



TattleTails & Tidbits



Spring Farm CARES Animal & Nature Sanctuary Journal

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In This Issue:

- Page 2.** The Humble Master Teachers
- Page 3.** A Lesson From The Animals
- Page 4.** How Do We Know When It's Time To Say Good-Bye?
- Page 5.** Miracles In The Middle Of The Road
- Page 6.** Rescuing Monarch Butterflies
- Page 7.** Animals And Intelligence
- Page 8.** What's New Around The Farm

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Summer Time

The dog days of summer have arrived. Around the farm it is a time of putting in hay for the horses, donkeys, sheep, goats and pigs to live on for the year ahead. It's a time of mowing and fence repair and catching up on all of the outdoor maintenance that needs to be done before winter. We humans are running from one thing to the next and feeling like it's hard to keep up.

The animals however are spending their days enjoying the warmth and sun. Horses, sheep, goats, and pigs are out grazing and, in the case of the pigs, wallowing in the creek. The cats are enjoying their enclosed porches where they can spend time out in the fresh air and sleeping in the sun. The real hot days are more lazy days for them where they seem to adapt way better than us humans.

Nature is producing an abundance of food and things are rapidly growing. Gardens are bearing the early summer vegetables and flowers are in bloom everywhere. It is a time to be grateful for all that we have around us. The Earth gives us so many gifts, and it is a great opportunity for us to show her our gratitude.

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

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The Humble Master Teachers

by Dawn E. Hayman



Deeteza was one of our first master teachers who touched the hearts of many visitors. She was a major influence on my own personal development.

In many of our articles and books we talk about learning from the “master teachers” of Spring Farm CARES. Over the years, we have been blessed with many incredible beings who have taught us much with their wisdom and deep compassion. But what do we mean by “master teacher?”

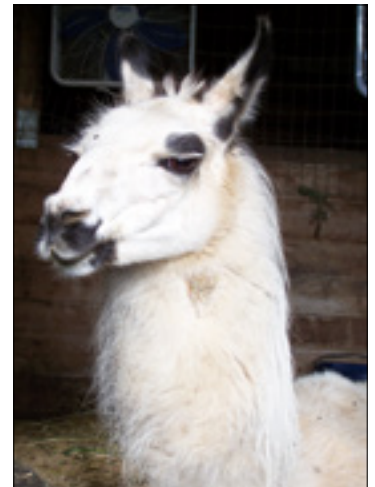
Many times I’ve been asked how to tell if an animal is a master teacher or not. I’ve also been asked if I could find a master animal for someone. This recently came up again after a workshop participant asked if a particular cat here at Spring Farm ever told me that he was a master teacher. This is a trap that we humans frequently fall into. And I’d like to explain from the animals’ perspective how they view this.

First, when we are talking about master teachers, we are simply referring to a being whose very heart and life brought great healing and wisdom to us. We are not suggesting that they have achieved some sort of higher

standing or title among the animal kingdom. We humans put great emphasis on intelligence and accomplishment in our lives. We often rank people in a hierarchy of intelligence. To be a “master” of anything implies they are at the top of their hierarchy. But too often we humans also seem to infer that these human masters have all of the answers and hold all of the wisdom without question.

A true master of anything is humble. He/she is as much a student as they are a teacher. Always understanding that anyone and anything can teach us something. Understanding that there are always more questions with answers leading to even more questions. A master is willing to share their wisdom through the depth of their compassion and love for all others. A master doesn’t judge others or see others as “less than” him/herself. A master shares selflessly and listens with mindfulness and a heart full of compassion. She/he does not walk around saying, “I am a Master!” A master walks with humbleness and humility and an understanding that in every moment there is something to learn.

I have found this to be the case among the animals as well. Generally, when we are referring to master teachers at Spring Farm, we are often doing so after they have departed into Spirit. It is a form of respect and understanding and acknowledgment for the depth of the being we had the privilege to learn from and love. But it is not a designation of being greater than or higher than any other animal here. This is a very important distinction. True masters, never sees themselves as greater than any other. Their love and compassion is equal to all. When masters see people being unkind to animals, for example, they feel compassion for those animals, but equally they feel compassion for the humans who are hurting so badly and are in such turmoil that they have forgotten their own light. That is the gift of the masters.



Gulliver is another master teacher who taught many students and touched a lot of lives with his wisdom. He was a big influence and guide for encouraging me to teach workshops.

So, no, I have never had an animal tell me, “I am a master teacher.” But I have experienced the wisdom and deep compassion that these master teachers have shared and my life is all the richer for having been blessed by their presence and relationships.

A Lesson From The Animals

by Dawn E. Hayman

From the day we conceptualized the creation of Spring Farm CARES, we were already certain that the animals were going to teach us what we needed to learn as we moved ahead. Our job was to listen and learn from them. And that is exactly what we have been doing for the past 30 years. The running of this sanctuary has meant entering a continual conversation, or many conversations simultaneously, with the very beings whose lives are in our hands. It may seem like we are rescuing animals, but in reality, it is the animals who are rescuing us.

In 1991 we helped our local humane society with an animal cruelty case and took in our first abused/neglected pony. Due to human carelessness, she endured terrible circumstances and ended up crippled as a result for the rest of her life. Her name was Sugar. It was a name that fit her well as she was one of the sweetest souls you could ever meet. We spent months rehabilitating her. Although she would never be "normal" on her legs, she was at least pain free. Sugar radiated joy and beauty. People would meet her and be with her for 10 minutes or more before suddenly realizing how crippled her little legs were. But it was not usually the first thing they'd notice about her, and that was because her deformity didn't define her. She taught us so much. She was tenacious and determined but soft and kind at the same time. It would take me many pages to describe our experience with her. But Sugar left us with a most profound and life changing lesson that we draw on to this day.

After Sugar came to us, her people were charged with animal cruelty. This was our first case and it was so upsetting to see what had been done to her and, quite frankly, we were hoping the judge would hit them hard and that they would get jail time. As the court date approached, we helped the humane investigator put together her case. There was more than enough evidence. We had veterinary documentation and photos and all that was needed. It was a solid case. The night of the hearing we waited here at the farm for the investigator to stop by and tell us the results. We were in the barn standing in front of Sugar's stall when the investigator came. We knew the minute we saw her face that it was not good. She looked at Sugar and teared up. "Nothing. They did nothing!" We just stood in disbelief.

"The judge basically threw out the case saying the pony was safe now and there was no proof of any deliberate wrongdoing. Oh, and they were told to reimburse you for the initial vet bill of \$300 but don't expect to see that either. They'll never pay it."



We were all feeling a lot of anger. But Sugar just stood there eating her hay, grateful as always for a nice stall and unlimited food and love. The investigator walked over and petted her head. "I'm sorry girl. I let you down. I tried my best."

Sugar looked over at me and with tremendous clarity she said, "Don't be all upset on my account. I'm not angry so don't be angry on my behalf. Don't carry this with you now as a weight on your back. There is no need. I mean no harm to these people. I feel sorry for them."

I was floored. Speechless. Yet I felt her message deep within my heart. I shared what she said with Bonnie and we understood what she was telling us. It is of course natural to feel angry when we see any abused animal walk in (or be carried in in some cases) to our facility. We acknowledge that anger and then let it go. Because we have a choice. We can carry that anger with us and constantly be exposing this animal to our own anger inadvertently (which keeps their wounds open even longer) or we can let go of the anger and look at the animal who is now safely with us, and focus on the love and care we have for them (and this allows them to heal). It's our choice.

Sugar taught us that revenge serves no purpose at all. Love heals. We can stay in anger or we can move on to something more healing. If the animals don't fall into hate and anger, then who are we to do so on their behalf?

How Do We Know When It's Time To Say Goodbye

by Christine Schneider, DVM cVMA



After my previous article discussing hospice and palliative care, we received some questions concerning how and when to make the decision of euthanasia. While I consider this a very delicate decision that needs to be made between an owner and their veterinarian (as well a conversation that extends far beyond what I could put into this short article), there are some major guidelines that should be considered. One of the more serious and imminent reasons necessitating euthanasia is unrelenting or uncontrollable pain. Thankfully, the veterinary community has made large advancements in the ability to control pain in our patients through both conventional and non-pharmaceutical methods. However, a pet suffering

from pain that is unable to be remedied through any means, needs to have a quality-of-life assessment. Additionally, pain is not always very obvious such as limping or vocalizing. Some pets are extremely stoic and may exhibit subtle signs. I feel it is extremely important to monitor and record any changes in your pets' behavior (especially if geriatric or recently diagnosed with a life-altering or terminal condition) and relay this information to your veterinarian to determine if these small changes could be indicating something more serious.

There are multiple factors that may cause a pet to have a disinterest in their normal activities. Orthopedic issues may prevent a pet from wanting to go on walks, chase a ball or climb up onto the couch to be near their owners. Gastrointestinal upset may deter a pet from eating their normal meals or refusing a tempting treat. Cognitive decline (similar to dementia in people) may cause isolation and abnormal sleeping patterns. While some of these can be treated with medications and individually may not necessitate euthanasia, a combination of these symptoms may affect the human-animal bond. I generally advise owners to create a list of five activities that their pet was enthusiastic about when younger or prior to the onset of an illness. When the pet stops participating in three or four out of those five activities, then the pet's quality of life should be evaluated.

Beyond the pets' primary factors affecting the euthanasia decision, an owner's financial, physical and emotional needs also must be considered. Geriatric and terminal pets may require expensive diagnostics or treatments. Large, immobile dogs may be difficult for some owners to care for. It can be severely emotionally draining to care for an animal that cannot be left alone or require medications multiple times a day. While it would be ideal that we are able to provide anything and everything our pets would ever need, it is not realistic in all situations and needs to be recognized that it is not wrong to consider euthanasia in these situations.

There are multiple online resources to help owners further research on quality life assessments for their pets. Here are two examples:

[Lap of Love](#)

[Ohio State University Veterinary Medical Center.](#)

It is also important to develop a relationship with your veterinarian prior to the onset of illness or aging so they can also recognize changes in your pet's physical and behavioral health to help assist in any decision making. Overall, there are factors that affect you, your pet and the bond between you that need to be considered while making the euthanasia decision.

Miracles In The Middle Of The Road

by Bonnie Reynolds

On March 9, 2017 something that happens all too often around here happened again. Employees spotted one strange cat, then another, then another, running around the property. They had been dumped off, just set loose by...well, someone. The cats were all friendly—terrified, but friendly. We caught them and brought them to safety.

In late afternoon, as darkness set in, a cold, heavy rain came with it. We were getting ready to close when a rain-soaked angel of a man appeared at the door. He was hugging to his breast what looked like a sopping-wet armload of black wool.

"He was laying right in the middle of the road just down a way from your place! It's a miracle that I didn't run over him! I could hardly see in the dark and rain. I thought it was just some thing in the road. But then I saw it move. Is he yours?"

He was a mess...long jet-black hair soaked, and hypothermic. We dried him off and warmed him up, naming him "Ray" in the process.

We also in the process discovered that he was blind.

What a horrible day that guy had had. Dumped off, stumbling around in his own darkness, searching for safety. Then rain and cold, and the asphalt road. But also an angel. And a miracle.

We lost Ray just a couple of months ago. Old age, not the road, got him in the end. He had lived a comfy, pampered life along with several friends in what we called "Ray's Room." It will always to us be "Ray's Room."

But then a couple of weeks ago another angel of a man came to the door, clutching another ball of black fur, this one rescued from the middle of a four-lane-road. And this time only about six weeks old!

Roma. How she got into the middle of a four-lane-road only the angels know. But, again, angels watched over her. And our little miracle was quickly spoken for. She'll be going home as soon as she has her shots and Dr. Christine's okay.



We often run stories about cats abandoned on the road. It is a fate that happens to too many cats. People who can't find help often get desperate and drop their animals off out in the country near farms. But house cats and city cats do not know how to fend for themselves in an environment that doesn't make any sense to them. Sadly, for every cat we find dumped on our farm, we spot three who are so terrified that they run off and we never find them. It is a fate that is happening more and more right now as people are trying to relinquish pets to shelters who are already over-full and adoptions are very slow. When Covid started, there was a huge wave of adoptions from shelters. But, sadly, a lot of those animals are now being returned again as people can no longer keep them.

Rescuing Monarch Butterflies

by Matt Perry



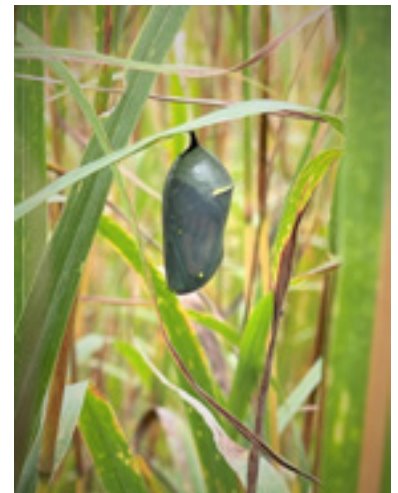
Imagine finding a needle in a haystack. Now imagine that instead of a haystack you have a large field of uncut hay, and the needle is a small green caterpillar. That's pretty much what confronted me on a day in early August over a decade ago. A wonderful field for Monarch Butterflies, which doubled as a hay field, was going to be mowed and I had a couple of days to rescue anything I could. I recall just looking at the field and feeling overwhelmed. It was probably only ten acres in total, but when faced with searching every square foot of it, it might as well have been a thousand acres. Regardless, I enlisted an assistant and we set out to do the work. My plan was to methodically cover the entire field by walking a series of parallel lines about three to six feet apart. Along the way all examples of the Monarch's host plant (milkweed) would be closely scrutinized.

The task before us was daunting. There had to be thousands of milkweed plants in that field. Some grew in dense rafts; others grew in isolation and were interspersed among grasses and other field plants. Before the day was out each one would get some attention from us. Specifically, I was inspecting the milkweed leaves for signs that they had been recently chewed and I was also looking for caterpillar manure (called frass), which sometimes collects on the leaves beneath where caterpillars feed. Monarch eggs are the color of pearls. Indeed, they are like tiny jewels; they are lightly furrowed and conical in shape. They are found singly, attached to the bottom of a leaf of the

host plant. Given our timetable, I was compelled to limit the search to more obvious things like caterpillars and chrysalises. However, if a female Monarch was seen laying an egg, we would attempt to collect it.

I set out into the field with a pair of hand clippers and a large bucket with a lid. The plan was not to pick up the caterpillars by hand but instead to clip the stem of the host plant and store the whole thing with plant and caterpillar, upright in the bucket. This way the insects could continue feeding if they were so inclined. Also, it's never a good idea to handle caterpillars. Their bodies are easily damaged, especially prior to molting. Since their skin-like exoskeleton will not stretch, butterfly caterpillars generally molt four times before becoming a chrysalis.

The light-green seed pods of Common Milkweed look like they were designed by Dr. Seuss. They are certainly one of the oddest structures that nature designed. I was in the midst of examining one of these pods when I spied the day's first Monarch caterpillar. It was no longer than the nail on my



index finger, but it had the unmistakable appearance of a Monarch. The larva is patterned with starkly contrasting black, white, and green concentric rings that run up the length of its body. Given the insect's bold appearance one would think they'd be hard to miss on a milkweed plant. But somehow, they manage to blend into their surroundings. Though they are not naturally camouflaged they do possess two sets of false antennae. One pair is located right behind the head and when the caterpillar feeds, these superfluous appendages jerk around and give the impression of working antennae. It is believed that they are used to deceive predators into mistaking the caterpillar for a formidable long-horned beetle instead of a defenseless larva. The Monarch caterpillar's milkweed

diet makes them far less palatable (if not poisonous) and therefore most predators avoid taking them.

I held the milkweed plant that the tiny Monarch caterpillar was feeding on and snipped it off at the stem. I then carefully placed it upright in my bucket and fastened on the lid. I was determined that there would be no escapes.

I continued trudging through the field, while maintaining as straight a line as possible, which wasn't so easy in the tallest grass. At a certain point it was almost as if my eyes had acclimated to finding Monarch caterpillars. I was seeing them faster now and my bucket was beginning to fill with them and their host plants. By the time my partner and I had finished going through the field we had gathered 75 Monarch caterpillars, three Monarch chrysalises, a few Milkweed Tussock Moth larva and one other unidentified chrysalis. It was a good haul!



By the end of that day all of the Monarch caterpillars had been relocated to the nature preserve where they were placed upon our own milkweed plants. There, at least several of them prospered, their chrysalises opened in time and they were able to begin their marathon migration flight south to Mexico.

Animals and Intelligence

by Dawn Hayman

Animals understand that there are animals and humans who are more intelligent than others. But how they operate from that understanding, in my experience, sets them apart from humans on a profound level.

When we have an animal here that is less intelligent, what we see is that the other animals in the group will do things to assure that the more compromised animal is not left out or left behind. The lesser intelligent animal is not cast aside or bullied or made fun of in any way. They are simply acknowledged for what they can or cannot do and they are looked after by others in their group. It is not even an issue. It's not "something" they have to deal with. It is a total non-event.

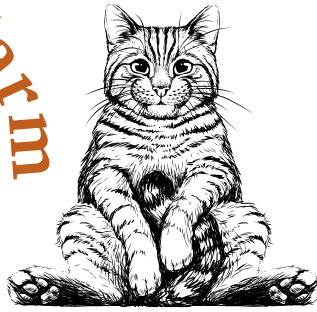
As an animal communicator, I have never been able to come up with a word or phrase to describe how the animals view lesser intelligent among them. For example, I will have an owner say something like this. "I have one dog that is just really stupid." That is the human view. However, when I have a dog in a household tell me about another dog who is less intelligent and they need to watch after them, there is no word in the English language that I can use to describe that idea that is not negative. We humans would say: "he's stupid", "he's an idiot", "she's not playing with a full deck", "she's dumb."

But the animals do not express this as a negative. It is simply an observation. "She's not as smart as I am on some things and I need to look after her." They do not see that as a negative quality or a burden or a problem. It simply is how they are without any judgment thrown at them.

Imagine if we humans would be the same way. What a different world we would experience.

Around the Farm

What's New?



Welcome Xander!

We welcome Xander, a donkey in his mid-thirties who was in need of a home for his final years. Xander has severe arthritis causing changes in his legs that we are treating and making sure he is kept comfortable. He also has a dental condition that affects elderly equines where his teeth are coming loose and falling out. Xander is receiving special dental care as well as special feeding and specialized farrier work to keep him comfortable.

He loves being with his new donkey friends and he is a buddy to our blind pony Molly.

Meet Ned & Sylvester

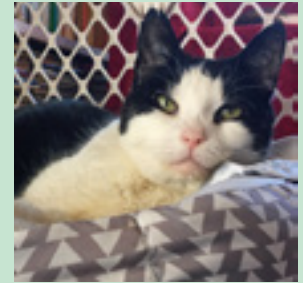
Both Ned and Sylvester arrived late spring. Each of them came to us from separate situations but both of them have neurological conditions.



Ned came to us when his very special person who had rescued him as a kitten could no longer keep him. He knew that Ned needed a sanctuary where his very special needs and care could be looked after for his lifetime. Ned is about 3 years old and was

born with a neurological problem. He also had an injury to one of his back legs and hips that make it more challenging to get around. But that doesn't stop Ned from having a good time. Ned is a little shy so we are taking our time with him as he settles in and gets to know us.

Sylvester was found as a stray in very serious condition. He was highly neurological and we are not sure if he had gotten into some sort of toxin or if he also has a



neurological condition since birth. Although he has gotten much less neurological, there seems to be some other underlying condition. But Sylvester is a happy guy and is thriving in his new place with us.

Both of these cats were in need of sanctuary and we were able to give them what they need.



In Loving Memory of Georgie

Sadly we said good-bye this month to the eldest of our cat family. Georgie was an amazing 22 years-old. You can see by his photo that he sure didn't look it! But age caught up with him quickly when he very suddenly started to develop fluid in his abdomen and a mass was found. Georgie loved every moment of his life, right up until his last breath. Of course, we were all sad. But at the same time, we stood in awe of a life so well lived and loved. Georgie left here knowing how loved he was and he wrapped himself in that love as we let him go. Take a good rest now Georgie. What a life!