

Reflections from Lost Horizon Farm — Dogs on the Farm (Part 1)

Barb Garvoille, Columnist

Each edition, retired dairy farmer Barb Garvoille brings her musings on dairy farm life from her own years of experience on Lost Horizon Farm, just north of Spring Green. This mooving memoir focuses on 1980-2000, join Barb as she rises with the herd.

...

When a person drives into a farmyard, one expects to see domestic animals as well as livestock. Most farmers keep dogs outside unless the dog is given the label of "house dog"; then it is allowed the luxury of living in the farm dwelling. Every one of the five canines on Lost Horizon Farm had a distinct personality and so etched its own history in our memory.

Tater

Tater was a rescue dog who came with the Garvoille family. She was a small terrier crossbred with short brown and gray wiry hair, large, round eyes framed by bushy eyebrows, and an attitude reflective of a puppyhood spent in an abusive home. She retained a sexist distrust; her lips would draw back in a snarly growl and her body attained a defensive posture whenever she felt a masculine threat. However, females she knew could call, "Tater Bug" and pat their lap, and this tiny canine would propel herself onto the comfort of that zone in an instant. Tater had a great love for sweets; the crackly sound of a candy bar wrapper being opened would bring her to your side like a shot!

Tater did not like to go into the barn when the cows were in their stanchions. As a house dog, she preferred being a loyal companion outside if one was working in the garden or walking in the fields. Her little legs would work very hard to keep pace. She minded well too. If directed to stay in the yard while you took the truck or tractor somewhere, there she would stay until your return.

Occasionally Tater would chase barn cats, but she largely ignored the two outside dogs of her era; Peaches and Queenie.

Peaches

Peaches, or Pie Face, as we called her, was a Golden Retriever. She was the consummate gentle dog; trusting and gentle toward every human visitor. She never bothered other dogs or the livestock, but, amazingly, could morph into a precision killer of any cat, kitten, woodchuck, squirrel, raccoon, opossum, mole, vole, rat, or rabbit that was unlucky enough to come within her field of vision. The thrill for Peaches must have been solely in the killing, because once the animal was dead, she had no further interest in it.

The lone oak tree in our valley has always been a favorite of raccoons. One early summer evening, Peaches watched as a mother raccoon led her four young from the woods, across the hay field into the cornfield towards that lone oak. Peaches immediately focused on the quintet and sprinted the 400 yards from the farm buildings out into that field, and, in no time, had killed first the mother and then each of the young. As was her style, she left the coons where she had dispatched them and came trotting home nonchalantly!

Peaches spent her evenings during her first farm dog year in a top-of-the-line Qual-Line Fence dog run replete with an insulated dog house. Somehow, in our general state of business, we had neglected to have her spayed before her second heat. This fact was not lost on our neighbor's Golden Labrador who, under the cover of darkness, stole down to Lost Horizon Farm, dug his way under the chain link of the dog run and

bred Peaches.

When the six puppies came, Vince ("Mr. Farmer") told our neighbor, Ed E. Moseman, that he was going to charge him for child support; Ed E. countered



Barb Garvoille

that he was going to charge breeding fees for his dog!

Much to Mr. Farmer's surprise, Peaches' offspring (because of their hunting dog lineage, I suspect) were greatly desired, and when they were 8 weeks' old, all found great homes, and we were told, became beloved companions to their new families.

During her second year, Peaches had eye surgery to correct an ingrown eyelid and wore an Elizabethan collar for a few weeks. I can still visualize her dropping her left shoulder to the ground and pushing that collar on the dirt of the farm driveway in an attempt to rub off that hateful cone of shame. Peaches contracted heartworm, survived the treatment, and lived for many years afterward in the company of her best dog friend, Queenie.

Queenie sometimes would travel around the countryside, and Peaches, of course, would follow. Queenie had a sharp nose and could always track her way home. Peaches was not quite as bright about returning or, perhaps, she had more of a youthful wonderlust. She was gone twice. The first time, Mr. Hetzel, the neighbor two ridges over, called to report she had spent most of the night sleeping on top of his car hood. (I expect she had jumped up there for the fleeting warmth of a recently run vehicle.) The second time she was gone for so long that we put a "lost" announcement in the local paper. That time she had traveled three ridges away, and by the time we recovered her, she had been truly beautified. She had been bathed, clipped, combed, and fitted with a new collar; Peaches had been transformed into a very showy dog! Thank you, Silvermans.

Riding in the back of the pickup truck was one of Peaches' absolute favorite things in life. Say "mount up," and she'd jump into the box of the truck. One very hot summer day, I had taken her to run an errand, and when I returned home, the truck box was empty. I retraced my route calling Peaches' name but to no avail. About an hour after my dejected return home, one soaking wet, somewhat sheepish-looking, dog appeared.

Somewhere along the way, Peaches had jumped from the moving truck, run down to Wilson Creek, had a cooling swim, and then come home cross country. It was the one and only time she pulled that stunt!...

Barb has called Lost Horizon Farm, just north of Spring Green, her home for the past 42 years. She is fond of all creatures (including snakes). Her joy stems from being able to be outdoors every day observing and treasuring the plant and animal life on her small piece of this planet. She loved milking cows and is proud to have been a dairy farmer.



Photo contributed by Barb Garvoille

Barb and Vince by the milk house getting ready to milk cows. Tater in the foreground.



Photo contributed by Barb Garvoille

Peaches getting a calf kiss.



Photo by Jalin Huang

The lone oak in the valley on the farm.



Richland Hospital



Come join The Richland Hospital team, whose work was just recognized with 5-Star ranking for medicare. Currently we have the following full-time benefit eligible employment opportunities available:

<p>REGISTERED NURSES Full-time and Part-time position</p> <p>MEDICAL ASSISTANT Full-time positions</p> <p>PATIENT ACCESS Full-time positions</p> <p>ENVIRONMENTAL SERVICES TECH Full-time positions</p> <p>CERTIFIED NURSING ASSISTANT Full-time Night positions</p> <p>LPN Full-time positions</p>	<p>PHYSICAL THERAPIST Full and Part-time positions</p> <p>ULTRASOUND TECHNICIAN Full-time Positions</p> <p>MAINTENANCE MECHANIC / POWER PLANT ASSISTANT Full-time Positions</p> <p>SENIOR LIFE SOLUTIONS THERAPIST Full-time Positions</p> <p>RESPIRATORY THERAPIST Full-time Positions</p> <p>PHARMACY TECH Full & Per Diem Positions</p>
---	--

Updated Wage Scales

For more information on these current openings or to complete an online application, please visit:
<https://www.richlandhospital.com/careers/>



Human Resources
The Richland Hospital, Inc.
333 E 2nd St, Richland Center, WI 53581
608-647-6321
Equal Opportunity Employer

