

"WHERE THE BLIND HORSE SINGS"

A book review by Howard Powers

Kathy Stevens spent her childhood on a horse farm in Virginia with brother Ned, sister Ellen, her parents, nearly 150 horses, and various dogs, cats and other animals regarded as pets. As nearly all farm families did at that time, they also raised animals used for meat and by products, and to her thinking, such was completely normal.

Graduation from Tuft's University led to a 10-year, very successful teaching career, but when Kathy was offered an administrative position, she considered her

options and chose to pursue a change in direction. Seeking a way to teach and also become involved with animals again, she chose to direct her energies toward establishing an animal sanctuary.

By this time, she realized that her previous thinking about animals was selective, as she had considered those in feedlots being prepared for human consumption as not having emotions, feelings, or intelligence.

Kathy deplored suffering in any form, whether related to humans or animals. Research opened her eyes to the deplorable conditions to which some animals were subjected: abuse and/or neglect, due to either ignorance or deliberate cruel handling.

Thus, the seed for Catskill Animal Sanctuary was planted.

In her book, Kathy relates the beginning struggles and subsequent success of this venture to rescue farm animals from being sold for slaughter, being starved or abused by uncaring owners, and other unimaginable conditions. She tells us about the problems of taking traumatized, neurotic, starved, and beaten animals, oftentimes found in extreme distress, and rehabilitating them into adoptable or at least manageable beings.

Horses, cows, goats, sheep, ducks, chickens, and all animals considered farm animals and not exotics, have found sanctuary on this farm, where each resident has its own dietetic and medical needs evaluated and constantly monitored for the best care. Animals so fearful of humans that they cowered in fright, to others so full of hate they only wished to bring about the demise of their handler, all eventually blend into the atmosphere and become a part of the unit.

Kathy relates fascinating tales of individuals, which in some instances cause us to pause and say, "WHAT? NO WAY!"

To say that CAS has risen above the standards of most animal rescue farms is an understatement. The amenities that these animals know would do justice to a human care facility. Few places would go to the extremes that exist here, but it has been Kathy's aim to bring it to this level and she has succeeded beyond her wildest dreams.

This is a book that should be read for its educational value as well as enjoyment. You may not agree with the author's beliefs regarding raising animals for meat and by products, but you will still find it interesting.

The book is priced at \$22.95 and should be available in your local book stores.

