

Mountain Lines

Don't Fence Me In!

by Lucy Muller, Lu@warwick.net

I think I'm supposed to write about Cragsmoor and the Town of Wawarsing, but I find it hard sometimes to stick to local news, as my motto is: "Don't fence me in."

As of today, March 9th, I have had it with this winter. Why am I looking at the results of a blizzard with zero degree temperatures? The reason is I choose to live in beautiful, rugged New York. We could begin going to Florida for several months, but I'm not ready yet. Even though I chafe at putting on the heavy jacket and boots, gloves and hat, once I get outside, I still feel so good when my face is cold and the air is fresh. And what is better than coming inside to a warm, cozy house and a cup of tea?

But take heart... on March 20th at 7:33 AM, the vernal equinox took place and we are on our way to warm weather. I also have things to look forward to. Baseball! Just the anticipation makes me happy. If you liked the film "Field of Dreams" as much as I did, you remember James Earl Jones saying that the one constant in our lives is baseball. It reminds us of all that is/was good in America.

For my husband, the trout season is coming. He looks forward to April 1st, even though it is usually too cold to go fishing. I love the trip into the woods, myself, to the enchanting secret pools, even if I never really want to catch anyone. Since the state releases fewer fish into our streams, due to budget cuts, maybe more fisherfolk could try catching and releasing this year. It will make the season last longer.

This next subject is one that really burns me up. It is whether people should be allowed to feed wildlife. There are already way too many controls on our daily lives without this. No one should tell me or anyone else not to feed deer or birds if it doesn't impact on other people. Of course, if you live in a village you cannot leave food out that will attract rats, but feeding birds is, for some people, the only pleasure they have. If the bird seed draws rodents then let the cats out. When I moved here there were some mice, but it took about two months for the body count to pile up as my cats did their thing. I doubt if hungry birds on a cold day will leave anything. I think it is so mean to deny an old person in a residence or apartment complex the joy of watching birds at their feeder.

What triggered this tirade I'm on is that at a feed store today, a girl told me that a man near Narrowsburg was facing possible jail time for feeding deer. Give me a break! There are so many real criminals. There are so many terrible things done in this world and a guy is taken to court over a nurturing quality? Now if he was luring deer to shoot them he deserves the punishment, but nowhere have I read that that was the case. The courts don't have more important cases than if a guy feeds deer? He's paying for it and by God he should be able to do it. I know, the so-called 'experts' say not to do it, because it will spread disease among the herd. Well, the herd feed together anyway. That's why it's called a HERD. I think they're on a power trip and if they want fewer deer then start a birth-control program. I happen to know that birth control for deer is totally available. I thought the problem was too many deer, so if a wasting disease is around what's the difference. What's the real reason?

Now, to the law. If you don't want people to feed deer and birds then ban the sale of deer and bird food. It is

crazy and confusing when the food is so available and then to tell folks not to feed.

If any biologist would like to respond I would be happy to consider what you have to say. It is not our fault if when feeding wild birds, that deer and turkey come to the feeder. I stop feeding birds from May to November though, so that the food will not attract bears. Carry on feeding!

Another question I have is why, when the rabies vaccine is available in fish cubes for wildlife, the state of New York doesn't distribute it? I was a volunteer at the Wistar Institute in Philadelphia a few years ago when the vaccine was first tested. We would cut up little pieces of tasty fish cubes and the technicians filled them with vaccine. Then the cubes were flown in helicopters over the southern part of New Jersey and dropped into the forest. The question was if the rabies would be halted when the raccoons ate the fish and become vaccinated. It worked in New Jersey and it worked in France. So what's the hold up in New York and the rest of the country?

Labrador Retrievers are very nice dogs most of the time. But they are big and strong and are known to eat and chew almost everything until they are at least three or four. I think if you commit to a dog and he does not bite, you should keep him, but some people give up right away. That's why there are many Labs in shelters. Here is a rescue club that sounds good to me.

Rescue for Life: Labrador Retriever Rescue is searching for volunteers to help foster Labrador Retrievers in need. Foster families are needed to care for labs whose present owners can no longer care for them, until a permanent home is found.

If interested, please call (845) 733-5278 or visit the website www.rescueforlife.org to complete a volunteer application. 

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