



TattleTails & Tidbits



Spring Farm CARES Animal & Nature Sanctuary Journal

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Living in the North East, fall brings along the most amazing splendor of sights and smells. From the stunning colors of sunflowers and maple trees, to the smell of ripe apples and fallen leaves - it is a smorgasborg for the senses. Fall reminds us that while all things take their course and come to an end, there is also the hope of a new beginning. When the great maple trees shed their colorful leaves, we understand that the tree is not dying, but it will rest and renew and come back in the spring with vivid green buds that turn into leaves and then start their ritual all over again.

Fall reminds us to look within and to rest and renew. The horses enjoy the cooler weather with fewer flies to bother them. The days grow a bit shorter and the cats snuggle in their beds grateful for the comfort that was once missing in their lives and is now most abundant in their lives.

And we humans..... well, we humans seem to moan that winter is soon to come often forgetting to savor the moment that is ours in the present. And the animals are here to remind us to just breathe and be grateful for each breath.

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The Merry-"Go-Round" Of Life

by Bonnie Reynolds



Bonnie & Buckwheat, left
Kazinka & Dawn, right

Dawn and I have worked together now, in what we eventually named Spring Farm CARES, for 39 years. During those years we have cared for, loved, and all too often lost, hundreds upon hundreds of animals. And though each "death" is sad, the loss often heartbreaking, each absence from our lives forever felt, Dawn and I are fortunate to have been given the understandings regarding "death" that we do have. To begin with, she and I are students of Seth. And if you have never read Jane Roberts' **Seth Speaks: The Eternal Validity of a Soul**, there is a real treat waiting for you. Beyond Jane's books of Seth, however, Dawn and I have been given understandings regarding "death" by the animals themselves! (It has also been handy for one of us to be so expert in communicating with animals.)

We have had dozens of such lessons. In limited space I can only tell you sketchily of a few. An early one was in 1992. Our yellow-and-white long-haired Head-Barn-Cat Prinny Purr had a seizure and died in our arms. Within an hour of her death she told Dawn that she was going right into utero and would return to us by September 24, maybe even before. She thought that her cat mother would be killed in the road and her litter would come to us to be nursed. She said that we would know her. She would be greyish and have really unusual markings.

How very specific! On September 21st, we got a call. A mother cat had been killed in the road. Her newborns were brought to us--one black, one white, one greyish with really unusual markings.

In the summer of 1993, two of our foundation horses died. The first was a buckskin Percheron-cross, Buckwheat. He was elderly, age 37. His bonded friend, Kazinka, a half-Arab chestnut mare, took his death hard. And one day she announced to Dawn that she had to go. She had to die. That afternoon she literally keeled over, stone dead. After the shock, and Kazinka's burial beside Buckwheat, Dawn asked her why she had gone that way. "Buck is coming back!" was the answer. "And I have to be with him. We're going to be twins. Llamas. And we're coming to Spring Farm!"

This was far out even for us. People didn't just give away llama twins. And we certainly couldn't afford to buy any. Yet in December a llama breeder called. She had a baby llama with an atrophied back leg. Would we please take him? To sweeten the pot, and because llamas suffer without the company of their own kind, this caring breeder sent along with him another, healthy, baby llama. Thus, though Kazinka was wrong on the "twin" part, Feather Dance and Gulliver came to Spring Farm. (Kazinka herself had been one of twins, a rarity among horses, so I guess she thought that's just how things happened with her.)



Mr. Bubbles

A similar situation, with more exact dating, had occurred in February of 1993 when Bubbles, one of two Shetland ponies that we had rescued, died. Her pal, Sugar, went into deep depression. She informed us that she, too, wanted to die, and started to really fail—until the morning of April 9 when, upon entering the stable, Dawn found her literally dancing around her stall. "Bubbles is coming! She's coming back!" she told Dawn. "Find her! Quick!" She explained that Bubbles had taken up residence in the developing fetus in a Shetland mare. She would return to Spring Farm by April 23rd, still in utero, and be born in her old stall.

As with llamas, available pregnant Shetland ponies are scarce. Yet, on April 22nd an elderly lady living about 10 miles from us called. She had many Shetlands. More than she could handle. She had a pregnant mare that she wanted to sell for \$350. So! The next day, April 23rd, we had "Little Missus" and her precious cargo trucked to us. On Saturday May 14, Mr. Bubbles was born in the stall where Bubbles had died. And, after only 15 minutes out

of the womb, he struggled to his feet. Totally ignoring his mother, he tottered over to the nickering Sugar, and they kissed. To top things off, the next morning Dawn's parents arrived with glazed donuts, their usual Sunday treat for Buckwheat and Kazinka in the next stall. Bubbles had always demanded a part of that treat. And now, less than a day old, catching sight of the bag of donuts, Mr. Bubbles tottered in beeline for the gate, stretched his head through the bars, demanded a chunk of donut, and wolfed it down. Indeed. Bubbles was back.

Then there was black-and-white George Kigercat, after whom our new small-animal facility, George Kigercat Memorial Hall, is named.



George on the 2nd round

George had repeatedly told Dawn that he was "working on plans for your new barn." He ignored us when we told him that we didn't need a new barn ... until, on Halloween night of 1993, our barn burned and we certainly did need a new one. But that's a whole other story. Here, it's only important that, in late June, before the fire, George got out on us and got himself killed in the road. He then told Dawn that he would soon be back. "You'll know me because I'll be with the bears," he told her. In September, we took in a three-day-old black-and-white kitten that someone found abandoned on a golf course. The lady brought the kitten in a box. And when we opened it we burst into laughter. Because the little guy lay sleeping between two teddy bears. Welcome back, George!

Oh there have been so many like instances. The full stories can be read in our latest book, **The Magic Years, A Thirty-Year Interspecies Conversation**. But from the above sketchy reports I think that you can see why Dawn and I have the comfort of knowing that death is non-existent on the Merry-"Go-Round" of every soul's eternal life.

A Note About Reincarnation

by Dawn Hayman

As an animal communicator, one of the most common questions that people ask me is whether their beloved animal friends are going to come back to them in another form. And they ask if I know when their animal friends in Spirit are coming back and how to find them if they do. I always tell people that you need to trust your heart and intuition. And trust your animal friend. If they are coming back to spend time with you again in physical form, they will find you and you them. Remember you found each other once already.

But I cannot stress enough how rare it has been for me to get an actual date even one time let alone several times. It is important to understand that this is not just a direct communication from the animal itself but also the intersection of my own intuitive/empathic/psychic abilities. These stories are not the norm, even for me. But we share them because they were incredible to experience and to illustrate the depth of connection we all have with a force far greater than our physical bodies. The connection between the physical realm and Spirit realm is clearer and greater than we often realize. We are truly only limited by our own thoughts and beliefs.

When we open our hearts to the infinite possibilities in Life, we often get communications and understandings that are miraculous and amazing. Our physical bodies are incapable of processing all of the amazing energies that are around us. We live in an astonishing world that is far greater and expansive than our physical senses can take in. In that energetic world, all is possible.

From Gizmo's View

by Dawn Hayman



Gizmo looking out her window

Gizmo, or Gizzy as we called her, came to the farm in 2009 after being abandoned with her litter of kittens. She was adopted out to a loving home after her kittens were weaned. But, sadly, in 2015 her person became very ill and could no longer care for her. Gizzy was returned to us again.

Losing her home for a second time proved to be extremely traumatic for Gizzy. She became depressed and despondent and stopped eating. Cats can become critically ill rather quickly when they do not eat. They can develop a liver condition (hepatic lipidosis) that needs immediate medical intervention and is often fatal. Unfortunately, that is what happened to Gizzy. She was immediately hospitalized and a feeding tube had to be installed to give her the nutrients she needed to turn this all around. It was touch and go for a while.

I communicated with Gizzy through this whole process. She was sent back home with the feeding tube until we could get her eating on her own again. But her despondency remained, I asked her what we could do to help her. "I am just so sad to lose my home," she said. "It's nice here, and all of you are very kind. But I loved my person so much. I feel lost. And I don't want to be with all these cats."

Despondency was going to kill her. I asked her whether, if I could come up with a situation for her with fewer cats and more privacy, she would try to stay around a bit longer. She agreed--as long as it didn't involve being adopted out again. She couldn't face yet another change.

We came up with a plan that ended up being everything Gizmo wanted. She ended up living in our library, where I also taught animal communication workshops. It was a big room with lots of windows that looked out on surrounding greenery. We arranged a table with bed and feeding dishes and litter box beside a window, overlooking a lovely hillside. And in that "private apartment", with only a few other cats down on the floor, she thrived.

The library was eventually renovated, becoming our small on-site veterinary clinic. Gizmo had to be moved. But I had promised her that we would keep her life here to her liking, and the promise was kept. We moved her to our large kitchen/lounge area. There we arranged her private "sky apartment" on a long work area that stretched from the stove to the sink and dishwasher beyond. There were only three other cats, down on the floor, and there were again windows, this time overlooking our gardens. Our princess lived happily, even able to meow till passersby let the water run in the sink so that she could drink from the tap. For four more years she enjoyed her post. No one ever usurped Gizzy's space. And she let us know how grateful she was.

This July, we saw that something was very wrong with her. An ultrasound revealed a large, inoperable mass. We all made sure that that she was kept comfortable with everything she needed right on her counter, and we arranged a little staircase should she decide to go down to the floor. She spent her days in her bed, soaking up the sunshine, looking out at the beautiful gardens beyond the window, and exuding peace and gratitude. She had found the forever home she had wanted which now she would truly prefer not to leave. But her life was complete. Her heart was full. She was filled with love. And her body was going.

We knew when she was finished and helped her to peacefully pass, there in the spot she loved so much, surrounded in love and beauty. She left her body like a whisper on the wind.

The day after Gizmo passed, I went into the kitchen and went to her empty bed. Silently I said, "Gizzy, I already miss you. Thank you for all the years we had with you. I hope you are happy where you are now." And as my heart connected with her, I felt her with me.

Her reply filled my heart with a message that I shall never forget.

"Dawn, it was so amazing. It was the most glorious and peaceful experience. As I looked out my window, I simply moved to the other side of the glass. I became the view that I cherished. The gardens. The farm. And my friends. All are right here with me."

A Message From Gizmo by Trinity Cook

"The beauty of loving someone, caring for someone, is the way we tend to mold our lives to fit around them. If you look around, you'll find evidence of this-small pieces of all the people (and animals) you love. For me, it's evident I'm loved in how the counter is arranged for me to walk around freely, the stairs that are placed to allow me to climb easily to my bed, the trays placed over the sink so I can walk across easily, how my bed has been arranged to keep me comfortable in my final days.



But when you mold yourself out of love for another, it is inevitable that you will feel their absence that much more. It is a gift to love and to be loved, and though painful, a gift to grieve. When you find all the little pieces of me, the little reminders of our time together, let them also be reminders that love can persist and reach beyond death - that it will still find me beyond this life.

Love is fluid and changing. In the spaces I used to fill, you will find room for new love. You will make room and mold yourselves in brand new ways around others who need you as I did. Thank you for loving me as I was, for creating space for me, and for molding your lives around mine."

Trinity Cook is our Animal Welfare Manager and received this message from Gizzy on the day that Gizzy "moved to the other side of the glass."

The Beaver's Muskrat and Woodchuck Neighbors

by Matt Perry



Beaver named Chinquapin

Life in and around a beaver pond is never limited to the Beavers themselves. While the dams and lodges are unmistakably the handiwork of these master engineers, their creations often become the center of activity for many other species. Most are water-loving creatures—frogs, fish, dragonflies, ducks, and Mink—while others are not typically associated with wetlands at all. Yet in the shelter of a beaver's lodge or along the edges of a pond, these unexpected neighbors can be found making themselves quite at home.

The beaver lodge, an expansive structure of sticks and mud, is not reserved exclusively for its architects. For as long as Beavers have built lodges at the sanctuary,

they have shared them with Muskrats. Though much smaller, Muskrats are skilled aquatic engineers in their own right, sometimes constructing small dome-shaped lodges that rise from the shallows. Yet when a beaver lodge is available, they often save themselves the effort, moving in as tenants instead. Within the lodge, they carve out separate chambers, confident that their accommodations will remain warm and that the lodge's plunge holes will stay ice-free through winter—all thanks to their industrious landlords. They reap other benefits as well: Muskrats, primarily herbivores, will readily feed on the Beavers' carefully stored caches of vegetation.

Woodchucks, or groundhogs, also favor the edges of beaver ponds, though they never inhabit the lodges themselves, nor do they have an affinity for the water. These stout marmots are consummate burrowers, able to excavate elaborate tunnel systems with multiple entrances and chambers. A single Woodchuck can move over 700 pounds of soil in one season. Strict vegetarians, they feed on a great variety of wild plants including clover, and dandelions. However, they also have a notable fondness for apples, carrots, and sweet potatoes—offerings we dutifully bring to the Beavers.

At the Beavers' old pond system, a female Woodchuck named Chunk became a familiar presence. Her burrow was dug into the same bank as the beaver lodge, and she grew accustomed to our visits. At first she appeared only to share in the ducks' birdseed, but before long she was taking carrots from my hand. Chunk raised kits nearly every year, though Woodchuck mothers are typically discreet; the young remain hidden in the den until they are nearly half-grown. After six weeks underground, they first emerge wide-eyed and clumsy, venturing tentatively into the daylight.



Muskrats

When the Beavers relocated to their new pond system, another female Woodchuck—Clover—took on Chunk's role. Nearly as tame, she often waited at the water's edge for her carrot or sweet potato. Unlike Chunk, Clover eventually brought her kits with her—or perhaps they simply followed her without permission. Woodchuck family life is lively, and Clover proved a strict

disciplinarian. Whereas Beavers are indulgent parents, tolerating nearly all types of youthful mischief, Woodchuck mothers are quick to scold. Clover's guttural squeals and growls could sound harsh to human ears, but they were largely bluster—she didn't harm her young, though she made her authority unmistakably clear.

Among Clover's litter was one especially memorable kit: a bold young male I named Hop, after the wildflower "Hop Clover". Hop was remarkably gregarious. He would take carrots and sweet potatoes directly from my hand, often perching on my shoe as he ate. If I was slow in producing his treat, he climbed up my leg without hesitation. On days I arrived late, he sometimes raided the produce bag I left hanging in the shelter, dragging it down and chewing holes through the sack to sample each of the carrots. His sister, Lily, though always nearby, was the opposite—cautious, suspicious, and standoffish. The two siblings often quarreled over food, their disputes earning frequent chastisement from their mother.



Woodchuck named Hop

As summer advanced, Clover visited the pond less frequently, leaving her growing young to forage on their own. By autumn, the family disappeared into hibernation, as Woodchucks invariably do. In their underground burrows they entered a suspended state few mammals of their size can endure. Their period of torpor lasts from October until March, during which their body temperature drops close to ambient levels and their heartbeat slows to only a few beats per minute. Come spring, I expected Clover to return, but it was Hop who reappeared first. He emerged gaunt, his coat hanging loose as though three sizes too large, his body depleted from the long winter fast. Yet he remembered me instantly, climbing onto my shoe and begging for carrots. With steady foraging he fattened quickly and soon regained the glossy, well-fed look of a healthy marmot.

Weeks later his sister Lily returned, sleek and strong, but by then the tolerance between them had evaporated. Adult Woodchucks are solitary by nature, and as their territorial instincts sharpen with age, sibling bonds dissolve. The two scuffled frequently, and Hop—smaller of the pair—usually came out worse. His sister began lingering near the beaver lodge, as though contemplating the bank it was attached to as a den site. Their clashes grew more intense until at last Hop disappeared.

I never saw him again. Perhaps he dispersed, as many yearling Woodchucks do, seeking to establish a burrow and territory of his own. Perhaps he found a mate and began his lineage elsewhere in the sanctuary. Or perhaps he met a harsher end at the jaws of a fox or Coyote, or in the talons of a hawk, all of which thrive on the abundance of small rodents supported by the beaver ponds. I prefer to imagine the first—that Hop, the bold little Woodchuck who once tugged at my pant legs for carrots, still lives somewhere, patriarch of his own colony. In him, as in Chunk and Clover before him, lies a reminder that the beaver ponds are more than the domain of Beavers. They are crossroads of life, places where many stories unfold—some known to us, others hidden—and where the legacies of even the smallest residents ripple outward across the sanctuary.

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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.

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