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SUMMER 2021

‘INDEPENDENT, FEARLESS AND FREE’



DRIVING WHILE BLACK

A conversation with Gretchen Sorin

By Alexis Greene

“What we know about other people and places is based on our lived experience,” said Gretchen Sorin, author of the revelatory history of African Americans’ experience, *Driving While Black: African American Travel and the Road to Civil Rights*, and Director of SUNY Oneonta’s Cooperstown Graduate Program in Museum Studies. “In this day and age, we have to start to understand the

experience of others, and empathy is something we really need for understanding one another. It’s how you maintain a democracy. You can’t have a democracy that protects just one group.”

For Sorin, with whom I spoke on the phone in May 2021, that statement encompasses what she said were her most significant discoveries while researching and writing *Driving While Black*. Begun as a Ph.D. dissertation at SUNY Albany, her study of the dangers, humiliations and joys of travel for Black

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A TOUCH OF SWEDEN IN OTEGO

By Carla Nordstrom

Several new vendors have joined the Franklin Farmers’ Market this summer and Trollbok Farm is one of them. Johan Grimm, Alissa Borshchenko, and Johan’s family bought a thirty-three-acre farm in Otego last September and began to make plans for a successful business venture. Johan has a background in filmmaking and Alissa is a bioengineer who works for a pharmaceutical company. They chose to locate in Otego because it is halfway between Albany where her job is located and Binghamton where Johan’s parents live and run a bed and breakfast.

It is important for this couple to be close to family since

See **TROLL**, continued on Pg. 18



PANDEMIC WANES

By Brian Brock

Having finally reached the far side of the peak of infections, we can look back. Delaware County has been in the COVID-19 pandemic for almost 500 days, with the first case diagnosed on March 13th of 2020. Last spring, the exploding number of patients downstate triggered a statewide lockdown. That kept the first peak remarkably low here with only twenty-five cases in the fifth week, although tests were in short supply back then.

After that peak, we had a safe but wary summer due to the continued lockdown (gradually relaxed), warmer weather which allowed outdoor socializing, and residents’ caution. All summer (June, July, and August), we saw only thirty additional cases. For many weeks, there were two or fewer positive test results. This background of infection

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Photo by Tony Breuer

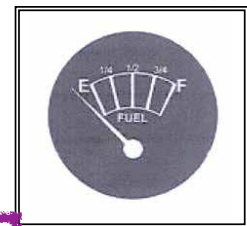
HEAD START What is it?

By Shirley Ferguson

If you have lived in Franklin for any time at all, you have seen the building on Main Street with the Head Start sign out front and lots of colorful and fun-looking play equipment in the side yard. Sometimes a sign will announce dates for registration or let us know about available openings. And you might have been lucky enough to see a line of youngsters walking down the sidewalk, all holding onto a lead connecting them each

to another with a teacher at the front of this cute little parade and another following along at the end. The kids were probably chatting happily with each other, maybe pointing at and exclaiming over a curious sculpture in someone’s front yard, or watching a lively dog being walked next door, or gaping at an impressively noisy construction machine passing

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\$5.00 Finn and Molly, herd leaders - Courtesy of Honey Pie Productions

WHERE HORSES GET TO BE HORSES

By Cat Gareth

You don’t have to have been a horse-crazy girl like I was, with my imaginary horses galloping alongside my parents’ car, to be inspired by what’s happening at Rosemary Farm Sanctuary.

The Sanctuary is set among hillside pastures on both sides of Roses Brook Road in South Kortright. It was founded in 2009 by Dawn Robyn and her husband, Robert, motivated

by a simple desire to help horses, a trip to an auction and the nearly wild, totally freaked-out (read: dangerous) stud colt Dawn bought for \$5.00. Twelve years later, it has become a 501(c)(3) not-for-profit, currently caring for 100 horses. Most were unwanted because of health or behavioral issues. Others were rescued from conditions that endangered their health or their lives. Rosemary Farm focuses on and accepts the most needy; many will live out their lives in the Sanctuary’s care.

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HORSES, continued from Page 1

Each horse is welcomed with a genuine desire to understand that horse's specific needs and to provide as much help, in whatever form, as the Sanctuary has the capacity to offer.

It is all done by a small, dedicated team, assisted by volunteers, supported only by donors, and guided by Dawn Robyn, now the Sanctuary's executive director. Although the Sanctuary's mission, to rescue horses in need and protect them for life, can be stated simply, achieving it requires courage and commitment as well as compassion.



Dawn Robyn and Rhett
Photo by Cat Gareth

How do they do it?

Rosemary Farm Sanctuary has three super-powers.

Its first super-power is time; there are no check-out times, deadlines, or stop-watches. The horses can adjust and progress at their own pace. Adoptions to qualified, permanent homes are possible, but horses can also stay in the Sanctuary's care - for life - if they need to.

Horses often come to the farm having had little or no handling, and no experience of anything beyond their former, sometimes dis-

mal surroundings. All handling is undertaken with the horse's safety, history (if known), and emotional state in mind. Work to establish trust between horse and handlers is paramount and begins immediately. Once a horse can be safely handled enough to allow urgent physical needs to be met, the process of assessing the horse's emotional scars, fears, needs, and capabilities begins in earnest. And takes as long as it needs to.

The process is empathetic and intuitive but grounded in careful observation and deep understanding of horse behavior and the ways in which horses communicate

with humans and with other horses. Gradually, mutual trust is established. Training and introductions to other horses can begin.

Empathy, the second super-power, is also at the heart of training. At Rosemary Farm, training consists of gently applying incremental, positive reinforcement techniques. The farm's skilled trainer, Daniel McCarthy of Catskill Natural Horse in Hobart, can harness (pun intended) his understanding of horses' instinctive behaviors to build trust and coop-

eration between horse and human. Depending on the horse, training may be minimal, just enough for trust and safety, or it may continue all the way to working under saddle and a possible future as a riding horse. It all depends on the individual horse's interest, aptitude, and level of comfort.

Horses, like other prey animals, evolved to be vigilant and reactive, in order to survive. These primal imperatives do not disappear just because humans have other ideas of how they want horses to behave. When living in a herd, horses rely on their herd mates and a strong herd leader for companionship and protection. Collectively, they are safer than any horse can be on its own. Nothing comforts and sustains a horse more than

tween horses. From those friendships, they build bands of compatible horses, led by confident,



Rosemary Farm view
Courtesy of Honey Pie Productions

experienced horses with which Dawn and team have developed strong relationships. (One of those leaders is Finn, that \$5.00 stud colt no one else wanted.) These bands spend all their time together, moving as a group from pasture to shelter to pasture, around the farm. This gives damaged horses a structure they instinctively recognize, plus a sense of security that might take years to develop with a person. The herd nurtures and consoles new arrivals, speeding their transition into stable, healthy, happy horses.

That's how they do it at Rosemary Farm, and it is truly beautiful to see.

Rosemary Farm Sanctuary provides guided tours most Saturdays in summer. Appointments are necessary. Much more information is available and on the Sanctuary's Facebook page and their soon-to-be-launched new website:

<http://rosemaryfarm.org/>



Dawn and trainer Dan McCarthy
with Murtagh Photo by Cat Gareth

the close companionship of other horses. And this is the Sanctuary's third super-power.

With thoughtful pairings and careful introductions, Dawn and the team build friendships be-