



TattleTails & Tidbits



Spring Farm CARES Animal & Nature Sanctuary Journal

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A New Chapter Begins

As we enter into the first issue of our fourth year of TattleTails & Tidbits, we look to a year of uncertainty. For many, it is already starting out to be filled with raging storms and fires and tragedy. But, we must also pause to look at all the beauty and wonder in the world. It is so important to focus on what we have to be grateful for in our lives and not what we fear could happen.

Humanity holds a space of collective consciousness where we create our world around us together. At Spring Farm CARES, we know this is true because this is how we created all that we have over the years. The animals teach us to be present and how to hold a space for creating our dreams and hopes and visions. They not only teach us to be better humans, but they implore us to remember our connection to them, to nature, and to each other.

There is so much good in this world. And if we could focus on that, and feel gratitude for those things, then we would create more and more beauty, kindness, and compassion.

Let's make this year a turning point for love and compassion. The choice is always ours, each one of us individually, and all of us collectively. Let's be the change we want to see in this world. The world needs us to be there and to be present.

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 Story of Ice And Snow And Peace On Earth

by Bonnie Reynolds



During the last week, much of the US has been digging itself out from under ice and snow. Here at SFC we received only 6 or 7 inches of snow, but one employee had 5' where she lives., another reports 8'. It seems then appropriate to speak of the plight of 3 whales, 37 years ago, October of 1988. We addressed the story in our first newsletter, Christmas of 1992.

Three young grey whales lingered too long at their feeding grounds off of Barrow, Alaska, and became trapped under the ice, unable to surface in order to breathe. The local Intuits, oil drillers, and organizations like Greenpeace joined forces and worked frantically to create and maintain breathing holes for them. Media covered the story daily. The whole world watched with

crossed fingers, hearts and minds joined as one, praying for the welfare of those three animals.

But the creatures kept frustrating their rescuers, repeatedly moving away from the air holes. I asked Dawn to talk to them, to explain to them that they should stay close to the holes, that those holes would keep them alive while their rescuers figured out some way to help them swim free.

Dawn did contact the whales...and was shocked by their reply.

"We are not here to be saved," they told her. "We three have been chosen to teach humans a very important lesson. We are not trapped here unwillingly. We will have to die to teach our lesson. We are not sad. We are honored to be the ones chosen for this task."

Dawn didn't understand, but she accepted their words. Each morning before hearing the news I had her again contact the whales. One morning they told her that one of them had died. The remaining two were going to move on, further under the ice. When she asked them what lesson humankind was supposed to learn from their sacrifice, they only said that they hoped we would find out.

The news confirmed what the whales had told her. The youngest had indeed died, and the other two kept moving further from the air holes. Sadly, Dawn and I resigned ourselves, waiting to hear of the deaths of those last two.

The next morning when Dawn contacted them, however, she had a wonderful surprise.

"We are going to live!!! You humans not only got our message but far surpassed what we thought you would do. Now we can teach the lesson better by living."

She could feel the joy and emotion flowing through them. They were so excited, so proud, so honored to have helped humans understand.

But understand what?

When we turned on the news we learned that the US State Department had asked the Russians to send ice breakers. And the Russians were coming!!! To worldwide jubilation, two Russian ice breakers managed to break a path through

the ice and the whales swam free.

It took nearly 3 years for Dawn and me to fully understand what those whales had been up to, what events a worldwide desire for their welfare had caused to happen. But during those 3 years the cold war ended, the Berlin Wall fell, and Russian Communism as we knew it became history. Two countries that had been bitter enemies for decades and had never communicated with one another in any humanitarian way had finally come together in a cold sea and “broken the ice” to save life...leading, hopefully, to the saving of a great deal of life worldwide for the next 37 years.

Once again, however, much of the world is again at odds with Russia. Dangerous odds, with horrible loss of life, and even worse loss if things don't improve.

Do the whales have more plans in store for us...plans that will again remind humanity of the worth of Life?

In the last few days hearts worldwide are again breaking, and sympathizing with an Orca whale named Tahlequah. In 2018, Tahlequah swam for 17 days, covering 1000 miles, carrying her dead calf on her back, mourning the loss of that little life.

There was jubilation when, this last Christmas, she was seen swimming with a newborn calf at her side. It didn't last however. By New Year's Day she was once again in mourning, swimming with that second dead calf on her back.

Two precious little sacrifices? What more might those noble beings, the whales, have planned? How many more sacrifices of Life must there be before we humans, too, become, finally, as noble—or wise--as the whales?

God bless them.

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](#).

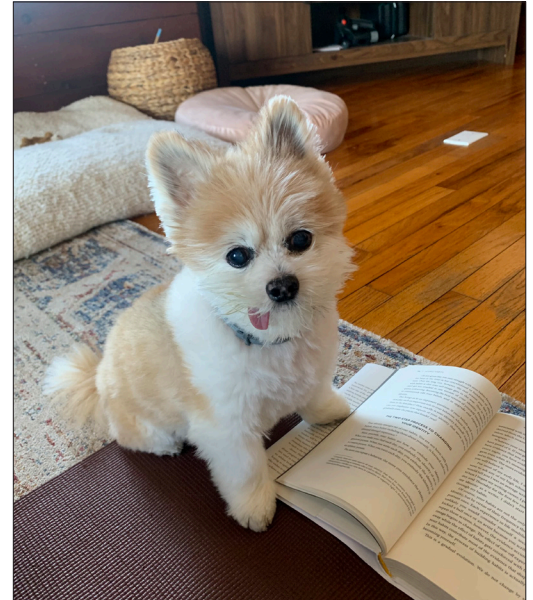
[Donations](#) are gratefully accepted and we hope you will share this with those you think would be interested as well.

The Courage To Love

by Becca Lorenzo

I used to say that I could never adopt a senior animal because I couldn't handle the prospect of having limited time with them. But in 2019, I ate my words as an 11-year-old Pomeranian mix stole my heart and ended up coming home with me. Being the first dog I adopted on my own as an adult, I didn't know what to expect. Now, six years later, Toby is 16, and I deeply understand the meaning of the phrase 'soul dog'. I knew I would love him, but I had no idea what an indescribably deep connection we would develop. As Toby is in the twilight of his life, the looming thought that has been in the back of my mind for years has been 'This is REALLY going to hurt'.

If you have a senior animal, you know the anxiety that comes along with anticipating when and how the end of their life will come about. A few weeks before Christmas, Toby started having some health issues, and I started worrying that what I had been dreading may be just around the corner. Dealing with the uncertainty of whether he was going to get better, or if we were about to be faced with the decision of letting him go, was beyond distressing.



Toby

On a particularly hard day, I said out loud to my husband "Sometimes I wish I didn't love him SO much. Then this wouldn't hurt so bad". I immediately felt guilty for even thinking that, but I was desperate to escape the pain I was feeling. Then all of a sudden, I was flooded with a vivid memory of a cat – a cat named Twiggy. Twiggy was a resident at Spring Farm CARES who I had met in early 2024. She was a little spitfire with deep green eyes and an adorable little fold to one of her ears. I didn't form a close bond with her right away; she mostly kept to herself and wasn't shy about letting you know when she needed space.

One day in February, I heard that her bloodwork results were not looking good and she was now considered to be on hospice care, so I started visiting her more to give her extra attention. Because you had to walk into Twiggy's room to get to the bathroom, it became our routine that I couldn't walk by her without stopping to say hello.

After a few weeks of this, I realized I was starting to get quite attached to Twiggy. This concerned me as she was on hospice, which meant that I was in for an inevitable heartbreak. Upon realizing this I thought "I need to stop getting so attached – I shouldn't spend so much time with her". I'm almost embarrassed to admit that this was my first thought, but it was. Out of self-preservation, I decided that it was better to hold back my love for this cat to protect myself from getting hurt.

But it was as if Twiggy knew what I was thinking because every time I came into that room she gave me this penetrative stare that demanded I pet her and a croaky 'meow' that sounded just like a 'hi!'. And since her bed was right next to the bathroom, I quite literally couldn't avoid her.

It was then that I realized that I couldn't evade this heartbreak – and I didn't want to. So, I continued our usual visits and gave Twiggy my full heart and full attention until the day she left. When that day came, I walked into her room, looked at the empty space where her bed once was, and felt a painful ache in my heart. I wished that I could hear her meow 'hi!' one more time. The absence of the connection that was once there hurt deeply. And I'm grateful for it.

Twiggy taught me that our ability to love is the greatest gift we have. Without it, what are we? And with love, comes grief, because one of the only guarantees in life is that we WILL inevitably lose those we love. But as humans in our modern world, we aren't taught how to handle the uncomfortable emotions that come along with grief, so we do anything we can to avoid it. We shut ourselves down, keep others at a distance and hold ourselves back from loving fully because we think that we're protecting ourselves from getting hurt. But really, all we are doing is just depriving ourselves and others of the most precious thing we have in this world.



Twiggy

So we have a choice: we can love fully and face loss, or hold back and face regret. I will take the pain of grief over the pain of regret any day.

As these memories of Twiggy came flooding back to me, I remembered this promise I made to her, and I knew I owed the same thing to my beloved Toby. And luckily enough, I got another chance to do that, because right after Christmas he began making a miraculous recovery. I have no idea what the future holds for Toby, but I know that whenever it's time for him to move on to the next world, I will take solace in the fact that I loved him as much as I possibly could. And for that, I will forever be grateful to my friend Twiggy.

Becca Laurenzo is our Community Outreach Coordinator. She developed and coordinates our Volunteer Program. Becca also is the voice behind the camera for our live Facebook series Animal Talk Thursday's. You will be seeing and hearing from Becca much more in the future.

**"Until one has loved an animal, a part of one's soul
remains unawakened."**

---- Anatole France

The Two Fox Species Of The Nature Sanctuary

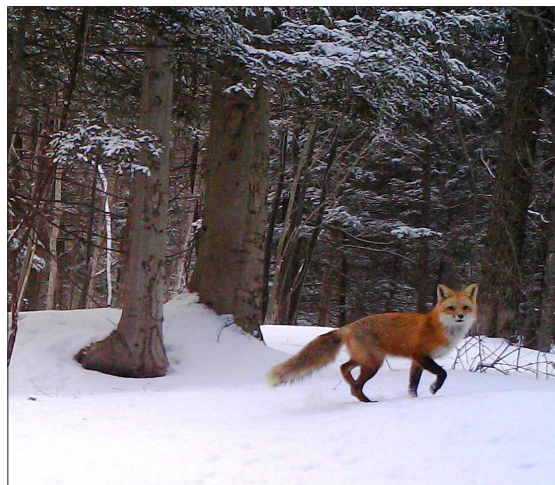
by Matt Perry

At our Nature Sanctuary, the Red Fox and the Gray Fox share the environment. This creates a unique opportunity to observe two similar but not closely related species with their own distinct behaviors and adaptations. While they may overlap in territory and habits, these two foxes remain separate, coexisting without interbreeding due to significant genetic differences. Despite being top-tier predators, both species have highly adaptable diets and behaviors that enable them to thrive in diverse habitats, from woodlands to open fields.



Red Fox

The Red Fox is the more recognizable of the two species, with its striking reddish-orange fur, bushy tail tipped in white, and black stockings on its legs. These foxes are masters of adaptation, capable of living in forests, grasslands, suburban areas, and even urban environments. Known for their cunning and intelligence, Red Foxes are primarily nocturnal but can often be seen during dawn and dusk, especially in quieter areas of the Sanctuary and around the beaver ponds. In places where they consider themselves safe, like our Sanctuary, they may be seen at midday.



Red Fox

Red Foxes are solitary hunters, relying on their acute hearing to detect the rustle of small mammals like mice and voles beneath snow or vegetation. However, their diet is far from limited to animals. They are omnivorous and opportunistic feeders, readily eating fruits, seeds, nuts, and even human food scraps when available. Grapes, berries, and other fruits are particular favorites, which they forage mainly in late summer and fall. This adaptability allows Red Foxes to sustain themselves even when prey populations are low and hard to come by.

In terms of vocalizations, Red Foxes are famous for their eerie, high-pitched screams that can punctuate the night, especially during the mating season in late winter. These calls can sound almost human and serve to attract mates or communicate with other foxes. They also bark, yap, and emit a low growling sound when feeling threatened or during play.

The Gray Fox, though less conspicuous than the Red Fox, is equally beautiful and fascinating. Its coat is a blend of salt-and-pepper gray with reddish flanks, and a black-tipped tail. Gray Foxes are more elusive than their red counterparts, often preferring dense woodlands and areas with thick underbrush. They are primarily nocturnal and tend to avoid human activity, which makes sightings a special treat for Sanctuary visitors.

One of the Gray Fox's most unique adaptations is its ability to climb trees, a trait unusual for members of the canine family. With semi-retractable claws and a strong grip, Gray Foxes can scale trunks and branches to evade predators, access food, or find denning sites. This arboreal skill sets them apart from Red Foxes and contributes to their survival in wooded habitats.

Like the Red Fox, the Gray Fox is an omnivore with a varied diet. In addition to hunting small mammals, birds,

and insects, it readily consumes fruits, seeds, and nuts. Grapes and berries are often found in their scat, highlighting the animal's reliance on seasonal fruits. This dietary overlap with the Red Fox could lead to competition, but their differences in habitat preferences and behaviors seem to minimize direct conflicts.

Gray Foxes are quieter than Red Foxes but still communicate through vocalizations. Their calls include barks, yips, and a variety of low growls and grunts, used to signal danger, establish territory, or interact with family members.



Gray Fox

Despite overlapping ranges and ecological similarities, Red Foxes and Gray Foxes do not interbreed. This is due to genetic differences, as the two species belong to distinct evolutionary lineages. Red Foxes are true foxes of the *Vulpes* genus, while Gray Foxes belong to the genus *Urocyon*, an ancient lineage that has been around for millions of years. Their different mating behaviors and preferences further prevent interbreeding.

Fox dens play a critical role during the breeding season. Red Foxes often dig dens in soil, or they work to enlarge existing burrows, while Gray Foxes are more likely to den in hollow logs, tree cavities, or rocky outcroppings. Both species raise their young in spring, teaching kits essential survival skills before they disperse in late summer or fall.

The coexistence of Red Foxes and Gray Foxes at our Nature Sanctuary offers a window into the complexity of wildlife behavior and adaptation. While both species share some similarities, like omnivorous diets, territorial habits, and remarkable survival skills—they remain distinct in behavior, habitat preferences, and physical traits. Together, these two species enrich the ecosystem and provide endless fascination for those who take the time to observe their lives in the wild.



Gray Fox

When It Is Just Time To Go - The Departure Of Blue

by Dawn Hayman



In the November/December Issue of TattleTails & Tidbits, Bonnie told the story of our rabbit Blue and how he dealt with the loss of his bunny companion Clover. Blue was truly devastated when Clover died. He had stayed faithfully by her side as she declined from old age. A few weeks later, we welcomed a new rabbit, Annie, and she and Blue became fast friends. Annie had recently lost her rabbit companion too, so it was really special to see Annie and Blue find one another.

All of us humans were feeling good about watching two hearts heal from loss and the accompanying grief. But then, life took a strange and unpredictable turn. On the morning of December 26th, Bonnie noticed that Blue wasn't really interested in eating his food. She had also noted the night before that he was more aloof than usual. While there were no obvious signs of illness, our caretaking team was watching him closely

throughout the day. Our medical team also was checking in on him and monitoring him. No one thought this was anything life threatening.

However, late in the afternoon, while the medical team was checking on him, out of nowhere Blue suddenly collapsed and passed away. All of us were totally blindsided by how quickly he just left. We just stood there in grief and disbelief. What in the world had happened? Why?

That is when someone said to me, "Dawn, today was Blue's day. He's the messenger today." From Thanksgiving through New Year's it is our tradition to post a daily message of gratitude from one of our animals. While I get the messages from them weeks in advance to prepare for this massive project, I post them day by day largely from an intuitive sense of who wants to share their message that day. I had actually chosen Blue about a week before. But when I went to post it, Blue said to me, "no, not yet. It's not time yet." So I posted a goat message instead. But for the message on the 26th, Blue suddenly jumped in my head and said, "Today is the day for my message!" So I posted it.

After he died as I held him between my hands, I asked him why he left like that. He was so upbeat and happy. "I'm sorry to leave so abruptly! It was just that Clover was suddenly there and I was so happy to see her that I jumped out to where she is. We are back together again! It was just a good time for me to go."

While we are sad for our loss, and most especially sad for Annie, it is hard to not be happy for Blue and Clover. It is hard for us to comprehend sometimes in the physical, but sometimes, there is a timing in the plan that we just cannot see or understand. For Blue, it was exactly the right time to leave. Each day when I post those animal messages, I tell the animal whose message it is that it is their special day. When I woke up on the 26th, I told Blue that this was his special day. And although it didn't look the way we would have wanted it to look, it truly was his special day.

This was Blue's last message:

"I have found so much joy in being a bunny. I am grateful every day for everything I am being given. There are so many things that I like about life. I love eating. I love playing. I love being in a form that can jump. But, by far, the thing I treasure most is companionship. I lost my bunny friend this year and it made me quite sad. I knew it was her time to leave her body behind. But I still miss snuggling up beside her. I have a new friend now. We are still learning about each other. She was alone too. She is very different than my other friend but that is ok. My heart feels comfort when I can share my things with a friend. I hope you are blessed with friendship too."