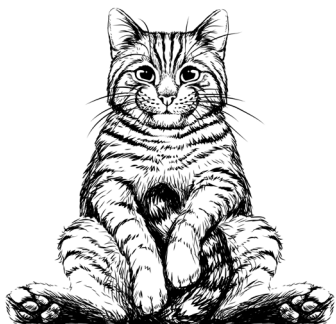




TattleTails & Tidbits



Spring Farm CARES Animal & Nature Sanctuary Journal

Volume 5, Issue 4, July/August 2026

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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

Creating A Peaceable Kingdom

In this issue we focus on peace and gratitude. Indeed the two are very intertwined for if we humans could spend more time focusing on gratitude, we would find more inner peace. This farm, meaning the very land we call "the farm", has an amazing and deep rooted feeling of peace and tranquility. It is the energy that people and animals find when they enter this space. It is energy that resides deep within the land, plants, trees and rocks. But it is also the heart energy from every animal who has ever resided in this space for generations. When you put all of these elements together, a most amazing thing happens. It is both magical and mystical and extremely palpable. If you come with an open mind and open heart, you will be sure to find it.

For those of us who call this space home, we are filled with enormous gratitude each and every day to be a part of the creation of this peaceable kingdom. And it brings us great joy to share this with all of you.

For those of you who have experienced the farm, you know exactly what we mean. And to those of you who have yet to visit, we look forward to having you experience this as well.

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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A Gift From Theo

by Bonnie Reynolds

A couple of weeks ago just before closing we received a call from a lady who had found a stray cat in urgent need of medical help. Due to a fund that we keep set aside specifically to be able to help in such situations – our Serenity Fund, named for a wonderful cat named Serenity who came to us several years ago -- we were able to tell the lady to bring him right over to us.

She had already given the cat a name. Theo. That's Greek. It means divine gift, gift of God. And to me Theo was just such a gift.

Theo was black. He was also huge – not only in size, but in, shall we say, “fat content”. He was so fat that he couldn't twist around to tend himself on the rear end, and that rear end was shedding maggots. His fur was terribly matted – the lady and her daughter had already managed to cut off a bunch of it. And we could see when he walked that there was something wrong with his right hind leg.



Yet with all of the circumstances that should have made him seem scruffy and even distasteful, he instead seemed regal. There was something – it's hard to describe the essence of him. One felt that one was in the presence of a very special, indeed a major, Spirit. He was so relaxed, so unafraid or worried, so “together” and cooperative as he was looked over. It was impossible not to fall in love with such a special Spirit.

Whatever his injuries, his condition was obviously beyond our limited abilities to help him in-house that evening. We would get him to the vet in the morning. For his comfort during the night a pen with food, water, litter box and comfy bed was put up. And we were touched, as he was invited to enter the pen, about how he limped to each of his rescuers, rubbed against them and kissed them, then so willingly entered the pen.

Comparing notes, we all agreed that we had each been touched in ways that we couldn't as yet describe. Except that we were all head-over-heels in love with him.

I didn't get much sleep that night. I laid there -- worrying about him, about how badly he might be infested with those maggots, how bad his injuries might be -- but mainly I was filled with wonder at that Presence. Only from some of the Master Teachers who have graced us had I ever felt anything approaching Theo's Presence. Had another Master Teacher come to us?

Reports from the vet's office the next day underscored the reactions that we had had. Everyone at that office was in love with him! And, as he had behaved with us, so he was just as relaxed and comfortable as they worked on him. But they had discovered that the maggots were issuing from a large and awful bite that he had received on his right hind leg and thigh. They didn't know as yet how deeply infection might have invaded his body, or what other problems might have developed from the bite. But they were astonished at his attitude. He had to have been and to be in a great deal of pain. Yet his behavior didn't show it. They warned us that their bill for everything they needed to do to help him might be huge. We told them not to think about the cost, just do everything they needed to do for him.

I received my gift from Theo that first afternoon as I sat at my desk. I was suddenly overwhelmed with gratitude – gratitude that with the Serenity Fund we had been not only in a position to take Theo in, but to pay whatever it took to help him. The gratitude just kept expanding. My mind went back 40 years, and up through all the years since, over all of the hard times and the great times, remembering so, so many things, and especially all of the people who have been with us along the way, aiding us, donating, cheering us on, helping to make Spring Farm CARES what it has become. And the gratitude spread to the whole world. I found myself thanking my desk for being there, found myself thanking the deep, lush green of the fields outside my windows. And the gratitude has not stopped. Going about my

work in the last days I have found myself repeatedly mentally thanking things, thanking animals, thanking people who surround me or who come to mind, thanking my own self and the whole world just for being.

It is a great gift that the special Spirit Theo gave to me. I will try to honor him by remembering to keep on valuing and thanking everything in the world. His prognosis grew worse and worse. In the end, problems were found that could not be helped or repaired. The go-ahead for euthanasia had to be given. But a special gift from God does not necessarily intend to hang around. For me, he had done what he came to do. I do not know what gifts others might have received, but I'll bet that those gifts were many and profound. Never will I forget Theo, the gift from God. And each time I think of him I'll remember to give thanks.



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 Peaceable Kingdom

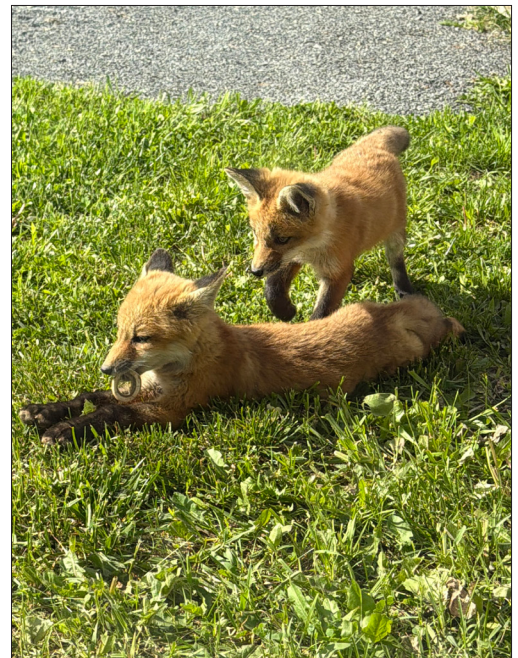
by Dawn Hayman

Something significant is happening. At first, it was hard to put words to what I could deeply feel. This farm has always been a sanctuary and refuge in this world. The farm drew me into its loving embrace nearly 40 years ago. I have watched others be called here as well over the years. Visitors come and speak about the incredible peace they feel when they step foot on the farm. That has been a constant for decades now. But this time, something is incredibly different. Deeper. Even more sacred. Powerful. Humbling. And while I cannot adequately describe this in words, I can share with you what we are seeing.

I intuitively understand that what I'm about to share is the culmination of so many Master Teachers who have resided on this farm in animal form for generations. And it is also the work of the human hearts who chose to focus on love, kindness, and peace. When you set your heart intention to be kind and tolerant and loving, there is no stopping what you will create around you. And our farm is proof of this for sure.

Last summer, for the first time in the 40 years I've been here, I saw my first fox come into the barnyard. This was an alarming sight as we have free roaming ducks, chickens, and our elderly Lucy goose who none of us wanted to see become dinner for the foxes. But the momma fox raised a small litter of kits under one of our storage sheds close to the barn. We only saw them a few times and then they disappeared. This, we learned, was normal fox behavior. The females will have their kits close to humans so that other predators, such as coyotes, won't come in. These mother foxes are extremely smart and cunning in their decision making. But this year, a female was seen on a daily basis around the farm for several weeks.

This time she made her den, as we later learned, under a goat shed that we are currently not using. It was literally 20 feet from our house. And for days and days we watched a litter of five four-week-old kits romp and play. We took pictures and videos and got a much closer look at this fox family than most humans get an opportunity to see. People told us to enjoy them as they won't be there long. Mom will leave with them and move out soon. While mom did move them, she simply moved them to another safe location right among our most heavily trafficked areas. The ducks, chickens, and goose were all safely locked in and the longer the foxes stayed the more I started thinking this was becoming an inconvenience.



But it is actually an amazing lesson because they are showing us something incredible. These young kits are very inquisitive. They come up on our deck, look into the windows and walk right up to our dogs barking at them from the inside of the glass. They come into the barn and play in the sawdust pile when all humans have gone. They are filled with curiosity and the innocence of youth. And they are thriving here.

What has been amazing to see is fox kits playing in front of our big hall while a family of young wild rabbits are playing just feet away. The first time I saw it, I was so alarmed. I braced myself for a National Geographic moment when the predator takes down the prey right in front of me. But, no. Momma fox didn't touch them either. Predator and prey had an understanding (albeit temporary I am sure) that in this safe nursery, it was a place to raise their young. There is a palpable feeling of oneness and appreciation – mom to mom for the ability to safely raise their young.

I have seen this before. Many years ago, I walked into our barn where we had numerous barn cats only to see mice running around all over the place and the cats sitting there calmly watching them.

"What the heck are you doing?" I asked one of the cats. "Why aren't you catching the mice?" The reply set me back on my heels. "It's mouse appreciation week. We can't kill them." I just stood there speechless. But the lesson continued.

"We don't just kill things to kill things you know. This is where humans get lost in the process. It makes us sad. We appreciate the mice and the rabbits and the birds. Everyone needs time to raise their young so that this precious life can continue. There will be a time to catch mice once again, but that time is not now. It is called respect."



At the same time we were watching the fox kits playing all around the farm throughout the day, one morning I looked out our bay window that overlooks the farm and saw a deer laying down in one of our pastures. I grabbed binoculars to see if she was okay as it was a strange sight to see her lying flat out. In the next few minutes, I witnessed her give birth and clean off her newborn fawn. I then got to see that fawn stand for the first time and nurse. I was filled with gratitude to have witnessed such a sacred moment and to welcome a new life entering our sanctuary.

As a teacher of animal communication, there is one single question I am often asked, "I'm just one person. How does opening my heart change the world?"

That question is always asked out of despair or hopelessness. But when we can set aside that hopelessness, we can know the truth that indeed the world only changes one heart at a time. Your heart energy is very powerful. Energy is very real. And when you come from a place of peace and love and tolerance, that is what you create around you.

We understand this principle here at Spring Farm CARES because we see it work every single day. There is always hope. And just like the fox can sit with the rabbit and the cat can admire the mice, we humans can also treat each other with that basic understanding of respect for all of life. We have the same ability. We have the same responsibility. And it is up to each one of us, heart by heart, to create that space. And from that space, hope is a vital bi-product, love is the seed that grows, and tolerance nurtures us all.

So, create a space of love and peace around you. Open the door to magic and amazement. Watch your own heart start to heal. And get ready to feel a most amazing appreciation and love for all of life around you. Nature will be the first to respond. The plants, trees, and the multitude of animals that surround you will share with you their own peaceable kingdom. Now is the time to welcome that peace into your own heart as well.

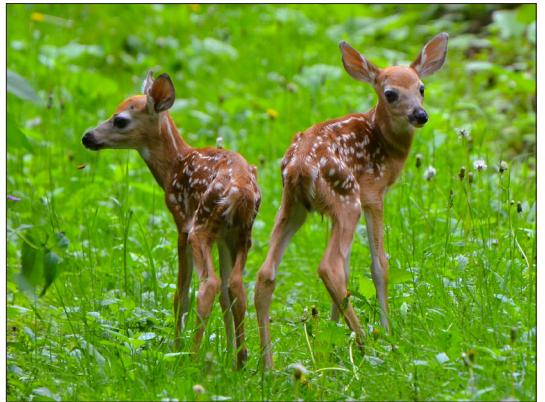
At The Nature Sanctuary, It's Not Unusual

by Matt Perry

At the nature sanctuary, it is not unusual for a White-tailed Deer doe and her spotted fawn to pass quietly by while we are working on a trail. It is not unusual for a woodchuck to approach in search of a treat. It is not unusual for a beaver to drag a freshly cut sapling past a group of observers in broad daylight, seemingly unconcerned by the presence of humans. Encounters that would be considered extraordinary elsewhere in the region have become part of daily life at the sanctuary.

To understand why, it helps to recognize that wild animals constantly evaluate risk. Energy spent fleeing from danger is energy that cannot be devoted to feeding, resting, raising young, or maintaining social relationships. Over time, animals learn which elements of their environment require caution and which do not. The process is neither sentimental nor mysterious. It is the product of experience.

White Tailed Deer Fawns



Woodchuck

For more than a quarter century, the Spring Farm CARES Nature Sanctuary has provided wildlife with an unusual set of experiences. Animals here are not hunted, harassed, trapped, or even intentionally frightened. Human encounters are overwhelmingly predictable and non-threatening. As a result, many species devote less energy to avoiding people than their counterparts elsewhere in the region.

The resulting interactions can be remarkable. One spring, a young woodchuck developed the habit of climbing onto my shoe while eating carrots. Not beside my shoe, but directly on top of it. There he would sit contentedly, chewing while using my boot as a dining platform. Woodchucks are typically wary animals. This youngster had simply concluded, through repeated experience, that people at the sanctuary

posed no meaningful threat and, more than that, could be regarded as allies.

The same principle was evident during an encounter with a mother porcupine and her kit. We discovered them feeding in a Black Locust tree along a trail. Rather than retreating, they continued browsing. The mother stripped leaves from the branches while her youngster fed beside her, carefully imitating her behavior. Both animals remained only a few feet away as we watched. The scene offered a glimpse into one of the most intimate moments in an animal's life—a mother sharing knowledge with her offspring and teaching it how to navigate the world.

The birds provide countless similar examples. Eastern Towhees, normally birds of dense cover and cautious habits, often forage openly near people. Chickadees, nuthatches, jays, and woodpeckers routinely usher us toward feeders that need filling. Hen ducks frequently bring their ducklings right up to us while they forage. Such behavior suggests not affection, but confidence—a distinction worth making. The sanctuary's wild residents have clearly concluded that we are safe. The same principle applies to mammals that are often misunderstood by people. Seeing a

Mother Porcupine





Eastern Towhee

fox, skunk, or raccoon active during the day does not mean it is rabid. More often, it simply means the animal feels secure enough to go about its normal routines without restricting its movements to darkness. In a landscape where risk is low, wildlife need not remain perpetually hidden.

Perhaps one of the most memorable examples involved a Barred Owl. One morning, while I stood quietly nearby, the owl descended into a shallow stream and began bathing. It splashed, preened, and immersed itself repeatedly in the water. Bathing leaves a bird temporarily vulnerable, reducing vigilance and diverting attention from potential threats. That the owl felt sufficiently secure to engage in such behavior speaks volumes

about the environment in which it lived.

No species better illustrates this phenomenon than the beaver. For more than twenty-six years, successive generations have shared the sanctuary with us while transforming the landscape through their engineering activities. Dams have slowed water, ponds have formed, wetlands have expanded, and entire biological communities have assembled around the habitats they created.

At the same time, the beavers have become unusually tolerant of human presence. They routinely travel trails during daylight hours. They pass within a few feet of observers while transporting branches. They groom, forage, and socialize in full view of people. Visitors are often astonished to watch a beaver emerge from a pond, accept a sweet potato, and calmly resume its activities.



Barred Owl



Beaver Taking Sweet Potato under supervision of our Naturalist

Because the animals permit close observation, behaviors that are difficult to study elsewhere become visible. Social interactions, parental care, communication, foraging decisions, and engineering activities can all be observed directly. In the beaver's case, the result is a deeper understanding of a species whose influence on North American ecosystems surpass that of any other non-human animal.

Yet these relationships are not merely the product of animals becoming accustomed to people. They are also the result of habitat. Over the years, thousands of trees and shrubs have been planted across the sanctuary. Forests and wetlands have been restored and expanded. Nesting sites, food sources, shelter, and cover have increased. In many ways, the sanctuary represents an effort to restore ecological opportunities that

have been lost across much of the surrounding region. This restoration has helped reestablish countless ecological relationships—pollinators with native wildflowers, birds with nesting habitat, mammals with natural forage, and, importantly, people with healthy natural ecosystems.

The sanctuary's wildlife has learned that people can be something other than a source of danger. In a sense, they have come to regard us as trusted members of their community, just as we regard them as trusted members of ours. In return, we have been granted a rare privilege—the opportunity to witness the lives of wild creatures unfolding at close range. In an increasingly fragmented and degraded natural world, that privilege is no small thing.

Meditation With Horses & Donkeys

by Dawn Hayman



This year we have added a new event that has really become popular with both horses and humans. If you missed the first one or couldn't get tickets (they sold out fast) we have scheduled two more dates for later this fall. Tickets are on sale now. (See below for details.)

We hold this meditation in the evening for a very specific reason. I have always loved my time in the barn in the evening when I do the final walk through for the night, top off hay and water, and check in with every animal in the barn to see how they are doing and listen if they have anything they want to share. It is one of the most sacred times of my day and for nearly 40 years now it is a very important ritual. I have often wished I could share the quiet in the barn with others. But the very thing that makes that time special is that it is quiet. It is the private time for the horses where they come back together into the barn as a herd after being out in their various pastures during the day. It is a time just for themselves after all humans for the day have gone. It is a time for them to decompress. And, with their permission, they have allowed me to invite you to quietly share in that space with me.

We have limited this meditation event to 30 people. The horses were fine with that as long as the humans could be quiet. It is a very special and unique experience for 30 humans to sit quietly in their hearts and commune with the 20 – 30 equines in the barn. I will guide a meditation that is actually given to me by the very horses surrounding us. And then you will have time to walk around and connect with the horses and donkeys.

Horses and donkeys are powerful healers. Their heart energy can be measured 15 -20 feet around their bodies. They are masters at staying grounded and being present in the moment and they have much to offer and teach us about being present in our own hearts.

We hope you'll join us for an hour of quiet and peace and a chance to reconnect to your own heart in the presence of these beautiful beings who are inviting you to share a moment in their home with them.



For Information and Ticket sales: <https://www.springfarmcares.org/events/>