



TattleTails & Tidbits



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Contributors:

- Bonnie Reynolds, SFC Pres/Co-founder
- Dawn Hayman, SFC VP/Co-founder
- Matthew Perry, Naturalist/Director of SFC Nature Sanctuary.

Reunions

While summer is in full swing, many of us spend time at family gatherings and catching up with old friends. This seems to be the season for reunions and it got us thinking about some very special reunions here with our animals. Many times, we do not know the history of the animals who come here or how they ended up homeless or in dangerous situations, but sometimes we end up meeting people from their past and we learn new information about them.

Reunions for them, just like for you, can be bitter sweet. Some are joyful. Some are painful. And some leave us all in awe and wonder about the chance encounters that lead us to finding lost loved ones from the past. Animals, just like us humans, form relationships that hold great meaning to them. Many have been separated from loved ones and they are genuinely excited and relieved to find them again. They do not forget.

They may get separated by circumstances that led them to places they never should have been. But they hold on to the love of the humans whose hearts they connected with so deeply. It doesn't happen often here, but when it does, it is always a wondrous thing to witness them find each other again. We hope you enjoy these heartfelt reunion stories as well as a story about a special turkey vulture.

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CONNECT WITH US:

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

Visit our Website and Blog:
www.springfarmcares.org

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Lucy Goose's Family Reunion

by Bonnie Reynolds



Bonnie with Lucy

Lucy Goose came to Spring Farm CARES ten years ago. She had been with her owners since hatching, and, for 19 years, she had been a beloved pet whose favorite thing was to be picked up and cuddled.

But the family then had to move out of state. Sadly, they had not been able to find a place that would allow them to keep a pet – especially one as unique as Lucy. But they had heard good things about Spring Farm CARES. They knew that we would give their goosey friend excellent care during what they assumed would be her last few years.

But her years kept passing. And Lucy is no wall flower. Her chummy personality, accompanied by her nice loud honk, has made sure not only of that excellent care, but of everyone's attention. You can't hang around Spring Farm CARES for long without knowing who this Lucy character that everyone talks about is. Of course age has been taking a

gradual toll on her. She hobbles now rather than walking. And a couple of years ago we thought that we were losing her. Because one morning when I went to give her her beloved can of yellow corn, I found her huddled down, with her head tucked away under one wing, refusing to move, refusing to eat. And she stayed that way for days, with all of us caretakers hovering about, not knowing what to do, assuming that soon we would find her dead. But I kept offering her her corn. And one morning she lifted her head and ate it. "Lucy's eating her corn!!!" I shouted into my walkie talkie, to an answering "Hooray!!!!" from a dozen other walkies. And the next morning my shout was, "Lucy's standing up!!!!" and "Hooray!!!" came the dozen answers.



Lucy and her brother as goslings with the young girl who grew up with them

Lucy lives enthusiastically now, honking in glee as her cans of corn are brought to her morning and evening, loving to climb in and splash about in the tub of water kept in her pen, or in the creek on nice days when one of the staff carries her to a nice deep pool. And she tolerates the two chickens who are her pen-mates, Betsy and Maizie – except when they try to steal any of her corn.

Then one day a couple of weeks ago a young lady happened to be driving by and noticed our sign. "Spring Farm CARES!" she exclaimed to her companion. "That's the place where my mother brought Lucy!" And she drove in to say hello to us ... never thinking for a moment that, after ten years, Lucy was still alive.

You've all seen videos, or heard, of dogs or cats or some other mammals, the supposedly most intelligent of the animal kingdom, who recognize old friends after many years and run to them. But a goose?

Lucy couldn't run, but she recognized her old friend immediately and hobbled as fast as she could to her friend's arms.

We all learned that day, if we didn't know before, that you don't have to be a mammal to love and to keep loving.

The girl was able to do a Facetime reunion on her cell phone between her mother and father and Lucy. Her parents were as surprised and delighted as the girl had been to learn that Lucy was still living and well -- and to be able to see her, call to her, and talk to her.



Lucy and her now adult friend hadn't seen each other in 10 years

The girl even produced a real prize for us. It is a picture of the girl holding Lucy and her brother when they were goslings only a few weeks old!

And so at the amazing age of 29, Lucy Goosey hobbles on, with her many loving new caretakers, but now knowing that beloved friends of old still love her. How many more years it will be we don't know. But a little goose's heart is warmer, as are the hearts of her friends.



Lucy swimming in our creek

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.

Scherry - A Deep Love Never Forgotten

by Dawn Hayman



Scherry (chestnut mare on left) in her elder years with best friend Deelight

When I first met Scherry, it was love at first sight. I was co-teaching a TTouch clinic at a pony club show barn about 30 miles from Spring Farm. And Scherry was one of the horses in the clinic. She had been one of their star jumpers--the pony that everyone wanted to ride but that few were skillful enough to ride. She won ribbons. She broke hearts. She was gorgeous and athletic. But she was also extremely high strung and prone to spooking. And that was even before the accident that ended her show life. What had happened was that, as she was being groomed, something got caught in her tail. Startled, she galloped out of the barn, relentlessly chased by the something in her tail. She ran straight through a split rail fence. One of the rails went through her chest. Pony club girls came running. Some controlled the

thrashing horse while others ripped off their shirts and pressed them into the wound, staunching the bleeding until a vet arrived. They saved her life. But one whole side of her chest musculature was destroyed. She could no longer be ridden. Additionally, while before being only high strung and prone to spooking, she was now a basket case prone to freak-outs. Too dangerous to be kept in a pony club. Her owner hadn't wanted to think about euthanasia. Now it was a must. Which is where I came in.

When I was asked to work with Scherry at the clinic and then told that she was scheduled to be euthanized in a few days, my heart broke. That evening I spoke to Bonnie. And the next day we asked the owner if Scherry could come live out her life with us here at Spring Farm. The owner sold her to us under contract for \$1 (we each chipped in 50 cents). The contract was that she would check on Scherry again in a year. If Scherry's quality of life was not any better by then, if she was obviously condemned just to living her life locked in a stall, she would be euthanized. We agreed to those terms and prayed.

A year later, the owner and some of the students who had tended Scherry the day of the accident came to visit. There were tears and hugs as they saw the transformation. A mare who had always been hot-wired now stood relaxed and glowing, ever so happy to see her old friends again.

Scherry and I became soul sisters. She was my horse. I was her person. Yet every so often over the years I would feel ... there was something wrong. She had walled something off deep within herself. And one day as I was grooming her I asked her straight out what that something was. Why couldn't she fully connect with me? I didn't really expect an answer. She surprised me.

"I loved someone once. Deeply. We were amazing together. We were like one body when she rode me. We won lots of ribbons together. I couldn't wait for her to come to the barn every day. My heart would fill whenever I saw her coming. Then, one day ... she just never came back. No explanation. No good-bye. Nothing. I have never understood how she could have left like that. I try not to think about it. Or about her. I love you too. But if I let myself love you too much ... well you might leave me like that. I couldn't bear that again."

Wow. My heart ached for her and her vulnerability. The woman who had owned her had since died and I didn't

know any of the kids who had ridden her. I didn't know what had happened to her special girl. I couldn't even verify that there had been one. But I could feel Scherry's grief, and her deep feeling of betrayal.

It was a few years later--we were holding a garage sale here at the farm--when a lady who lived nearby walked in and said that she had heard that we had an old friend of hers here at the farm--Scherry. I was stunned. She had been one of the people associated with that pony club barn?! Eagerly, I took her out to see Scherry--who came running when she saw the woman, obviously recognizing her. And I now had my own chance. As the woman was leaving, I told her what Scherry had told me. About the girl who never came back.

The woman grew quiet. Then she teared up. "That was Margaret. Scherry and Margaret were amazing together. Like one. It was amazing to watch them, What happened was ... Margaret was killed in a car accident, Dawn." Oh!

... Oh. "I have Margaret's boots," the woman continued, "the ones she wore when she rode Scherry. I don't know why I saved them, but I did. I'll bring them to you. They might give Scherry some closure."

True to her word, the woman later returned with the boots. I will never forget the moment when I showed them to Scherry. She smelled them thoroughly and deeply inhaled the scent. Even after years, an essence of Margaret was there. And I told Scherry then what had happened--helped her understand why Margaret just never came back--why Margaret had not willingly deserted her--why Margaret hadn't simply neglected to say goodbye.



I could feel the many emotions surging through Scherry as she listened. I threw my arms around her neck and hugged her. I told her that I'd do my best not to ever leave her and that she would be here with us forever. And her life changed that day. Because she allowed herself to once again think of Margaret, and to remember their partnership. She could be sad, yes, but never deserted. She had always been loved and always would be.

Several years later, another young lady, in her early 20's, showed up at our door asking after an old friend--Scherry. This young lady had for years been suffering. Much as Scherry had suffered. Because as a 12-year-old it was she who had been riding Scherry just before the accident with the fence. And she had always blamed herself. When I called Scherry down from the pasture, however, and Scherry saw her old friend, there were only happy greetings, There was healing that day. Old traumas and guilts were let go. This girl had actually helped to save Scherry's life. She shouldn't have been blaming herself for an accident that had been just that, an accident. Years of mental punishment were let go. Two old friends reconnected in love and healing--each knowing that the other was safe and doing well.

Scherry lived with us for about 15 years before she passed. She loved the pasture where she was turned out daily, occasionally racing in circles and executing cabrioles, or else watching patiently for the balloon of an area balloonist to pass over her pasture, which balloon one of Scherry's pasture-mates had convinced her was God. Scherry was at peace within herself in those last years. She had learned to trust again. But, most importantly, she had learned to allow herself to love, to be loved, and to remember love. Hers was a beautiful healing. It was an honor for me to be a part of it.

The Hidden Graces of “Dangles” the Turkey Vulture

by Matt Perry



*Dangles in flight (above)
Perching on one good leg (below)*



function in the toes on her right foot. Still, her resilience is clear. Despite the impairment, Dangles does all the things a Turkey Vulture must do: she soars, she roosts, she courts and breeds, and she no doubt locates carrion with the same uncanny precision her species is known for. Given her consistent presence over the seasons, we suspect she nests somewhere nearby—maybe in the collapsed ruin of an old barn, along the sheer wall of an abandoned quarry, or in the shaded crevice of a remote gorge. Her exact story remains a mystery. But every sighting of Dangles reminds us of the quiet perseverance of wild creatures, and the sanctuary’s deeper



A male vulture performs for his mate

At the Spring Farm CARES Nature Sanctuary, few things bring us greater joy than seeing our wild residents thrive—living long, uninterrupted lives, free from interference. Over the years, we’ve come to know many of the animals who call this place home. Some are easily recognized by their physical traits or distinctive behaviors, and many have been given names—like our Beavers, Deer, and Woodchucks. But countless others remain unnamed—wild denizens whose presence we cherish, even if we cannot always tell one individual from the next. This is especially true of many bird species, where subtle differences are difficult to discern. Yet now and then, one stands apart—not by song or species, but by something unmistakably singular.

Such was the case with a Turkey Vulture first seen soaring above our reforestation fields in the spring of 2016. I remember the moment vividly. We were planting young sycamore trees, when a small kettle of vultures passed overhead—riding thermals in wide, deliberate spirals. They glided without a single wingbeat, their silhouettes crossing paths in an effortless and graceful manner. Among them, one caught my eye. She was different. One leg hung loosely beneath her as she circled—an injury, perhaps, but she flew as smoothly as the others. From that day forward, we affectionately called her “Dangles.”

We’ve seen her regularly, off and on, in the years since. Whatever the injury was—perhaps a long-healed break or an old dislocation—her leg still dangles. When perched on a tree branch, she mainly uses her left leg to grip, though it is possible she retains limited function in the toes on her right foot. Still, her resilience is clear. Despite the impairment, Dangles does all the things a Turkey Vulture must do: she soars, she roosts, she courts and breeds, and she no doubt locates carrion with the same uncanny precision her species is known for. Given her consistent presence over the seasons, we suspect she nests somewhere nearby—maybe in the collapsed ruin of an old barn, along the sheer wall of an abandoned quarry, or in the shaded crevice of a remote gorge. Her exact story remains a mystery. But every sighting of Dangles reminds us of the quiet perseverance of wild creatures, and the sanctuary’s deeper purpose: to protect the lives of, and to provide habitats for all—named or unnamed, whole or infirm—just as they are.

Courtship among Turkey Vultures begins not in the dark recesses of their secluded roosts, but high in the sky. There, males engage in slow, sweeping flight displays, gliding on thermals with exaggerated dips and arcs that resemble a kind of silent, avian ballet. I’ve seen Dangles take part in an aerial dance only once, but it was impressive and memorable, and something she pulled off despite her disability. These soaring rituals are complemented by strange and seldom witnessed ground performances: the male struts in wide circles around a prospective mate, wings partially extended, resembling

the performance of a male Wild Turkey. They do all this in near silence, for vultures lack the complex vocal structures of songbirds. Instead, their language is visual—an exchange of gestures, posture, and proximity. Just where Dangles and her family group perform their vulture “square dances” has remained a mystery to me, but each spring my hope is to witness one.

Perhaps one of the most visually striking and least understood behaviors of the Turkey Vulture is its “horaltic pose”—standing with wings fully outstretched, often in early morning light – sometimes they do this on the ground and sometimes in the branches of tall tree or dead snag, where they can resemble over-sized, macabre Halloween decorations. This wing-spreading posture serves several purposes: it helps dry feathers soaked with dew or rain, warms the bird by soaking up solar radiation, and may assist in killing surface bacteria accumulated from feeding on carrion. In this moment, with wings extended and body still, the vulture takes on a statuesque quality—part sentinel, part sun-worshipper.

Of course, Turkey Vultures are carrion feeders—they never prey on live creatures as raptors do. Interestingly, when multiple individuals converge on a carcass, a subtle social hierarchy emerges. Older birds and those that arrive first, like Dangles, generally assert dominance, often through subtle posturing or brief physical interactions. Unlike their more aggressive relatives, such as the Black Vulture, Turkey Vultures are less inclined to fight, preferring to yield rather than escalate conflict. Nevertheless, a pecking order does exist, and access to prime feeding positions is often determined by age, experience, or timing. The slow unfolding of a group around a carcass resembles a ceremony—each participant knowing their place, advancing or retreating according to an unspoken etiquette.

To judge Turkey Vultures merely by their diet is to miss their essence. Dangles and her kind are custodians of the landscape, removing decay and disease before it can spread through the broader wildlife community. Their wings, spanning over six feet, are as precise as any falcon's when soaring. Their family structures are complex and enduring. In the interplay of survival and subtlety, the Turkey Vulture reminds us that beauty is not the exclusive province of songbirds or colorful plumage. It may, instead, lie in a sun-drenched wing, a long glide over a valley, or the patient vigil at a nest hidden deep in a hidden hollow.



A Turkey Vulture adopts the "horaltic pose"



Turkey Vultures perch with wings open at a feeding site

Thoroughbred Reunion

by Dawn Hayman



The herd of retired Thoroughbred Race Horses

Bonnie had purchased a Thoroughbred mare as a riding horse just prior to the start of Spring Farm CARES. Her name was Lamoka Bo and she was a retired race horse (although she only raced once.) While researching her lineage, Bonnie contacted Bo's breeder on record and he explained that he actually still had Bo's mother, Four Bales, and was looking to retire her rather than euthanize her. She was now in her mid 20's and could no longer be bred. Bonnie offered her a place with us.

I will never forget the day Four Bales arrived. When we brought Bo out to see her, the two mares literally ran to one another and began madly grooming one another. They were so ecstatic to be reunited. They remained that way here – an inseparable pair until Four Bales' death several years later. Our hearts

were always filled watching the two of them together and knowing how some strange fate brought them back together again where they could just enjoy being horses again without having to perform to any standard.

Within a year or two after Four Bales arrived, the breeder called us back again. He had two more of his race horses that he needed to retire instead of euthanizing them. The racing industry can be incredibly heartless but at least this breeder tried to do the best for his horses. We said yes and drove out with our trailer to pick up Lamoka Babe and Lamoka Gypsy. Little did we know at the time, we were in for another very special reunion indeed.

We had put all of our retired Thoroughbred race horses out in a pasture together. There were six of them. Bo and Four Bales immediately welcomed Babe and Gypsy into the herd. They all started running around and playing together. Bonnie called the breeder to remark about this and he started laughing. "Well, they haven't seen each other for several years but Bo, Babe, and Gypsy all were weanlings and yearlings together. Then they went their separate ways. I never thought about that until now but the group is reunited."

And reunited they were. Each of them had had various levels of success and failures racing. Each went through some injuries and hard times. But in the end, they all ended up in a herd together, out in a pasture where they could run and make up their own games on their terms, and spend the rest of their lives together.

More than once we witnessed an astonishing thing. Those six Thoroughbreds would line up shoulder to shoulder with their butts to the fence line. They'd all look from one to the other and we could feel them amping up. It was as if one of them suddenly yelled – "On your mark, get set, go!" And they would take off and race up to the top of a distant hill in their pasture. Running and racing for the pure joy of it. We could feel their exhilaration. No jockeys, no trainers pounding to get another tenth of a second out of them. Just six athletes competing for fun among themselves. Six best friends living the dream that most horses never get to live.