



Fauna

The Legends of Fauna | Vol. 1
Spring 2013



15 Years of Friendship

Over the past several months our Fauna friends have been asking about Sue Ellen and wondering how she is doing? Many who know the chimps know that Sue Ellen's best friend, Pepper, passed away on June 27, 2012. For almost 15 years, from their time in the same cellblock at The Laboratory for Experimental Medicine and Surgery in Primates (LEMSIP) only able to see or hear each other, to their years here at Fauna where they had the chance to touch, hug, and live together, they had been good friends.

In 1997 nine adult chimpanzees and six youngsters moved into the chimp house at Fauna. The group consisted of five very wise and mature ladies, Annie, Donna Rae, Pepper, Jeannie and Sue Ellen; four very angry older guys, Pablo, Tommy, Yoko and Billy Jo, and the terribly troubled and traumatized youngsters, Rachel, Chance, Petra, Regis, Binky and Jethro.

Annie lived with the youngsters. She had been chosen as the matriarch by the veterinarian at LEMSIP and after arriving at Fauna she continued as the mother figure to this adorable but unruly group. Until, that is, the day she decided she needed to join

her adult friends on the other side of the building. These friends were all infected in the lab with the HIV virus, and were kept from

*It is better to suffer
wrong than to do it.
—Samuel Johnson*

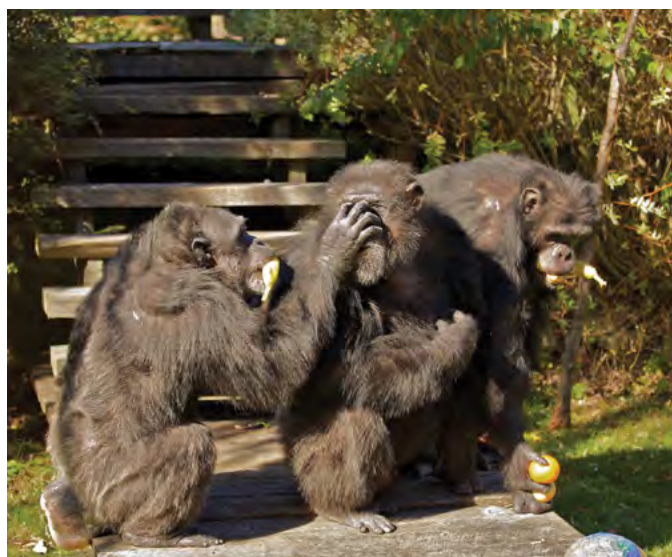
Annie for fear she would contract the virus. This, of course, was irrelevant to Annie. She did not feel the need to be separated from her friends and she desperately needed the support and lifestyle living amongst them would provide her.

At LEMSIP the groups that were formed created a great stress and strain for Annie. She was on her own to raise and discipline two eight-year-olds,



New York Hoodlum, Binky

Photo © Jo-Anne McArthur



Hoodlums Jethro, Regis and Rachel

Photo © NJ Wight



Annie and Donna Rae 2004

Binky and Jethro; two nine-year-olds, Petra and Regis; one 13-year-old, Chance; and one terribly disturbed 15-year-old, Rachel. Lovingly nicknamed *The New York hoodlums*, this gang was not much different from a self-raised urban street gang. Some days we still refer to them this way; they may be older, but they are not necessarily wiser.

Poor Annie. She needed support and friends to help her do this daunting job. No female chimpanzee in the wild would ever be left to raise so many alone, and she understood that. So, one day she asked to move. Annie made her intentions very clear to me while she sat in the front room on her own staring at the door leading to the other group. We now knew that HIV infection would not be a threat to Annie so I asked her: "Do you want to go in there?" She had this look and gave a scream of excitement, like she was terrified or very happy. However, I really wasn't sure which one it was.

**What is a true friend?
A single soul dwelling in
two bodies.
—Aristotle**



Sue and Pepper—two classy ladies

So, I pretended I was going to open the lock on the door. I thought if she retreated or reacted badly she did not want to leave. Well, she started to bob up and down, as if to say, "Hurry, hurry." Next she put her hands on the door to help me open it, trying to lift it up, making it very clear she really wanted to go in there. We kept looking at each other and I gave her enough time to change her mind, but she knew exactly what she wanted to do. I opened the door and off she went!

Donna Rae welcomed Annie with open arms, forever sealing her fate with the rest of the group, which included Sue Ellen and Pepper. They trusted Donna Rae's judgment and followed her lead in welcoming Annie. These four "remarkable ladies" were a tight-knit and powerful force in the chimp house. Untouchable, strong, loyal and extremely intelligent, they understood how important it was to stay together, protect and be there for each other.

They were angels and so amazing together, sharing, bonding, and living to the best of their abilities in the new home we had provided. They did everything as a group and were as close and as loyal to one another as family could be. This served them well up against the big guys, and the troubled teens. They worked hard to make things work given the circumstances of life in captivity; behind bars forever. This was not easy, but was sadly their fate.



Sue Ellen as Obi-Wan Kenobi

and has always seemed so vulnerable and dependant. She is beautiful and completely adorable looking, with a tiny face, mesmerizing eyes, and unique, movable ears. She is the smallest chimpanzee at Fauna, but possibly has the biggest character. Sue has a rather wild temper, expects us to know what she is thinking, and has absolutely no patience or tolerance for us most days. But she is totally adored by the other chimps—possibly because of these traits. Naturally, she is completely loved by the humans, who will forever try to appease her.

How could we not love this precious little munchkin who pops up out of her nest in the morning still wearing her sheets, draped like capes over her head and shoulders; who comes to dinner with brightly colored scarves around her neck, or sashes around her tummy; or even when she carries her fennel under her arm like a cane or a magic wand, that could make all the bad go away. She is Princess Susie. She is a charming character with a sweet soul, stuck in a world somewhere between chimp and human. One we must show deep respect and empathy towards for somehow managing to find a way to make it all work.

I think back and reflect on Sue's personality, the magnetism she has, her impatience, and I can see that her personality

In 2002, Annie died. It was a shock and a deep loss for everyone. Then, a few short years later in 2005, Donna Rae left us, leaving behind the last two of this formidable foursome, Pepper and Sue Ellen.

Donna Rae was a best friend to Sue Ellen, close, protective and caring. In all relationships there is usually a closer bond between two, and always the 'third wheel' or 'odd one out' in the group. At the time, Pepper appeared to be the quiet, third wheel. Honestly though, knowing how wonderful Donna Rae was she most likely cared as deeply about both of her friends but never let them know who her favorite was, if she even had one. When Donna Rae died, Sue Ellen was in deep despair, missing this friend whom she had lived with in the lab, and who had watched over her so protectively for so many years. Pepper became a life support for Sue Ellen, or so it seemed.

Sue Ellen is a very small and frail looking chimpanzee



Sue Ellen—she is beautiful and completely adorable-looking, with a tiny face, mesmerizing eyes, and unique, movable ears. She is the smallest chimpanzee at Fauna, but possibly has the biggest character.

somehow gives the others a chance to express themselves through her. When Sue Ellen lashes out at us or screams at someone in her space, the others support, hug and comfort her. I really see now that it empowers everyone and that the quiet chimps who are in a rage on the inside can participate without consequence or blame to them, simply by supporting her. It is as though she represents them and expresses their feelings.

I remember times when Sue Ellen was getting agitated with Yoko—he is relentless and loves to tease her. She would scream and get mad, but he wouldn't stop. The girls would come to her defence, but still Yoko would not stop. Not much stops him once he sets his mind to it and sometimes huge fights would break out because of his teasing.

Yoko has great fun poking her. Poke, poke. Scream. It starts out cute and fun, then he pokes her harder and she gets furious. Of course this seems to really make him want to do it more, just like that obnoxious and tormenting little brother so many girls have to deal with. We often wonder, "Gee, why don't you move away Sue?" But nope, she takes it, preferring the challenge of making him stop.

Of course when he doesn't stop, (no surprise there) Sue Ellen turns towards the humans and lets out a screech, as though we have done something wrong. Suddenly, all the chimps stop what they are doing and turn on us. Yoko suddenly not picking on Sue Ellen anymore, but instead, hugging her and encouraging her to come after us, with everyone else doing the same thing, hugging each other in support. The humans are now apologizing, frantic, to try to find something to change their minds, and stop them from being furious with us. Who knows, maybe this was also one of the ways Yoko managed to get the hugs he so desperately needed.

Once again, Sue Ellen has managed to change the focus, redirect the anger towards the annoying humans and bring some peace and love to the group. It is never funny to have everyone so angry at us, but amazing to see how Sue completely manages the group, turning everyone against us, which is safe because we are on the other side of the bars. She turns the tables, distracts Yoko, and leads him to believe that "we" are causing harm, and that "they" need to go after us. This keeps their side safe. They have no way out and

*When you live in the
shadow of insanity, the
appearance of another
mind that thinks and talks
as yours does is something
close to a blessed event.*
—Robert Pirsig



Photo © Fauna Foundation

Sue Ellen, Pepper, Tom and Yoko share a picnic

with us on the other side, we are not a threat to them really. This is one of the many examples of re-directed aggression, and how they use it to their benefit.

What fascinates me is her innate understanding of the situation, and how she protects herself, turning it around, her ability to "bluff." Truly amazing. Annie used to do the very same thing. I have seen so many different ways the chimps try to manage their lives in captivity. They are survivors and they will try anything.

Certainly not all chimps think the same way, nor use the same tactics. Each one develops their own survival skills. Binky, for example, could never be distracted if he was in a fight; he will fight no matter what the consequence. But they are not all the same and I truly admire and respect the way Sue Ellen has learned to protect herself from the likes of Billy, Pablo, Binky, Toby and Yoko, all fierce and incredibly strong males who she has had to live with over the years.

During the time the four girls were together, Sue Ellen was, in a way, a leader. When she was angry the others followed, whether she was right or wrong, they supported her. Not much different than any constituency, it is the support group that is instrumental in establishing the leader. Donna Rae, Pepper



Tea for two

Photo © Fauna Foundation



Photo © Fauna Foundation

Sue Ellen and Pepper out and about

and Annie all stood behind Sue Ellen when she was angry. None of those ladies would lash out at a human and preferred not to engage in battle with the other chimps, but certainly would benefit from Sue Ellen getting angry at us. It was as though they could have their say without doing anything, except of course, hugging, and supporting Sue Ellen while she did all the screaming and expressing. It seemed to be extremely healing for all involved.

Looking back I see very clearly how important this was to everyone, including Yoko, Tom, and Pablo, who may have been seriously hurt if they had not been tricked into thinking "we did it." Surely all chimps in captivity have such a character in the group, their front person, the sweet one who is loved by all, and also feared by everyone, backed by their alliances, their "thugs." The one who gets things changed, who commands respect, and who has power because they have friends and followers. That was Sue Ellen.



Photos © NJ Wight

In hindsight, I see who was leading the group of girls. It had not really clicked before. I often looked at Sue Ellen as the frail one, the dependant, when in fact she was the lion hearted, the brave one, the behind-the-scenes leader. It is fascinating to see how a whole group of chimps can rally around the one who is somehow speaking on their behalf.

**You only need
enough courage
to take one step.**

So often in captivity chimps contain themselves, and cannot really be themselves for fear they will be punished, denied, or even ignored by the humans. It is not how we do it here at Fauna, but where ever there are humans working with captive animals, there are favorites, and those who are spoiled, so to speak. God help you if you are not liked! We have seen the results of those who have been unlucky in that way; to not have many human friends while in research. Chance and Petra shared this fate.

So, for the past 7 years, up until her death, it was Pepper and Sue Ellen. They became inseparable and without a doubt, one of the most beautiful relationships we have been blessed to see. Where ever Sue Ellen was, Pepper was not far behind. Often, Sue Ellen would wander on her own and it would always be Pepper going to look for her. If Sue was off visiting the others, and suddenly she would scream or get angry for any reason, Pepper came running to protect her, not even looking to see who she might have to take on. She was brave when it came to defending Sue, and always there for her. A friendship to be admired and respected indeed.

Over the years conversations would often come up about Pepper and Sue Ellen Grow, questions about what would ever happen if one of the girls died. (It is rather frequent that my family and I discuss such things.) We wonder how the ones left behind will do, will they be okay? It is always a concern when individuals are so attached to one another and depend on each other the way those two did.



Pepper's death was a surprise. During her last days it seemed as though Sue Ellen was leaving her alone more and more. At first it allowed Pepper time with us to take care of her. Then we went through a few days where Sue just guarded Pepper, wouldn't let us near her. During those days I felt like she was a fierce warrior coming out of the dark, yelling, lunging, attacking all of us who dared to go near her dear friend.



Glenn Grow spends time with Sue Ellen

I may have commented once after being yelled at by her that she was "as ferocious as a junk yard dog." She was and I had the utmost respect and admiration for this darling little soul who seemed to know full well that her friend was dying. Her fear, her tenacity, her courage to take us on, to be by Pepper's side, then to go away so we could care for her—that all took great courage. She was remarkable and the best friend anyone human or non human could ever be blessed with in a lifetime.

During that last week of Pepper's life, my very special friend and one of Fauna's dear friends, psychologist Dr. Theo Capaldo

came to visit. Theo commented on this remarkable courage Sue Ellen had and her need to lash out and express herself during this deeply difficult time. She put it all into perspective as she sat watching Sue Ellen lunge at me, providing the reasons for her behavior. She too, had great respect for this dynamic relationship between Pepper and Sue. Theo understood the dangerously protective side that came out in Sue Ellen and I think it further endeared Sue Ellen to her.

I know we have all underestimated Sue. She has many health issues, including poor vision and hearing and severe arthritis in her hip, the result of a serious bashing she received by a large male chimpanzee in a very small lab cage. She has a serious limp and this was a major reason we installed staircases and hand rails in the chimphouse, so she could move around better. These problems have had an impact on her life, and had left us believing she was frail.

This was why we always felt she needed Pepper. Her life was filled with Pepper, from the moment they woke each morning, their nests just a few feet away from one another,



Sue Ellen and Pat Ring share a special moment

until the end of the day when they would return to their same places to tuck in for the night. Both of them made elaborate nests strategically placed at the front of the building where they would welcome the morning sun and get to watch everyone who entered the building. Each day Sue Ellen and Pepper would greet all who passed by. Then they would stroll together to the end of the skywalk where they would pass the days watching the geese landing on the pond, or supervise the garden team who worked under their elevated enclosure. They had a routine and seemed to need and enjoy their rituals. They were never apart. If Sue Ellen disappeared for too long Pepper would be off looking for her. They had a full life together and Sue Ellen could ALWAYS rely on Pepper for anything; to guard her, to fight for her, to support her, to share with her and to be there for her. Always.

*In the midst of winter, I
finally learned that there was
in me an invincible summer.*
—Albert Camus

So, what did Sue Ellen do after Pepper? What do you do after you lose someone so important in your life?

There is no doubt that Sue Ellen was deeply affected by this enormous loss. She looked sad, was disoriented, withdrawn, confused, and even frantic in the beginning. She still is at times. She was either sleeping or looking for her best friend. (That is the best way to describe it.)

Certainly we all knew she was deeply sad, alone, and completely lost, but what could we do for her? Sit with her, invite visitors to come, groom her, play with her? We tried it all. Even to the point of scheduling staff times for visits just to be sure we imposed ourselves on her for fear she might give up. We preferred to have her angry with us for bugging her than to see her curled up and depressed.



Photo © NJ Wight

Gloria and Sue

By fate, as things often happen in my life, I received an email from someone who had worked as a security guard for a few years in the same lab where Sue Ellen and Pepper lived. He remembered Rachel as well. I always see these moments as messages, omens, and not knowing what this one meant, other than a chance for Sue Ellen to see an old buddy, I jumped at it. I invited John to come and visit and spend some time with our dear little Sue.

He told me that he used to visit Sue Ellen while doing security rounds at night and that she loved to hear him sing. I thought; "Well, Sue Ellen is smart enough to decide if she wants to visit or not, and we would know if she did remember him. What did we have to lose?" She needed something to lift her spirits and I prayed his visit would do just that.



Photo Art © NJ Wight

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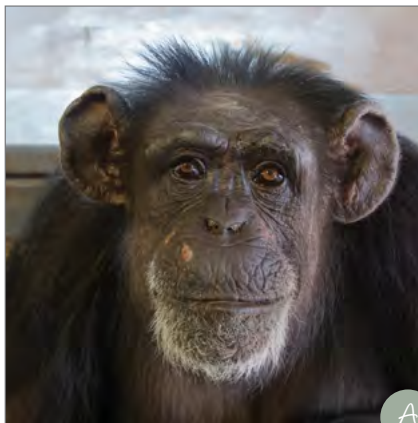
Please help support Sue Ellen and her gang of **Legends** at Fauna. We have created these special edition souvenir items to commemorate this first issue. Whether for yourself or someone you love, we are sure you will enjoy these items and feel good knowing you have helped support the *Lifetime Care Fund* for the Fauna family.



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It had been years since he had seen her. He had worked at the lab when Sue Ellen and Billy Jo first went there, and had left shortly after. It was a rare chance that she would remember him. There are people from their past that they have good memories of. For these souls locked in cages for life, it is only the relationships they have with the humans that can save them. It is their only life support system really.

I have come to realize that each chimp has had someone who held meaning for them and that even here in their sanctuary home, they may not always choose each of us as a friend. If they were free they would certainly pick and choose, but in captivity they have less choice. They must accept us and try to relate to us in some way. They have found ways to survive in some of the worst conditions, making some of us believe we are truly their friends, when in fact, if they left they might never look back at us again. I saw this so many times with the staff from the lab.



Photo © Jo-Anne McArthur

I really couldn't say if Sue Ellen remembered him but she seemed intrigued by his tattooed arms and his dark hair, and was totally content to sit staring at this visitor from so far away. She was entertained. She spent a long time grooming him, and listening to him sing Elvis songs to her. For just a moment she forgot she was alone and that was good enough for me.

After that visit I realized how much Sue Ellen needed to see people, to have visitors. So many of the chimps' dear old friends had come to see Pepper in her last days, but had not been back to see Sue after Pepper passed. We needed to find friends. Old or new, I did not care, as long as they helped her get through it all.

**A friend is someone who
knows all about you and
still loves you.
—Elbert Hubbard**

Sue Ellen is not that close to the other chimps here at Fauna. Binky visited with her and that was nice, but he is rather rambunctious and he scares her. Then Yoko, who she has had many years of dealing with, and who just loves to make her scream. So that never lasts too long. Then there was Chance, who had spent lots of time with Sue Ellen and Pepper, but somehow wasn't exactly the nurturing kind of

friend that Sue Ellen first needed. I couldn't choose the dynamic Petra, far too strong and controlling for Sue during this sad time, nor Rachel who was too demanding for someone who needed comfort. Jethro, "Fauna's hottie," was not the appropriate guy for Sue, always the same thing on his mind. Then there was Regis who was a little too needy and sensitive for her. Toby, well, just too darn scary. Spock and Maya not well known to Sue Ellen and not the best choices during a difficult transition. So, while I tried to think about who was the best choice for dear little Sue, I tried to find more friends to come and visit, realizing this could be very comforting for her.

**Promise me you will always
remember: you're braver than you
believe, and stronger than you
seem, and smarter than you think.**

—A.A. Milore

Rozlyn and Gil Kaplansky, long time dear friends of the chimps, had been to visit Pepper in her final days. They cared deeply for Sue Ellen too. For more than a decade Rozlyn and Gil Kaplansky have been supporting the chimps in more ways than one; they have helped build the Islands, the extensions, the staircases, purchase new windows and extend the skywalk. But more meaningful to the chimps—they bring chewy vitamins, raisin bread, YOP and so much more!

The chimps are no different than the rest of us. If they see friends arrive with good food, this is often what they appreciate most. They do not think about the plans for the future, or the grants to build new enclosures—they focus on their snacks. Roz, and Gil are snack masters! They have provided all sorts of goodies, including Florida oranges and grapefruits in winter and much needed stainless steel bowls to serve food in.



Photo © NJ Wight

Mmmm...raisin bread!

They have given so much, but more important than all of this is the LOVE they bring when they come through the door. All the chimps feel it and they are blessed indeed to have it. Sue Ellen had the chance to spend alone time with Ros and Gil after Pepper passed and it was very sweet and very special. It helped a lot, and it seemed so very important to Sue Ellen to see these dear old friends.

Then Pat, one of Sue Ellen's nearest and dearest human friends, came to visit and sit with her. He had a moment with his "little princess" that he called me to tell me about. One of the rituals he and Sue have



is that he sits and peels an orange for her and she eats it piece by piece, or he has a cup of tea with the chimps. It is time spent together sharing and seems to be very comforting. So Pat made Sue some tea and she drank it. But then something happened that was completely out of character for Sue Ellen. When Pat held out his hand to give the cup back, to his complete amazement, she did.

Sue Ellen never gives anything back and always gets furious at the mention of giving. For years the chimps have practiced giving back; cups, bowls, trolleys, objects. Almost all do give back, and with pleasure, knowing they will have their cup replenished, their bowl filled again, or the trolley refilled. But not Sue Ellen. She just never got into that, not wanting to participate in any of the giving back stuff. Until this day with Pat. He called to tell me and we were both ecstatic.

After a few months of Sue Ellen being on her own, the most common question I received was, "Do you think Sue Ellen misses Pepper?"

Although I have no evidence, I would have to say she must. Of course right after Pepper passed, Sue Ellen was clearly stressed, sad, lonely and depressed. But later it became more difficult to understand. How could I see or feel what she might be feeling? The opportunity that gave me clear insight into how she was feeling was when the Brofmans came to visit. Finally, I was able to put words to what I saw. It was the dream of Brad to meet and spend time with a chimpanzee. So for his Birthday his wife Bonnie booked a private

visit to come to meet the chimpanzees of Fauna. It was a time of complete joy and elation for Brad who had dreamt of this for a very long time.

He was in awe of the chance he was given to live his dream, and I was delighted to introduce Sue Ellen to such kind and caring people. When we arrived at the chimp house I knew we would be spending a little time with Sue Ellen but I had no idea whether she would choose to stay for the visit or leave, as she usually does.

Well, once again, to my surprise, she wanted to visit with these new found friends, curious to meet them and interested in spending more time with them. She seemed smitten with the sound of Brad's voice and his soft and gentle nature. He spoke directly to Sue Ellen, as though there was no one else around, adoring her, and showing his empathy for her recent loss. She listened, tilted her little head, her lovely ears moving, something they do when she listens closely. It was indeed charming.

He was on his knees on the floor, eye level with Sue, who was standing and trying desperately to get closer to him. I have said so many times before, Sue Ellen prefers men, all men. She seems to be interested in those with dark hair, and she particularly likes facial hair. We all have preferences in life, and this just happens to be hers. Like us, chimpanzees know what they want, and what they like. So be it.

Bonnie was just fine with letting Sue Ellen and Brad have this special moment, elegantly stepping back to give them time together. When I told Brad and Bonnie about Sue's visit with John months back, and her liking Elvis songs, Brad admitted that he did too and that he knew a few tunes. To my utter surprise and joy Brad started to serenade Sue Ellen. It was lovely, magical and so sweet. Brad was on his knees next to the area where Sue was standing on the other side of the bars and she had her face as close as she could to the bars, straining to see him. I told Brad, "Move closer, she needs to feel your breath on her face. The closer you are the more she will relax, because she can see you better." He did as I asked, and again Bonnie took another step back completely understanding how important this moment was. After Brad started to sing to Sue Ellen, she turned to look over her shoulder, excited and anxiously happy. She looked again, then turned back to Brad.

A few moments later, she turned again, this time she circled around looking towards the staircase where Pepper used to sit, out of sight, but not far away. She really seemed to be looking for her, expecting her to come to see why she was so happy and to see what was going on.

Sue-Ellen and Pepper loved to share happy moments. If Sue-Ellen was happy Pepper would hug her, and if Pepper was happy she would hug Pepper. Imagine life without all those hugs?

It was in this moment I knew what it must be like and how to describe what Sue Ellen must be feeling. Each day after someone we love dies, for brief moments we forget they aren't there, only to remember they are gone. You might be in the car or watching something great on TV, and you think "Oh gee, I think I will call Ma and tell her what I just thought of." Then you remember, "Oh my God, she is dead, and has been for

Every time I say
something they find hard
to hear, they chalk it up
to my anger, and never to
their own fear.
—Ani DiFranco

two years now." Those funny ways we forget, because we just don't think about it every minute of every day. We may be sad inside but we carry on, we eat, we drink, we sleep, we're alive, but a part of us is gone, missing; something we can't even identify.

That was what I think happened to Sue Ellen. When she is happy and wants to share something with her best friend, she looks for her, missing her hugs, her kisses, her love. When she is in a stressful situation and turns to look to see if Pepper is coming to help her, I think she misses her, and feels her absence. She is alone. When she sits by herself in the skywalk, it's possible she is looking behind her for the friend who has followed her down the walk way for the last 10 years, wondering if she is coming? That is what I think it is like. And I do think, like it is for all of us, she will realize again and again Pepper isn't coming, until the day she doesn't look for her anymore.

We will never know how long this will last, but what we do know is that the grieving process is like ours. She has the same triggers, the moments of sadness and loneliness that even we cant explain or describe, just the ache...and the emptiness.

We have all worked hard to help Sue Ellen through this difficult time, and we have certainly worried so much about her. Her chimp family have worked and worried even more. Binky, who was sweet and kind, through the bars, gentle and tender. Spock being so supportive and trying so hard to comfort her through the bars when she seemed scared and stressed. And Chance, now living with Sue Ellen, doing the most work, trying to be a different chimp and to work on being social.



Photo © NJ Wight

Chance and Sue Ellen

Over the years Chance had lived for very short periods of time with Sue Ellen and Pepper, always ending after a day or two. Pepper had little patience or tolerance for Chance's unpredictable, uncultured, anti-social ways, and she showed it. Things often ended with Chance being evicted from their space and from their lives for a few more weeks. I have to say, I was not left with many choices of who could live with Sue Ellen. She stayed alone for a few weeks after Pepper passed away, with only day visits from Chance, Binky, Regis and some of the others.

*If you're going through
hell, keep going.*
—Winston Churchill



Sue Ellen in disguise

raised by humans. Chimps who have grown up alone in a cage, used in biomedical research and terrorized every day of their life. Chimps who are stressed, scared and angry because they have lived behind bars. All of the chimps who are forced to live this way struggle daily to fit in, to belong, to cope. It is difficult enough for them to manage their own lives, never mind care for another in need. Those who do, are remarkable and exceptional. Families are like that, but it is rare to have family groups in sanctuary. Families are made and it can take many years.

So, I chose Chance. Traumatized, troubled, insecure, sassy, scary and scared little Chance. A chimpanzee born in a research cage, separated from her mother at birth, left alone in the smallest of cages without social contact from humans or chimpanzees. A damaged soul who came to us when she was 15 years old and who is now 30 years old in body, but just a little girl in her mind. A little teenager who needs guidance, unconditional love, support, friendship, and most of all, hugs.

Chance has been one of the most difficult chimps to integrate and save, if I can use that word. The trauma of her past has always been a challenge. Unreasonable, unpredictable, untrusting and unforgiving. Rightfully so.

So, could it ever work? Sue Ellen and Chance? Our eldest resident, with health problems, a terrible temper,

So, there seemed to be slim pickings and few comforting options from this list of amazing characters: the oh so dynamic Petra, the rough and rugged Binky, temperamental Maya, or the relentless tease Yoko? The demanding, uncompromising and sometimes spoiled Regis, Jethro the stud muffin, the super emotional gentle giant Spock, or the unpredictable Rachel and Toby? Who could possibly live with Sue Ellen and not hurt her, stress her, scare her or torment her? Without Pepper there to protect her I did not have many options. Sue had never lived with any of these folks without a backup team of strong, intelligent, and socially capable female friends. Donna Rae, Annie, and Pepper.

Ah, if only they could all live happily ever after? That is just not how it is for chimpanzees who have been



“So, I chose Chance. Traumatized, troubled, insecure, sassy, scary and scared little Chance.”

Photo © NJ Wight

and the right to a life with minimal stress? What were the chances?

Pepper shared everything with Sue Ellen.

Chance doesn't share at all.

Pepper always put Sue's needs ahead of her own.

Chance has always chosen to live alone because she is focused on her own needs. She is afraid of everything, and she never had the support from the group.

Pepper was kind and gentle with Sue. Loving and supportive.

Chance does not know how to be gentle, no one taught her. She is rough and has no experience, except with the tough guys, who were working it out themselves. She had to just try to fit in, but never did.

Pepper would move to make place for Sue Ellen, making a nest near but not too close, allowing Sue Ellen her space. Normal behavior from chimps who have learned how to live in harmony and with respect.

Chance turns into a rock, unmovable, non giving, and resisting—to the point of pushing back.

Pepper always waited for Sue Ellen to take her food off the trolley first. She was not as high ranking as Sue Ellen and she never wanted to engage in stressful moments at meal time. She understood that she would be served, that we would always make sure she had what she needed. Pepper understood rank, showed respect, and was polite.

Chance wants it all to herself, wants it first, just like Sue. Worried there won't be more, and having spent years as a low ranking family member, she has an edge.

This might all sound like a complete mismatch, and writing it all down I realize it sounds worse than it did in my head. It has been stressful indeed, but, today as I write this I was told of a beautiful moment shared by Sue Ellen and Chance. My staff commented they saw Chance tickling Susie Goose. (Sue Ellen's nickname.) They were sitting on the staircase, Susie on one step and Chance on the next, and Chance was nudging and pushing Susie. Sue was moving with the pushes and Chance was rough but somewhat controlled. Sue Ellen was trying to hold Chance's hands, and laughing.



So today there is harmony.

There is acceptance.

There is a friendship growing.

There is play.

There is affection.

There is sharing.

There is tolerance, most days.

There are hugs and embraces.

There is support.

There is some peace.

*There is a new and improved Chance, and there is LOVE,
and her name is Sue Ellen.*

It is as though Chance has been to a retreat, an awakening, an enlightenment. She has had some kind of healing.

When Sue Ellen isn't mad, she is one of the most relaxed souls in the chimp house. She is slow, quiet, peace loving and supportive. She is a nature lover, an outdoor's girl who enjoys wildlife. In general a very zen individual, a lifestyle she adopted from Pepper.

Apparently this has rubbed off on Chance. You can see it in her eyes, there is a peace there, a calmer energy. She is far more relaxed, kinder, and less stressed. This is the light that Pepper left. Pepper brought this peace to Sue Ellen, nurturing her, making her feel safe and loved. This love has not left the chimps home, it is there for everyone still. Seeing this relationship between Sue Ellen and Chance grow and nurture is so beautiful and the greatest legacy Pepper has left. Bless you Pepper for sprinkling our lives with such love, patience and kindness; for caring for and loving your family in that special way you did, teaching all of us about unconditional love.

To know that someone who has had a life stolen from her, who has had her soul destroyed and was lost for 30 years in her own thoughts and fears. To know someone who was unable to break out of her own prison of fear and distrust but who rose above it all, healing herself by giving love. Someone who was able to leave behind such a beautiful gift—her love.



*Pepper isn't really gone at all.
She lives on forever in our hearts and in our souls.*

*Every life has a meaning,
Every life can change another life,
And every life can save another.*

"Dare to reach your hand into the darkness to pull another into the light."

There is hope for Chance now, and Sue Ellen is going to lead her into the light.

With much love, respect and deepest gratitude,
Gloria and your family here at Fauna,

Gloria xo



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Please help secure a healthy future for Sue Ellen and her friends by donating generously to the Fauna Foundation Lifetime Care fund. For more information visit us at: FaunaFoundation.org

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