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## Walk with the animals, talk with the animals

### Woman teaches animal communication at Lacey zoo

By BERNARD VAUGHAN Staff Writer, (609) 978-2012

LACEY TOWNSHIP - "A meaningful life is one that is spent in the presence of love of all who surround you."

Sound like a loving farewell to a soon-to-be-widowed spouse? An introduction to a Buddhist prayer by the Dalai Lama? Maybe the lyrics to a reggae song?

Wrong. Wrong. And wrong.

This timeless bit of knowledge was part of a message from Murphy, a 2-year-old horse, to his human owner just before he was euthanized after two failed colic surgeries in 2003.

That is according to Colleen Nicholson, a homeopath and animal communicator from Syracuse, N.Y., who gave a seminar to about two dozen people Saturday at the Popcorn Park Zoo about animal communication - and we're not talking, "Sit, Rover. Good dog!"

"Every time we form a thought, we've already formed a picture in our brain, and animals see those pictures," Nicholson said. "It's very important in talking to animals that you picture what you want them to do, not what you don't want them to do, which confuses them."

For example, Nicholson said, if you have a puppy that's relieving itself in the living room, don't think about how angry you are that Sparky can't control himself when you're cleaning up the mess. Rather, think about Sparky trotting outside and relieving himself in the grass, like a good dog.

Nicholson says she discovered her cross-species telepathic ability 13 years ago with Clover, her pet pot-bellied pig. She says she would talk to Clover - as many do with their pets - but that after saying something to Clover she would immediately say something that someone else may have been thinking.

"One time I walked by him and I tripped in front of him," Nicholson recalled. "In my mind I was thinking 'Ouch, that hurt,' but I blurted out 'That was silly.'"



## • Newsroom

Nicholson said she wrote off more occurrences like this until Clover began suffering from unexplainable seizures and a friend recommended she take Clover to an animal communicator.

"I was skeptical," Nicholson said. "But she was able to tell me the symptoms of Clover's seizures, which allowed me to find the right remedy, because I'm a homeopath. Afterwards, the communicator starting repeating comments from Clover which I had said, and she explained to me that it was animal communication."

David Drake, a wildlife biologist at Rutgers University, is skeptical, too.

"Inter-species communication among animals is well-founded, but to my knowledge there have been no studies to support inter-species telepathic communication among animals and humans," Drake said.

That doesn't stop believers like Susan Magidson, of Ross Mill Farm in Bucks County, Pa., an old friend of Nicholson's and a fellow pot-bellied pig lover - Ross Mill Farm actually is a boarding house for pet pot-bellied pigs when their owners are out of town.

Magidson does behavior-modification consulting for pot-bellied pig owners, and she told the story of one customer's porker who refused to walk through a kitchen - a necessity to get outside. Nicholson, Magidson said, communicated with the pig and discovered it was afraid of "tiny elves" in the kitchen.

"The elves turned out to be mice, and as soon as the mice were caught, the pig had no problem going in and out," Magidson said. "It's something you have to believe in - you have to believe its possible."

Nicholson has communicated extensively with the animals at Popcorn Park Zoo, she said.

"He allowed me to experience 9-11 through his eyes," Nicholson said of Biscuit, a mixed-breed dog at Popcorn Park that was rescued from the World Trade Center wreckage. "It wasn't until I was with Biscuit in October (2001) that I was able to cry."

"We've had behavioral and medical problems with animals where we can't figure out what's going on, and we consult her," said John Bergmann, director of Popcorn Park Zoo. "She provides a different kind of insight."

As far as Nicholson being on the level, Bergmann says she has revealed aspects of the animals' habits and personalities that only their caretakers were aware of.

"She's said some things that have sent chills down our spines," Bergmann said, although he couldn't provide a specific example.

About two dozen people paid \$100 each to attend Saturday's seminar. The participants, all animal lovers, studied pictures of their classmates' pets to glean what information they could. Then they went to the zoo to practice the channeling techniques they learned.

"At this point, they should have verifiable truth that they got something from this stranger's animal," Nicholson said. "They might get the favorite toy, or the color or texture of the toy, for example."

Nicholson says the Popcorn Park animals were excited about this weekend's

seminar (she doesn't have to be on site to communicate with them - all she needs is a picture).

Edna Goonan, of Turnersville, swears she made a connection with a vain puma.

"She kind of said, 'How do I look?'" Goonan said.

After focusing her attention on the cages and corrals full of goats, deer and exotic animals, she insisted there was more to the exercise than simple empathy. Her cat, Sweetie Pie, communicates with her all the time, she said.

"If you don't know what she's saying, you're not listening," Goonan said.

Kathryn Malekoff, of Beachwood, was a skeptic, at least at first. But she said she seemed to connect with her classmate's draft horse during the classroom exercise.

"I want to believe. Let's put it that way," she said.

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