



TattleTails & Tidbits



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The Tapestry Of Life

Every day here at Spring Farm CARES we are filled with deep gratitude for the actual farm and land as well as all of the humans and animals who have contributed to what you now see and experience as Spring Farm. Bonnie follows generations of her family who called this land home. She has been connected to this land for over 80 years. For Dawn, it has been for 40 years. And during that time, we have seen several generations of animals and humans come and go. Each one offering a unique energy that gets woven into the tapestry of this experience that we call Spring Farm CARES.

We stand on the shoulders of giants who stood here on this land dreaming their dreams and living their passions. All of them lending their hearts and energies in making this farm and land that special place it is today. And we thank those amazing beings for all they have inspired in us to keep creating in this space and to pass it along to the next generations to follow us. We walk with deliberate awareness and create with deliberate intention to be the most loving and compassionate and willing to listen students of the teachers who stand with us.

That is what makes up the heart of Spring Farm CARES. You are also a part of all of this. And we thank you for walking with us. In this issue, we share from different angles and vantage points, some of the people and animals who have shaped our visions and inspired our hearts to keep moving forward.

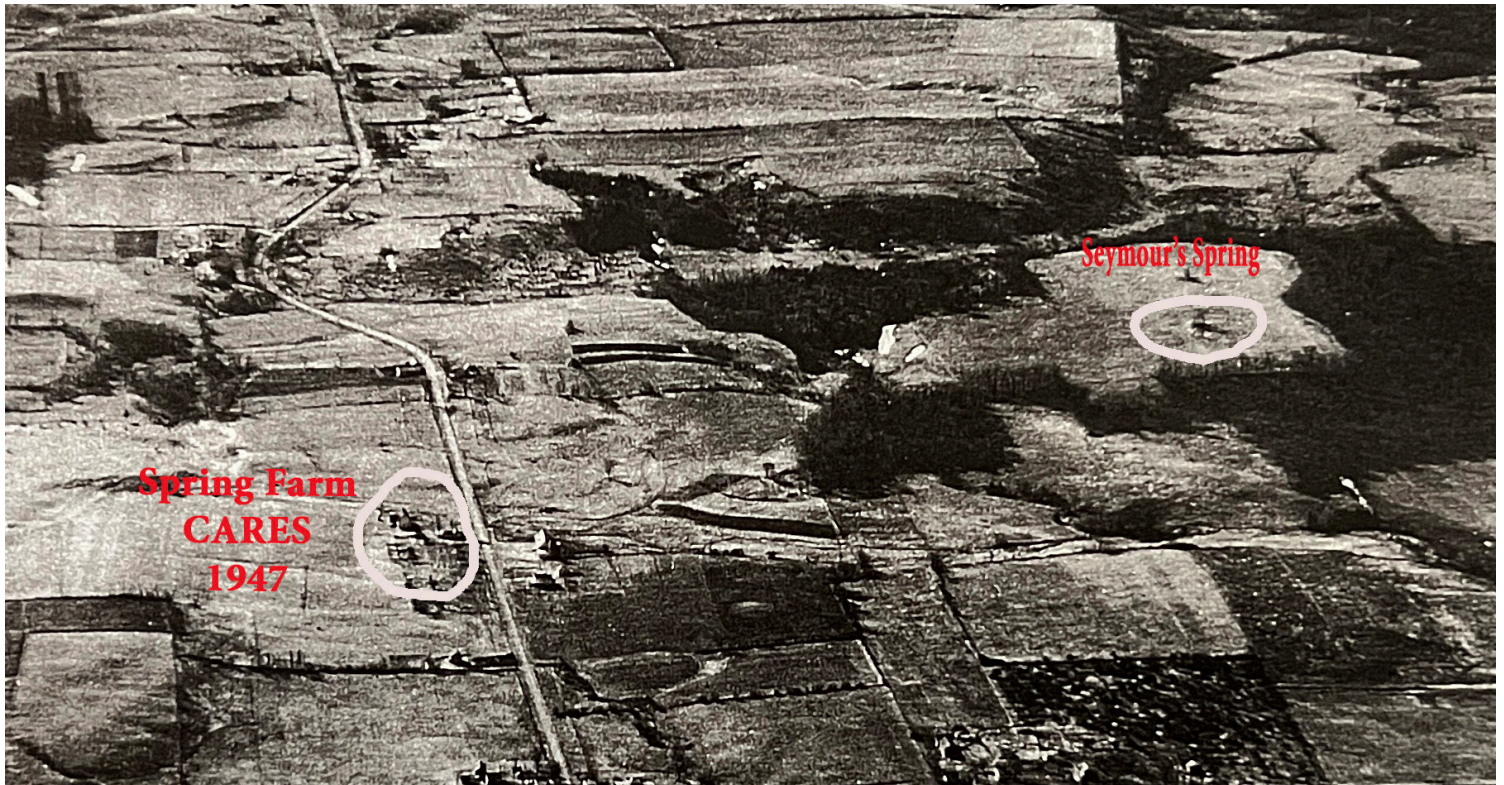
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Over 200 Years Of Family History

by Bonnie Reynolds

There were two sets of original settlers of Spring Farm ... Noah Humiston born 1771, and his wife Freelove Graves born 1780, and Salmon Seymour born 1779, and his wife, Freelove's younger sister Clarissa Graves, born 1787. Noah and Freelove were the first settlers of the 50 acres east of what was then an Iroquois Indian trail and is now NYS Route 12, on which acreage the buildings of today's Spring Farm CARES are located. They settled on that property around 1798 and began building the "homestead"—Bonnie's home since 1945 and in her Jones family since 1827. In 1804 Salmon purchased the acreage to the west of the Indian trail, now the Spring Farm Nature Sanctuary. He and Clarissa were married in 1805. They moved into the log cabin that Salmon had built to receive his bride, remembered by later generations as Seymour's Spring, and the drama began.



Salmon and Clarissa's first child, Harriet, born in 1806 died. Baby Hannah, born in 1807, lived just a month. 1809 saw success when a second baby named Hannah lived. Amanda born 1811, Benjamin 1814, and William 1816, lived as well. It was at the end of 1816 that Noah and Freelove decided to move further west and sold their farm to Salmon and Clarissa, uniting the parcels on either side of the Indian trail. And at last, poor little Clara had a real house. Sadly, Henry, born 1819, died. But Marilla, born 1821, and Emily born 1823, lived. In 1827, it was Salmon and Clarissa's turn to move, to another farm, in nearby Westmoreland. There, in 1828, Emery was born and lived, but a last child, Clara, apparently died.

Twenty-four years of child bearing, 11 births, six of them in a little log cabin at Seymour's Spring, and 4 babies lost. A lot of drama played out during those years, the ins and outs of which we can never know and only imagine. Because Noah and Freelove remained childless!

How did Noah and Freelove feel about that? How did Salmon and Clarissa feel about that? How did either couple feel about the circumstances of the other couple? Did Freelove act as midwife for her little sister during the births there in that log cabin? Did she share in both heartbreak and triumph? Was it because of family tensions that she and Noah finally sold their home to Salmon and Clarissa and moved far away?

Oh, the novels that could be written.

It was when the Seymours made their last move in 1827 that members of Bonnie's Jones family came onto the scene, renting Spring Farm from the Seymours and finally buying it in 1844 after Salmon's death. Then, in 1856, Bonnie's widowed great great grandmother Mary Jones, with her toddlers, Bonnie's great grandfather then age 5 and his two little sisters, followed family members who had already migrated from Wales to the US and, once here, went to work for her Jones cousins at Spring Farm. In 1861, cousins or not, she and their son Alfred married and proceeded to have four children of their own.

And this cousin thing is interesting. Because Bonnie decided to look up the genealogies of Noah Humiston, Freelove and Clarissa Graves, and Salmon Seymour. It turns out that those first settlers of Spring Farm were Bonnie's distant cousins!

So for over 200 years Spring Farm has been a family thing. And in the years to come it will stay a family thing – a family of loving, caring people both here on the farm and out there among you readers -- and among their cousins, the loving, caring animals that they all love and care for.

The Tapestry Of Spring Farm

by Dawn Hayman

For the entire month of April, I experienced an amazing connection and insight to the energy of the farm and the history of the humans and animals who have graced this land. At first, I didn't understand what was happening. But the episodes became almost daily for several weeks, until the open door through layers of time that I was experiencing in the present moment, slowly faded away and seemed to close.

The first time it happened it shook me. I was doing my nightly barn close down and check of the horses, donkeys, pigs, goats, and poultry. I do the exact same routine seven nights a week, never changing my order of how I check on everyone. Each animal gets a personal check in from me and supplemental feeding as needed. It is a sacred time of day for me. It is quiet. No other humans. No machinery. Just me and all of the animals. And of course the energy of the farm itself. On this particular night, I was walking back out of our large arena to shout a last good-night, turn off the lights, and close the barn door. But as I began walking, I noticed my feet and everything became slow-motion. I was aware that it felt like I was walking through layers of time. And I was going back in time as I stood in that exact spot. I looked up and around the barn. Everything was different, I was standing in the arena the way it was 30 years ago. The stalls were all different. The animals were all different. And in that instant, I was 31 years old and shutting down the barn at the end of a long day. I was standing, looking at the horses one last time for the night. That always brings me comfort and peace. I turned quickly to look at the corner stall. Four Bales, a large Thoroughbred mare was standing eating hay looking back at me. I could smell her wonderful smell (I am super aware of each animal having their own unique odor and I used to say you could blindfold me and just let me smell them and I could tell you who they were.) I closed my eyes to take it all in. Her heart connected instantly to mine.



Four Bales and Dawn circa 1987

"Hello dear friend!" she said. "I am here as I always have been here."

I was so excited to be there with her. And in an instant, the scene faded away and I returned to present day. I walked



Deeteza circa 1990

out and walked home thinking what the heck is happening to me? Yet, grateful for that moment.

The next night it happened again. This time, it was an Arab mare named Tara. And I held that moment with her as I did Four Bales. And night after night as I walked through that arena, I walked through layers of time. Only as the days moved on, the experience changed. I would land in a time period with a barn full of animals who are no longer here. And I was able to focus on them one at a time. For each animal, I relived the day they arrived here at the farm, and that would then fade to the day I said good-bye to them as they passed into spirit. I was there for almost all of those occasions. After over 2 weeks of this nightly experience, which now became a ritual I longed for every day, my old horse and master teacher Deeteza appeared. She was the one I had hoped to see

the most and it was as if she was deliberately left until last. My heart melded with hers. We were breathing in the energy of one another. And she gave me this message:

"It is an illusion that we are all gone. We wanted you to see this. Each one of us who has lived here and loved here is part of the fabric of this farm. Each of us is a fiber that weaves our own path full of memories and love with yours and we create a tapestry of energy that is always here. You can pull from this energy anytime. We were not here and then gone. You walk among us still through layers of time. We hoped that you would see this. Close your eyes and when you open them again you will be in your current time frame. But you will know that we are with you always. And you will come to understand how each of you is also a fiber in the tapestry called Spring Farm. And you will continue to lead through your heart and vision well into the future. We will be here weaving with you. Travel on with hope. Believe in light. And wrap yourself within the tapestry of our love for you."

When I opened my eyes, she was gone. But the barn was filled with all the amazing beings that are here today. And I could see each one of them for the light and love that each of them is now weaving into the fabric of this farm.

As I walked out of the barn, I knew this was bigger than anything I could understand in that moment. But I understood that every being, human and animal, who walked this land, is a part of something much bigger than any of us can realize. And the past and the present mingle in a delightful dance that becomes the future. Yet, they all exist in the same space at the same time.

About TattleTails & Tidbits

TattleTails & Tidbits is a free bi-monthly journal of Spring Farm CARES Animal & Nature Sanctuary. We have an amazingly talented group of Directors and Staff and we started this journal to share both creative writing, inspirational stories of the farm, educational articles, and artwork just to name a few. The purpose of our journal is to give you helpful information and to touch your heart and stir your soul.

There will be stories shared through animal communication with the many animal teacher residents of the farm as well. We hope that each issue gives you a variety of topics from both our animal and nature sanctuaries.

TattleTails & Tidbits is available only in electronic form. You can [sign up for our email list](#) to receive it directly in your In box and/or you can [download your copy directly from our website](#).

[Donations](#) are gratefully accepted and we hope you will share this with those you think would be interested as well.

On The Wings Of Doves

by Dawn Hayman



Jessie

I am often asked if animals send messages from Spirit to let us know they are ok after they pass. Many people have the experience of seeing a special bird or a cloud in the shape of their pet right after their passing. There are so many ways they reach out to us to let us know they are ok and still connected to us. I want to share one such story with the recent passing of my heart dog Jessie.

At the beginning of May, Margot and I noticed a male Cardinal that kept coming and sitting on a ledge right outside our kitchen window. Let me first say that we have lots of Cardinals around here and that is not unusual. We can see and hear them every day. But what was very unusual was where this bird kept perching and looking directly into our window. I tuned in to the bird and he said, "Hi, you once knew me as Faith." And then he

flew off. We had a border collie named Faith who died several years ago and so Margot and I thought how nice that was that she stopped by to say hello.

A couple of days later, after that message, a pair of Mourning Doves started to hang around our house and yard. While Mourning Doves are common in our area, neither of us could remember ever seeing them around our yard and house like this. They were constantly around. And then, they began perching on the same ledge that the Cardinal had perched on. Again, I connected with the birds. "Who are you?" I asked. The answer was puzzling at the time. "We are friends who need to be here right now."

The next day, on May 5th, our beloved 14 year old yellow lab, Jessie, wasn't feeling well. Sadly, we discovered he had a large mass on his liver. Those mourning doves stayed there all day, every day, until on the afternoon of May 10th, when we had to say good-bye to Jessie and let him go. He was the last in our original group of nine dogs that we had in our house. Faith had been one of his companions. And we knew his best friend Grace, who died two years ago, would be waiting for him for sure. Our hearts were broken. The Mourning Doves seemed to leave with Jessie, never to be seen again.



Puppy Jessie with Faith

Just two days later, I was startled to hear the song of a bird that I just love to hear and have not heard in a few years here on the farm. I ran to the window and just outside, perched on a branch near our house, was a male Baltimore Oriole singing away. He has shown up there every day since then.

The message was clear. "Hi Mom, it's me Jessie. I sent this bird to sing to you so you'd know I'm ok."

"Did you choose him because he's orange, kind of like you were?" I asked through tears.

"No, I chose him because it is your favorite bird and I wanted you to be reminded I'm still near and life is still beautiful."

Remembering Roddy: A Sanctuary Original

by Matt Perry



Roddy

these seasons of watching and learning, we gained a deep appreciation for the species' remarkable intelligence, loyalty, and emotional depth. Canada Geese form lifelong pair bonds, and if tragedy strikes, the survivor often mourns for an agonizingly long time.



Roddy with Lydia and goslings



Roddy scolds a beaver

Over the last 25 years, the Beavers at our nature sanctuary have transformed the landscape into a vibrant haven for wetland-loving wildlife. Waterfowl in particular have flourished, with Canada Geese becoming some of our most reliable and steadfast pond residents. Each spring, we could count on a few goose pairs settling in to nest at the ponds, their arrival marking the true beginning of the breeding season.

Sometimes, the nesting season for geese unfolded without incident, and we were privileged to witness the miracle of new life: tiny goslings—flightless and vulnerable—growing under the care of their devoted parents into strong, full-sized and fully-flighted members of the goose community. Through

Among the many goose families that found refuge at the sanctuary, none captured our hearts quite like Roddy and his mate, Lydia. For more than a decade, Roddy was my near-constant companion during spring and summer days at the beaver ponds. While Lydia sat on the nest incubating their eggs—an exclusively maternal duty among geese—Roddy stood watch. And often, he chose to pass his guard hours beside me, a silent but expressive presence as I waited for the Beavers to emerge. Roddy, with his distinct pale eyebrows—a rare feature among Canada Geese—wore an expression so keen that I often imagined him as a cartoonish professor, peering at the world with a bemused expression and quizzical eyes.

Roddy's relationship with the Beavers was a complicated one. Though the Beavers posed no threat, he was a father and a defender first, and when his goslings were young, he didn't hesitate to hiss and warn off the flat-tailed engineers when they strayed too close. He was much more intolerant of rival geese, and over the years I watched him chase away countless pairs who dared to encroach on his territory. Indeed, Roddy was a fierce protector of his family and his realm, and his reputation was well-earned.

But time humbles even the fiercest souls. In the spring of 2023, Roddy seemingly met his match in a younger, determined gander named Ulysses, who, along with his mate Beatrice, made a claim on the main beaver pond. In a confrontation on neutral ground, Ulysses bested Roddy, chasing him across the



Roddy walks by Daffy the doe

pond, nipping at his back and neck, until Roddy retreated over the beaver dam. It was a hard sight to witness. Roddy, a little ruffled but unharmed, ceded the main pond and moved to a smaller, quieter pond with Lydia. I thought perhaps he had finally lost his edge.

Yet, true to the spirit that had endeared him to us all, Roddy returned the next spring with renewed vigor. In a rematch with Ulysses, Roddy decisively reclaimed his honor, sending the younger gander fleeing in defeat over the same dam where Roddy had retreated the year before. Watching him, victorious once again, it was hard not to believe he had spent the winter in training for that precise moment.



Roddy scolds a woodchuck

Roddy's daily rhythms were a familiar comfort to us. Even outside of breeding season, he preferred walking between ponds rather than flying—a sure sign that he felt utterly safe and at home at the sanctuary. Sometimes he even joined up with the local deer herd, trailing behind them or leading their slow, dignified marches through the fields, blending into their placid society as if he had always belonged. It was an example of interspecies fellowship that never failed to make us smile.



Lydia on her nest

Every March, I eagerly awaited the arrival of Roddy and Lydia, the truest heralds of spring, and for many years, we weren't disappointed. Often, they would return with their grown offspring from the previous season, their family bonds still intact. Yet once the nesting season began in earnest, hard instinct would take over. The young would be chased off like any other intruder, and the focus would shift to raising the next generation.

This spring, however, Roddy did not come back. Lydia returned alone. Every day, for over a month, she landed on the pond and called out—haunting cries that echoed up and down the creek valley. She was desperately trying to summon a companion who could not answer. Canada Geese are profoundly attached to their mates, and when one is lost, the survivor often mourns for a very long time. Lydia's grief was palpable and since Roddy's loss she has shown no interest in finding another mate.

And we grieve with Lydia. Roddy was more than just a resident goose. He was a friend, a fixture, and one of the enduring spirits of the sanctuary. His day-to-day absence has been a hard thing for us to grapple with. However, we will forever treasure the seasons we shared with him, the lessons he taught us about loyalty, courage, and determination—and the simple, profound joy of companionship. We miss you, Roddy.

The Miracles Of Wonder & Grief - The Passing Of Lil G

by Trinity Cook



D.K. (left) and Lil G (right)

last seconds of their life.

There are some animals that spend their whole life on Spring Farm, and others who come to us later in life and will only be here for a short while. But all of them have a home until they are ready to leave, and all of them touch us in their own way. End of life care is something that is common here, as we take in many animals with complex health needs. Staff here take pride in knowing that every animal here will be loved and supported in their final moments. For many, it is hard to understand how we cope with caring for them each day and that losing them is very painful. It certainly can be, but sometimes it is the opposite. There are many things I would have considered impossible before I came here, and they often happen during passing. The animals sometime choose to share some of their greatest gifts and become profound teachers in the

Lil G was a cat here that was a consistent presence on the farm, here before I even came. She was a gentle motherly figure with an appetite that did not match her small and slender frame. She was kind, and a good friend to many cats when they needed one. But above all of them was D.K. He was the yin to her yang. If she was outgoing and friendly, he was often hiding away (not unfriendly but quite timid). But watching them together was like watching a couple who'd been together for decades. Staff would often find them fit together like puzzle pieces in beds, cat trees, and shelves. They'd spend all hours of the day eating together, grooming each other, and keeping each other cozy. They'd come here together, and they'd spend every minute they could together.

Lil G became sick. She had several conditions happening concurrently. She managed quite well until one morning she didn't. I came in and she was lethargic, and within 15 minutes she began to pass. She'd chosen a small cat bed to lay in and peacefully began her process of transitioning. I was astounded at how peaceful she was, at how graceful she'd accepted it was her time. Even so, as a caretaker, you still ask yourself if you're doing all you can do, if anything more could be done to help them. But sometimes the medicine will only take you so far. At a point, there are no more interventions, and all that's left is to be present with them. She stopped my overthinking and simply said "just put your hands on me". I place one hand on her head and one over her abdomen. After a few seconds I began to see a vibrant green light around her body and into my hands. I've seen many things here, but nothing like that! In that moment I was fully with her, I could feel her completely. She showed me her life here, all the people she'd touched in her own special way. All the love she's come to know from long time friends and strangers alike. I could feel her joy, peace, and past pain. She managed to share with me through one touch, the entire journey of a soul and the exuberance of leaving this life knowing they'd completed their purpose. There was no fear, she was deeply grateful for this life and was at peace with leaving. I felt her begin to shift and then hesitate. I knew it was time, but something was keeping her here. Of course, it was her very best friend D.K. I asked her what she needed, and she said, "please take care of him for me". I promised her we would keep taking good care of him, even if our support would need to be from afar. In that moment her heart stopped, and she was no longer here.

I believe that two things can be true at once. I can feel the heaviness in my heart, even now. I miss her when I walk into her room. I miss hearing her yelling (because it was not meowing, it was yelling) for her dinner plate. I miss getting to witness the love between her and D.K. It is painful to see the spaces she filled feel empty. As much as I miss her, she gave me the gift of experiencing her death the way that she did. That the actual act of dying can be beautiful and joyful. It is hard to believe wonder and grief can exist together and yet somehow, they always do. Cats like Lil G are how I'm able to keep going, because I know in all the heartache, there are small miracles, too.