcha!" With great glee they all galloped back to the barn. It took me a bit longer to battle my way through the brush to get back to the trail and then to the barn where they all calmly stood as if they had been waiting for me there the whole time.

It wasn't the first time they pranked me, and it wouldn't be the last either. Clearly, it took collaboration, timing, and the spirit of fun to try to get me to stop taking life too seriously.

Yes, animals have a sense of humor.

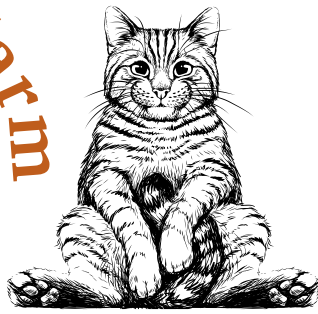
Do You Have A Question You'd Like To Ask Dawn?

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.

Around the Farm

What's New?



Spring Has Sprung!



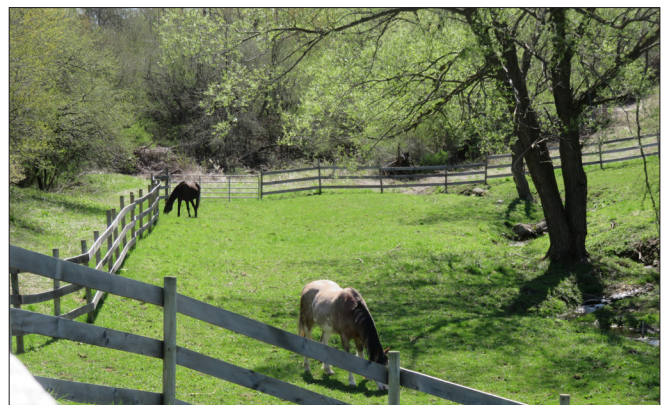
Bayberry Grazing



Horses Enjoying Pasture Time



Overlooking the Farm



Jose and Shawnee



A Look at Several Paddocks



Jose