



# TattleTails & Tidbits



Spring Farm CARES Animal & Nature Sanctuary Journal

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

## Renewing Our Mission

As spring arrives, everything starts to renew. The grass quickly gets green, the leaves start to form on the trees and the barren winter landscape gets replaced by life redefining itself anew. Spring is a rebirth and a time to look ahead to growth. It is a time to plant seeds that will bear fruit later in the year. The equines love when spring arrives with the promise of sunny days and warmth as well as the abundance of grass that they look forward to each year. The cats look forward to having access to their enclosed porches and basking in the sunshine and fresh air.

We humans meanwhile are taking this time to recommit, deepen, and refine the very heart of the mission of Spring Farm CARES. This is the Year of the Fire Horse according to the Chinese zodiac and we have used that theme for this year to honor all of our equines, past and present, who have always been at the very heart of all we do. Spring Farm CARES began as a horse rescue 40 years ago. In this issue, you will read about that mission and why we feel it is so important to stay true to that mission for the animals and for humanity as a whole.

As always, we are grateful for your participation in that mission and look forward to all we will continue to do together.

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](http://www.springfarmcares.org)

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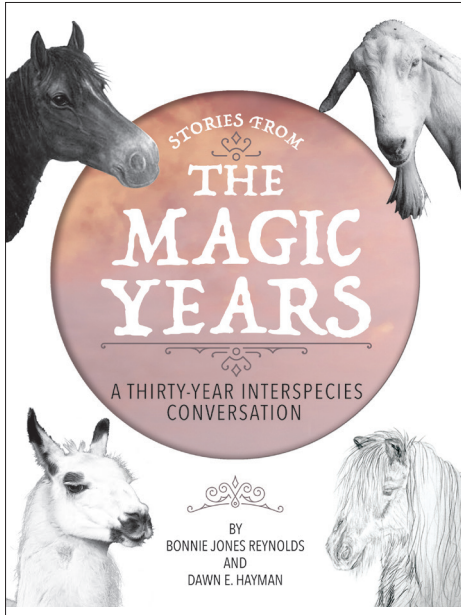
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# The Mission

by Bonnie Reynolds



It was 40 years ago, in 1986, that Dawn and I began giving shelter to animals in need. And it was 35 years ago, in 1991, that we took the advice of Dawn's accountant uncle, applied for and were granted 501c3 Charitable status. (Margot Unkel, our third "founder", joined us in 1995.) While making out the application, we were asked to make a Statement of Mission. Refusing to give in to worries about being thought crazy by the neighbors, I put our deepest beliefs and purpose onto paper.

*We believe that when our Mother Earth and all her living things were created, a loving balance, respect, and communication existed between Humans, all other life forms, and the Earth. We believe that Humankind has forgotten the original plan, to the detriment not only of others in the animal kingdom, and of the Earth, but of ourselves. We believe that a return to an understanding of our oneness with All That Is will cure the cruelties and horrors, and the illnesses with which we find ourselves surrounded. Through our caring contribution, we hope to help Humankind remember the original plan of love and respect, to remember our natural ability to communicate with All That Is, and so return to balanced health, physically, mentally, spiritually, and in relationship to all.*

The Universe heard us, and proceeded to gift us with Master Teachers, like former native medicine woman reborn as a Shetland Pony, Sugar – like an Arab princess, called “The Great Voice” by the other animals, Deeteza – like Simon the Wise, a large white goat who, we discovered, visitors and students regarded as “Almost ... holy” – like Gulliver the Llama, who proclaimed himself, and proved himself, to be, “The Great Eyes”. (Portraits of these first four Master Teachers appear on the cover of our most recent book, “Stories From THE MAGIC YEARS, A 31-Year Interspecies Conversation”) – then there was Amber D. the donkey, self-appointed mother of every animal in the stable and also of us – there was Phoebe, our amazing office duck – Monica the Afghan, composer of music -- and beloved George Kigercat, after whom our small-animal facility, George Kigercat Memorial Hall, is named.



Bonnie with Deeteza

Oh, so many great teachers have come to us over the years. Those who have passed away are still very much with us in, and coaching us from, spirit, while relatively new Masters work daily, continuing our education -- like a mare named Brandy, whose eyes when you look into them draw you into – surround you – with understanding of the silent beauty and love of the Universe – and like a goose named Lucy who manages to surround you with love, but much prefers a noisy Universe.

There are some among those of you reading this right now that met, and well remember, some of our original Masters. Because some of you have been with us for all of our 35 years! Not only have you donated during of those years, but you have learned right along with us, helping us to attain success in our declared Mission, filling us with gratitude. Others among you are relatively new to Spring Farm CARES, but are now beginning to learn, responding to the amazing messages that the animals send to you and that you receive either consciously or sub-consciously, further fulfilling our Mission.

There is of course Dawn Hayman, and the amazing abilities with which she was sent into this world. Those of you who have taken any of her classes assume that you were being taught by Dawn. But Dawn will be the first to tell you that she is learning every day right along with you, that she is merely the conduit, channeling, by way of the animals, the Wisdom and Love of the Universe. And we're excited about the new presentations Dawn has decided on for this

year – in-person, evening “Meditations With the Horses” out in our stable, learning to feel and understand the very special energies with which these wonderful animals are constantly surrounding us.

It’s hard to express the happiness that knowing that our “caring contribution” is to some extent having results, that our early “hopes” have in some ways been fulfilled and will continue to be fulfilled. It’s hard to express how grateful we are to be living here in this peaceful place called Spring Farm, watched over, we truly believe, by angels. It’s hard to express how wonderful it is to wake up each morning knowing that we are surrounded by a few hundred animal friends, and that every bit of “work” that we do each day has purpose, that purpose being to care for and help them while they help us. Spiritually help us.

And we are grateful to all of you for being here with us, searching for and appreciating the spirituality and the return to the “original plan” as it is taught, gifted so lovingly to us, by a class of angels that Humanity calls “animals.”



*Amber Donkey*



*Simon*  
*photo by Suzanne Gold*



*Gulliver*

## 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.

# A Different Kind Of Nature Sanctuary

by Matt Perry

What distinguishes a true sanctuary is not simply the land it protects, but the philosophy that guides its stewardship. Many preserves and wildlife management areas serve important ecological purposes, yet most remain shaped by a human-centered framework in which wildlife is monitored, regulated, and controlled according to external goals.

The Spring Farm CARES Nature Sanctuary operates from a different premise. Here, the welfare of the resident wildlife is paramount. This is fundamentally their home. We regard ourselves not as owners or managers, but as support staff—working in service of the animals, plants and ecological communities that live here. That shift in perspective transforms every decision made on the land.



*Beavers Pippen & Tosh*



*Painted Turtle*

In many managed landscapes, wildlife is viewed primarily at the level of populations. Animals become statistics to be increased, reduced, or stabilized. At our sanctuary, the opposite is true. Many of our wild residents are known as individuals. The deer are not an anonymous herd, but a community composed of distinct beings with recognizable temperaments, relationships, and histories. Over time, these differences become unmistakable, and with that recognition comes responsibility.

To know an animal as an individual changes the ethics of conservation. Abstract “management” becomes difficult when the subjects of that management are familiar lives observed over years.

Nowhere is this philosophy more evident than in our relationship with the beavers. For more than twenty-six years, they have served as the sanctuary’s primary agents of wetland restoration. Through dam building and water redistribution, they have reshaped the landscape in ways no human engineered project could replicate.

In most settings (including in many nature preserves), beavers are treated as problems to be controlled. Here, they are trusted. They are known as named individuals, and they operate with complete autonomy. Rather than interfering with their decisions, we partner with them—protecting them from external threats and allowing their intelligence and instincts to guide the evolution of the ecosystem. The result has been the creation of extensive wetlands that support amphibians, birds, insects, fish, and countless other species. The beavers are not merely inhabitants of the sanctuary; they are its architects.

Our role, therefore, is not to impose structure upon the ecosystem, but to support it. We restore habitat, plant native species, and provide food and shelter opportunities with careful attention to ecological



*Questionmark Butterfly*



*Bobcat*

relationships. Pollinator gardens, for example, are designed not simply for beauty, but around the host plants required by butterflies, moths, and other insects to complete their life cycles.

Even our nesting structures reflect this philosophy. Fabricated boxes and platforms intended for birds are treated as equal-opportunity shelters. If a flying squirrel, mouse, or non-native bird species occupies them, they are allowed to remain. The structure has fulfilled its purpose by providing a nesting place to a living being in need.

Central to the sanctuary's ethic is a commitment to non-harm. Predators and prey alike are treated with respect. Coyotes, bobcats, and other predators are not viewed as threats to ecological balance,

but as participants in it. When ecosystems are allowed to function with minimal interference, they tend to regulate themselves more effectively than systems subjected to continual human manipulation.

We also adapt human behavior to wildlife, rather than demanding the reverse. Trails are closed if butterflies are laying eggs nearby. Sensitive bird nesting areas are avoided. Noise and disturbance are minimized. Such actions are not restrictions, but acknowledgments that humans are participants within a larger living system—and that we have ethical responsibilities to uphold.

What emerges from this approach is a model of conservation rooted in humility. It rejects the assumption that nature must constantly be controlled. Instead, it recognizes that ecosystems—the animals and their habitat—possess their own intelligence, resilience, and capacity for renewal when given time, space, and protection.

The sanctuary therefore becomes more than protected land. It becomes a living demonstration of coexistence—one in which animals are not managed, but known; where ecosystems are not engineered, but allowed to evolve; and where human beings act not as masters of the landscape, but as careful and conscientious partners within it.



*White-tailed Deer*

# Finding Sanctuary

by Dawn Hayman



When Bonnie and I started on our path to founding Spring Farm CARES 40 years ago, there was no way I could possibly imagine where this journey would lead and how much it would change my life. Fresh out of college with a Social Work degree, and totally disillusioned with the profession I had chosen, to say that I felt lost was an understatement. I felt I had just wasted 5 years and a lot of hard work putting myself through school to come up empty-handed in the end. But, little did I know at the time, that I was exactly where I needed to be and nothing at all had been wasted. In fact, I had been somehow divinely guided to what seemed to be the “wrong” choices only to find out they were exactly the right choices all the while.

At the start I was working for Bonnie, a family friend, part-time doing odds and ends for her. Although I had been around horses a little bit during my childhood, it was not a lot and it certainly was not on my radar as a career path by any means. In fact, I had what I felt was a healthy fear of horses and a deep respect for their strength and size compared to mine. I told Bonnie that I wanted nothing to do with her horses. But that soon changed.

I spent a lot of time doing yard work on the farm, and it was during those times of mowing the lawn, that I developed a profound connection to this land. My heart suddenly was clear that I had found a home. But, I shot that thought or “knowing” down quickly thinking who was I to feel this way? This wasn’t my farm. I merely was helping Bonnie out doing some work. I can clearly remember a day on the mower when I was finishing up and watching the sun set and this clear message came to me, “You are going to live here one day and you’ll remember this exact moment years from now.”

And as history proved, that is exactly what came to pass. This farm is my home and has such deep meaning to me. But I owe all of that to the horses (and of course Bonnie).

Bonnie has always been the visionary here. I was often the naysayer saying that it was a dream but it could never happen. Yet I learned about creating the reality we visualize. I learned about trusting my heart. And my life suddenly exploded onto a spiritual path that I could never have fathomed. The horses embraced my heart and brought me home. So many master teachers blessed this farm, opened our hearts, and connected us back to spirit and purpose. And then, they guided us to invite you to join us.

We founded Spring Farm CARES based on this mission. I owed so much to the animals who saved me. And I vowed to spend the rest of my life in service to them and their mission. A mission which includes helping open the human heart and reconnect humans to their own beauty and spirit – exactly what the horses had given to me. They asked only that I would teach others what they had taught me.

This is what Spring Farm CARES is all about. Some people have said it is too lofty of a mission. That we will never see it happen. But, they are not correct. We do see it happen on a daily basis. Does it change the world? Do you help change the world by joining and supporting our mission? Yes it does. And, you bet you do!

Indeed, the only way things change is one heart at a time. What the animals have shown me again and again is to never underestimate the remarkable courage and power that one heart has. Thank you for being a part of this journey. Thank you for lending your amazing heart to this mission. You are changing the world. The animals know it. And we here at Spring Farm CARES certainly know it as well.

# Story's Mission

by Dawn Hayman



Story

Before Spring Farm CARES was born, Bonnie had tried to breed some Thoroughbred mares to see if she could show that a horse could be bred, raised, trained and raced using holistic techniques and kindness. (This is another example of a decision that ended up leading us right to where we needed to be to start Spring Farm CARES. For we quickly learned there was no place in the racing industry that even remotely took that seriously.)

One of the foals Bonnie bred was born in 1991 and was named Ironic History or "Story" for short. Story was a true black in color – which is not very common. Any aspirations for a riding career, let alone a racing career, were cut short at just 2 months old when Story contracted a virus that damaged her heart. So Story was destined to live out her days here with us – a destiny which was heaven sent for Story as we came to understand.

Story lived to be in her mid-twenties and never left Spring Farm CARES and she left a legacy behind. Story became my best friend. I had an incredible connection with her. We would spend most evenings playing in the arena where I would set up obstacle courses and jumps and all sorts of things and

Story and I would do the course totally halter free. We were true partners. We had trained her using Linda Tellington-Jones' TTOUCH method. And Story was incredible. I could do anything with her. She trusted me completely and I her.

Then, one year, we hosted a 5 day TTOUCH training here at the farm. Bonnie was telling the instructors about my work with Story and they asked if I would do a little demonstration with her. This was a huge accomplishment for me and I was floored and honored. And I was also very nervous and wanting to do this perfectly. Because I had something to prove that I could do this. Everyone gathered in the stands in the arena and I went to get Story from her stall at the other end. I walked in with the halter and said to her, "Ok girl, this is our time now. Let's not mess this up." Story stopped dead in her tracks as she was turning to walk to me. She just stared at me. My heart was pounding with anxiety. The group was waiting, all eyes on me. And Story did something she never, ever did. She turned around and offered her butt to me. I fleetingly thought she was going to kick me. But then I blew that off and thought, 'no, she'd never do that.' So I walked up to her to come around to her head, getting very embarrassed and frustrated that I was looking foolish. Notice, it was all about me. It no longer was about my relationship with Story. It was me wanting to impress the other humans.

Without hesitation, Story whipped her leg out and kicked me in the leg. It was not a little kick. It was a smack heard all the way across the arena. Not only was my leg bruised, but my ego was bruised even more. But worse than that, I knew what I had done. I had betrayed my best friend. I had made us into a side show instead of just honoring the relationship we had. I had made this about my ego and showing off for other humans.

Story never ever let that go. In fact, she not only stopped doing halterless work with me but she no longer let us halter her to do anything. She became almost completely unhandleable. Story ended up living the next 23 years in a herd of four horses who lived outside year round in a large run in shed. I always blamed myself for having destroyed her life. But years later, Story taught me something else.

I frequently would walk a loop around a big field that Story had access to. She started to follow me on my walks. She was about 20 years old now. One day, I stopped and she hung her head over the fence.



*Story meditating with Dawn*



*Story meeting with an animal communication workshop participant and barn cat Bella.  
(Photo courtesy of Jackie Taylor)*

She said, "Maybe you could relax and let go of your guilt. I am just fine. I am living the most amazing life here. I never wanted to leave this farm. I didn't want to perform. I didn't want to be sold. I just wanted to be a horse on this amazing land and be with you. And that is what I have done. Why don't we stand together and meditate. Right now. And maybe you will find me again for who I am and have always been. I never shut you out or asked you to leave. It was your guilt that did that. I just did what I had to do for you to understand that I needed to stay here. Like this. This is my life. I love my life."

While Story couldn't be "handled" in the traditional way of horses, she still was an amazing teacher. She still helped by connecting with people over the fence. And I started meditating with her regularly.

I never again let my ego take precedence over what was right for an animal. While I totally understood that the animals here didn't need to perform for anyone ever again, what I didn't understand was that the same applied to me. I didn't have to perform to someone else's expectations or standards either. I just needed to live the life I came here to live. I just needed to be me. Story helped me find that truth.

Many people would look at Story and say 'what a shame she never could be ridden.' But they missed the point about the life she lived. Story's life was a complete success. She got to live a life that most horses never get to find. She got to be free on her own terms. And we were the lucky humans with whom she chose to share that with. She was a champion in a most profound way. And when she crossed her final finish line, she did so without a halter or bridle or bit in her mouth. She left this world totally free. It was clear she interacted with us and visitors because she chose to do so, not because it was expected of her. And in that freedom, she led with her heart and was a catalyst for opening the hearts of many others.