



# Spring 2025

A place for animal shelter, history, conservation, and recreation

Volume 25- Issue 1

## Cracker Box Palace: A Community Treasure with Boundless Potential



**Cracker Box Palace** is more than an animal rescue—it's a cornerstone of the Sodus Bay area and Wayne County, nestled on 627 acres of conserved land protected by the Genesee Land Trust and recognized on the National Registry of Historic Places. Our farm stands as a living testament to history, a sanctuary for animals, and a dynamic hub where people with diverse interests and needs can connect, learn, and grow.

When some see aging structures, we see historic treasures poised to tell their stories. The century-old barns that shelter our rescued animal friends are steeped in a legacy of agricultural innovation and compassionate care. They represent not only the past but also the potential for a brighter future.

Our vision stretches far beyond rescue operations. Imagine Alasa Farms as a vibrant hub where:

- **Animal welfare and veterinary** sciences thrive, engaging and educating the community on proper care.
- **Wetlands and woodlands** become immersive outdoor classrooms, inspiring students and professionals to connect with the natural world and discover sustainable solutions.
- **Farmlands** are transformed into cutting-edge models of regenerative agriculture, pioneering techniques for future generations.
- **Historic Study and Education** engages learners of the past to inform the future.

At the heart of this transformation is Alasa Academy, our growing resource for education and innovation. Through the Academy, we aim to offer educational programs, hands-on training, and collaborative opportunities, making Cracker Box Palace at historic Alasa Farms a center for learning and growth in Wayne County.

Cracker Box Palace will remain steadfast in its commitment to providing a sanctuary for rescued farm animals. By leveraging our unique attributes and collaborating with community leaders, businesses, and individuals, we envision Alasa Farms becoming a beacon of innovation, compassion, and growth—a true community treasure that enriches lives and inspires all.

We invite you to join us on this journey of transformation. Together, we can build a legacy that lasts for generations to come. To learn more, please contact Janet Halasinski at [development@crackerboxpalace.org](mailto:development@crackerboxpalace.org) with the subject line "Innovation-Education."

## We Can't Do It Without Your Help

At Cracker Box Palace, we are continually reminded of the powerful impact we have on the lives of the animals in our care. Over the past few months, we've been fortunate to find forever homes for many of our animals, each one carrying a story of resilience and hope.

While many of our animals come to us from unfortunate circumstances—whether abandoned, neglected, or in need of special care—we know that every new home represents a fresh start and a bright future. It's in these moments that we are reminded why we do what we do.

Each adoption is a victory, not just for the animal, but for our entire community. It takes a village, and your support, whether through donations, volunteering, or simply spreading the word, makes these transformations possible. We cannot thank you enough for being a part of this journey with us.



## Volunteer Spotlight



We are incredibly fortunate to have a dedicated team of volunteers who go above and beyond to support our mission. We are excited to shine the spotlight on **Lynda Faulks**, a truly remarkable individual who has been with us since the beginning of her volunteer journey and is now an integral part of our Board of Directors.



### **Tell us how you first got involved with Cracker Box Palace**

*My family and I moved into the area in 2011 and loved visiting the animals at the farm. My son, Joshua and I connected with another volunteer (Janet Halasinski) who was caring for the cats regularly. We offered to care for the cats one night a week to give her a break. We loved the experience of volunteering. It inspired me to become more actively involved once I retired from teaching.*

### **What types of things do you do as a volunteer there?**

*I am on the Board, coordinate the weekly staff and volunteer schedule, a member of both the Volunteer and Historic Committees, coordinate many of the community events including the Halloween Event and The Easter Egg Hunt, painted several of the exteriors of buildings on the farm with great friends, volunteered at the Cracker Box Palace Golf Tournament, help care for the rabbits, goats, pigs, donkeys, turkeys and cows, muck the horse stalls, actively try to recruit more volunteers, created a music video of the farm animals, promote the farm on social media, help clean and organize the various buildings on the farm, help coordinate new hires on the farm, do my best to make positive connections with local programs like "Steady Work", BOCES and Arc Wayne. I am learning how to write grants to support Cracker Box Palace thanks to the help of Jay Roscup and I donate funds to the farm.*

### **What has surprised you most about working at Cracker Box Palace?**

*In all honesty, I have learned that volunteering/working at Cracker Box Palace can be challenging. We are so fortunate to have amazing volunteers and staff, but we need more people to get involved on a regular basis.*

### **What's the best thing to happen since you started working with Cracker Box Palace?**

*As much as I love connecting with the animals on the farm, it has also been a great experience meeting other volunteers and staff members.*

### **What might someone be surprised to know about you?**

*I love all of the animals, but have very little farm experience. I grew up loving dogs and cats but have no background with caring for rabbits, horses, donkeys, goats, pigs, cows or turkeys. It's been an eye-opening experience, but one that I love.*

### **What would you tell someone who is thinking about volunteering?**

*Volunteering gives you peace of mind and a sense of accomplishment. It warms my heart to support Cracker Box Palace in so many different ways with so many amazing people.*

## West Barn – past ~present~ future

The West Barn is the western most agricultural structure of the Alasa Farm complex on Shaker Road. It was constructed around 1870 using heavy hewn timbers and mortise-and-tenon joints. The frame is made of beechwood, and the joists are hemlock, both common species in western New York. The building is a large rectangular shape, approximately 72 feet by 30 feet in size.

The barn's foundation is a masonry "gravel" poured in forms built of sawn boards. Large glacial stones were then added to the mix and settled to the outside as the mix hardened. The building approach created walls that vary greatly in thickness and alignment.

Historic uses of the West Barn include livestock, hay storage, and threshing – the process of removing the edible part of grain. Currently, the West Barn is primarily used for keeping horses, storage, and for classroom space during summer camps. In the past it also housed a gift shop.

For much of its history (1860s–1924) the West barn along with the others in the complex barn were painted red with white doors, sash, and trim. After the farm was bought by the Strong family, the exterior color scheme for all buildings on the farm was white with green trim, which the barn retains.

Future plans involve renovating the barn to transform it into a functional space for classrooms and community gatherings.



West Barn circa 1924. Alasa Archives



West Barn circa 2013. Alasa Archives

## Animals that have crossed the Rainbow Bridge

Just this side of heaven is a place called Rainbow Bridge.....

Penelope the turkey   Cyllus, Hershey, and Izzy the goats   Marshmallow the rabbit

Judy the horse   Dodge and Appollo the sheep

*Rest in peace until we meet again*



*In loving memory of...*

*Your memories live on forever in our hearts!*

- Cheri Kline, Robert and Nanette Keller, Diane DeVolder, and Jacqueline Spiegel remember Donna Neufeglise
- Neal Caddy remembers Salley Dell Harris
- Carol & Ronald Baker, Wray Warner, James McMahon, and the Lion's Club of Sodus, remember Robert Herman
- Richard Hazen remembers his late wife Nancy's birthday
- Gerald & Brenda Zeborowski, E Seth Jenks, William & Elaine Hassle, and Ronald & Carol Baker, remember John Miner

## THANK YOU!

To all of our donors  
With sincere gratitude for the many  
donations we receive each month that  
allow us to support our mission:

***To provide shelter and sanctuary to farm  
animals in need from within our region,  
promote the rich history of the area and  
utilize sound conservation and agricultural  
practices by engagement and education of the  
community.***



To donate on line go to our website:  
[www.crackerboxpalace.org/donate](http://www.crackerboxpalace.org/donate)

## Successful Buy-A-Bale



We want to extend a sincere **thank you** to everyone who stepped up and contributed to the Buy A Bale campaign last fall. Thanks to your generosity, we were able to secure all the hay needed to feed the animals through the winter.



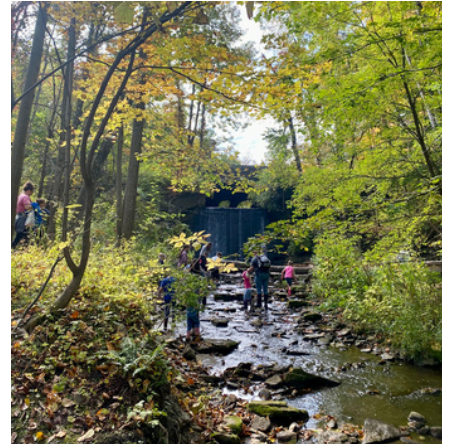
Piggy Smalls was an unexpected surprise at Cracker Box Palace and has quickly become a favorite among visitors. Born to parents Pumba and Notorious P.I.G., this adorable pig has captured the hearts of all who meet her.

**Piggy Smalls' 3rd birthday** is on April 24th, so when you visit Cracker Box Palace, be sure to stop by and wish this charming little pig a very Happy Birthday. Her playful personality and sweet nature make her a must-see during any visit.

## Make The Most of Your Visit to Cracker Box Palace



Located near the serene Sodus Bay, Cracker Box Palace offers a unique and heartwarming experience for animal lovers of all ages. Whether you're visiting the animals or hiking the trails, there are a few things to keep in mind to make the most of your visit.



### Meet the Animals

Cracker Box Palace is home to farm animals who have often experienced neglect or abuse, and many are in the process of healing. When interacting with them, please be gentle and respectful. We ask that visitors avoid yelling or chasing the animals, as they may be sensitive to loud noises and quick movements.

Feeding the animals is one of the highlights of a visit, and there are specific food lists available near each animal's area and on our website to guide you on safe treats. Apples and carrots are favorites among many of our residents, but make sure to stick to the recommended foods to keep everyone happy and healthy.

### Trails

Several miles of marked trails await your adventure. Our scenic trails are open daily from 8am to dusk, offering a wonderful opportunity to connect with nature. Whether you're hiking, biking, or walking, remember to follow the "Carry In/Carry Out" policy—this helps keep the trails clean for everyone to enjoy.

As you explore the trails, please remember to share the path with others, yielding to horseback riders and mountain bikers.

### Dress for the Weather

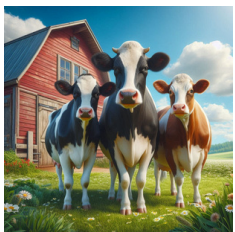
Sodus Bay's cooler temperatures can surprise visitors, so it's important to dress accordingly. Layer your clothing to stay comfortable during your visit and wear close-toed shoes that are suitable for walking on rough or uneven ground. You'll be exploring the farm and interacting with the animals, so comfort is key!



## Cattle Capers: The Great Cracker Box Escape

Submitted by Jane Halasinski

It was a lazy Sunday morning in late August, and as usual, I was the first to arrive at Cracker Box to feed the cats. But as I glanced towards the horse barn, something felt off—very off. There, sticking her head around the corner of the barn, was a cow. A cow! That's definitely not where she belonged.



Sure enough, upon closer inspection, all three cows had staged their great escape. They were happily munching their way across the farm, sampling flowerpots, nibbling on vegetable patches, and delighting in any tasty treasures they could find. It was a scene straight out of a comedy sketch.

I quickly called in reinforcements, alerting the staff to this bovine rebellion. Mr. P was the first to arrive, and we knew we had a challenge on our hands. Daisy, the lead troublemaker of the trio, posed a particular problem. She was enormous, horned, and—not to mince words—exceptionally stubborn. Her status as the herd leader only added to her disagreeable charm.

After a bit of brainstorming, we realized we'd need help. The farm manager, enjoying some well-earned vacation, provided a brilliantly simple solution: grab some buckets of grain, show them the goods, and start walking—they'll follow. Easy, right?

The journey to the pasture, however, was anything but straightforward. It was about 400 feet away, with a corner to navigate at the 150-foot mark. The first stretch went smoothly, with Daisy trailing behind. But when Mr. P broke into a trot, Daisy decided she'd join the race. And oh, what a race it was! Within moments, Daisy was barreling forward, horns gleaming, with poor Mr. P sprinting for his life.

As they rounded the corner, Daisy nearly overtook him. Luckily, Mr. P pulled off an impressive leap over the goat pen fence, narrowly escaping her charge. The other cows followed the commotion, and with a bit of wrangling, we managed to guide them all back to their pasture and secure the fence to prevent any further shenanigans.

For the cows, it was an impromptu buffet adventure. For us, it was a heart-pounding exercise in livestock management. And for Mr. P? A day to remember—and perhaps a newfound appreciation for fences.



## Permanent Conservation of Alasa Farm



photo credit: Kucko Digital

**Did you know that Alasa Farms, now owned by Cracker Box Palace, is permanently protected with a conservation easement?**

The conservation easement is held by the Genesee Land Trust, a Rochester based not-for-profit corporation. The conservation easement is permanently attached to the land, regardless of who owns the property.

In 2011 Alasa Farms, Inc, and in partnership with the U.S. Department of Agriculture, granted a conservation easement to the Genesee Land Trust. The conservation easement consists of approximately 627 acres of the farm with the purpose of protection, preservation and maintaining the conservation values.

As outlined in the easement, the conservation values of Alasa Farms include productive agriculture and forestry lands, watershed protection of both Second and Third Creeks, scenic Seaway Trail along Route 14, and the historic buildings and farmstead.

As the current landowner of Alasa Farms, Cracker Box Palace must ensure that the management of Alasa Farms is consistent with the conservation easements, and the resource values that the easement protects. The easement restricts the development and use of the property in accordance with the conservation easement. The conservation easement allows CBP to use the property to grow agricultural and forest products, provide recreational opportunities, and maintain historic preservation. CBP works with Genesee Land Trust if there are any questions about whether the proposed management action is consistent with the conservation easement.

Why is a conservation easement beneficial? When a property such as Alasa Farms is protected with a conservation easement, it means that the property and all its amazing resources will be around for future generations to enjoy.

To learn more about the Genesee Land Trust, visit <https://www.geneseeandtrust.org>

## Community Partner

Cracker Box Palace is blessed by the help of young men and women in the **STEADY Work** program. The workers are willing to learn and experience new job tasks including caring for the animals, cleaning the grounds and maintenance work. They enjoy being around the animals and respect the leadership and staff at Cracker Box Palace.

STEADY Work (Skills, Training, and Employment Access for the Development of Youth) and Cracker Box Palace's partnership began over 10 years ago with a goal for the youth involved to develop soft skills needed for maintaining jobs as responsible employees and learn about agriculture careers. According to STEADY Work over 90% of program participants met with success as measured by their ability to obtain employment and maintain it for one year or longer.

A special thank you to Mavrik Hammond, Alex Chavez, Jada Hagar, and Bradley Leno (not pictured) who are helping Cracker Box Palace employee Grace Lukash care for the horses. She is thankful for their assistance.

To learn more about STEADY Work, visit <https://www.steadywork.org>



**Cracker Box Palace at Alasa Farms**  
**6420 Shaker Rd, North Rose, NY 14516**  
**Mailing: PO Box 174, Alton, NY 14413**

**Visit the Farm**

Trails and Outdoor Recreation: Monday – Sunday 8am until dusk

Barns: Monday – Sunday 8am – 4pm

Office: Tuesday – Friday 9am – 4pm

Visit at your leisure or contact us to schedule a tour

For adoptions and admissions, email for an appointment at

[info@crackerboxpalace.org](mailto:info@crackerboxpalace.org)

or call 315-483-2493 and leave us a message



For more information visit [www.crackerboxpalace.org](http://www.crackerboxpalace.org)  
Or email us at [info@crackerboxpalace.org](mailto:info@crackerboxpalace.org)

**UPCOMING EVENTS**

**April 19** – Easter Egg Hunt

**May 3** – Volunteer Day of Service

**May 15** – United Way Day of Caring

**May 23** – Blessing of the Farm

**June 7** – National Trail Day

**June 23** – Golf Tournament

**August** – Summer Camp  
More information to come

**August 9** – Farm To Table Event  
at the Farm

**Cracker Box Palace**  
**12th Annual Golf Tournament**

**June 23**

**Sodus Bay Heights Golf Club**



**Registration Opens April 1st**

*Cracker Box Palace at Alasa Farms* is registered as a 501(c)(3) non-profit organization.  
All contributions to Cracker Box Palace are tax-deductible to the extent permitted by law.  
NYS Tax# 225956 | NYS Char Reg# 40-91-09