

The Walrus Says

By Jim Munro



Beth Weibust e-mailed us the day after Christmas with this very special Christmas story.

"The phone rang just before noon on Christmas morning. 'Hey, we're trying to get a game going on the North End and we need a center fielder. Got anyone available? We're on the bridge now.' It was Link Murray bringing his dad, Dr. Joe Murray, to visit my dad after an absence of over 60 years.

"Dad and Dr. Murray played ball together in Milford, Mass., and had last seen each other in the early 1940s. I grew up with a photo of my dad on the wall. He was crossing home plate, and there was another ballplayer at the plate waiting to shake his hand. It was Joe Murray. Later, they went on to attend Holy Cross College in Worcester and then went their separate ways.

"Fast forward about 40 years, and Joe's son, Link, just so happened to move to Jamestown, into my neighborhood on East Shore Road. My son, Ryan, spent a great deal of time at their house, hanging out with Link and Karen's son, Ethan, and skateboarding on Jamestown's real first skate park on the tennis courts.

"Link and I often spoke of getting our dads together, but with everyone's hectic schedules, it just never materialized . . . until Christmas morning, 2005. We couldn't have bought our dads a more meaningful Christmas gift. They reminisced as we all caught up with each other. It was a sight to behold . . . three generations gathered together in friendship. Peace on Earth."

In a postscript, Beth explained that her dad is "a simple man" who owned a hardware store and as a Marine fought on Iwo Jima during World War II. Twenty-three years ago, he survived cancer, losing a kidney and a bladder.

She said that Dr. Murray is a Nobel Prize winner. He was educated at Harvard Medical School

and performed the first kidney transplant.

"But on Christmas, they were just two former ballplayers — reliving the past."

Thanks Beth, it's a real Christmas story.

Our neighbor John Preece is moving to the Big Apple and some 60 friends gathered at the Portuguese American Citizens' Club Friday night to help him ease into the transition to big city life.

John leaves as full professor of communicative disorders at URI and will be professor of communicative sciences at City University of New York located at Hunter College. He will be moving on to his new job at the end of this month.

His wife, Kathy Koken, will complete her school year at Westerly High School, where she teaches Latin, and join John in New York in the fall. John said they plan to keep their island home and return to it for the summer and holidays.

Friends who turned out to wish the couple well were from the island, URI, and Westerly. Out-of-staters included former islanders Dave and Kathy Sylvia and Kathy's mom Vivian Scott, 88, all of Carson City, Nev., and Betty and Ed Shreeves of Love Tree, Iowa.

We'll ditto Sam Bari's New Year's resolution in last week's Press.

A Christmas gem: When 2-year-old granddaughter Sasha, who learned to talk since the last time I saw her, said to me, "I love you, Grandpa."

Maybe you and your pet can help each other out during 2006, says Dr. Joshua Hatch of the Jamestown Animal Clinic in his Pet Tip of the Week.

"Does Fluffy need your help with some New Year's resolutions? Maybe your house pet is a little on the plump side and could benefit from cutting out those table scraps this year or cutting back on the amount of kibble he or she gets. Maybe Fluffy can help keep you on track with your resolutions by getting outside with you and going for longer walks and helping everybody get in better shape this year.

"We know how important it is to keep your pets fit and healthy to help avoid problems like diabetes and premature arthritis and

your pets depend on you to do what is best for them in 2006 and beyond."

Woof!

Amara Murray and Matt Mulder are also leaving the island this month, but they're going a bit farther. The two are heading to western Kenya, where they'll be doing six months of volunteer work for a local organization.

Amara wrote, "I'm looking forward to working in the health clinic, and my husband will be helping out at the high school and center for children with disabilities. We've been practicing a bit of Swahili and Dholuo (the local language), and are looking forward to living in another small town like Jamestown — population 4,000."

Amara is the granddaughter of Dr. Joseph Murray in the above Christmas story.

The couple are seeking donations of a laptop, solar-powered or battery-powered microscope, thermometers, and notebooks.

If you can help them out, they can be reached at 423-3331.

Has anyone heard from the Jamestown Moonbathers?

Welcome to new Town Administrator Bruce Keiser and kudos to Police Chief Tom Tighe for his very capable substitution. We must be the only town in the state whose police chief is a qualified town administrator.

Jeepers creepers where'd you get those ? , jeepers creepers where'd you get those ?

Islander Mo Vandal has a rivalry going within his family and he's proud of it.

The rivalry only erupts at certain times of the year, like the Army-Navy football classic.

His son, Army Col. Thomas Vandal, West Point class of '82, finds himself sometimes at odds with his own son Nicholas, who is now a midshipman 4/c at Annapolis. Nicholas had always rooted for his dad's service, but when he was chosen for Annapolis his loyalties changed.

Actually, Nick was accepted at all three service academies but choose Annapolis because he wants to be a Marine pilot.

As a second semester freshman, Nick has a 4.0 average and is taking sophomore and junior classes.

Tom has done three tours in Iraq. "I'm very proud of both of them," Mo said. "My son believes everyone should give something back to their country."



Christmas morning at the Weibust home. Three generations gathered include (left to right) Casey Weibust, Ethan Murray, Ryan Weibust, Dr. Murray, John Casey, Link Murray, and Beth Weibust.

Tom has two other sons, Eric, 16, who has expressed a strong desire to attend West Point, and Stephen, 15, who wants to go to the Naval Academy.

So, it looks like the rivalry is going to go on for awhile.

Who does Mo root for?
"I was in the Army during the Korean War."

Kudos to the Vandal family.

Welcome also to the Rev. Kevin M. Lloyd the new rector of St. Matthew's Episcopal Church. Father Lloyd will join us on the island soon with his wife, Julia, and 2-year-old son, Harry.

Lets see, it's January and still no solution to the deer problem on the island.

Hanne Calcina of North Main Road sent along an item from the Dec. 4 issue of the New York Times by Nicholas D. Kristof.

She asked if we could reprint the entire article. Well, we can't do that but we can quote some highlights of the story. It's entitled "For Environmental Balance, Pick Up a Rifle."

The report starts out explaining that the deer is a large American mammal, and in that category — which includes the bear, wolf and cougar — deer kill the most humans each year. "Unchecked by predators, deer populations are exploding in a way that is profoundly unnatural and that is destroying the ecosystem in many parts of the country. . . . One result is ticks and Lyme disease, but deer also kill people more directly. A study for the insurance industry estimated that deer kill about 150 people a year in car crashes nationwide and cause \$1 billion in damage."

Kristof advocates bringing back hunting.

He says some communities are talking about using birth control to keep deer populations down. "Liberals presumably support free condoms while conservatives back abstinence. Deer contraception hasn't been very successful,"

Kristof notes. He says other towns have discreetly hired private companies to shoot deer. "We have an environmental imbalance caused in part by the decline of hunting." He adds that a study shows that for every 100 hunters who die or stop hunting, only 69 hunters take their place.

"I was raised on 'Bambi' — but also, as an Oregon farm boy, on venison and elk meat. But deer are not pets, and dead deer are as natural as live deer. To wring one's hands over them, perhaps after polishing off a hamburger, is soggy sentimentality," Kristof contends. He says the alternative to hunting is that deer die of disease and hunger or as one magazine editor suggested, "Do we introduce wolves into the burbs?"

Kristof goes on to say that hunting connects people with the outdoors and creates a broader constituency for wilderness preservation. "It's an abdication of environmental responsibility to eliminate other predators and then refuse to assume the job ourselves. . . . It's time to reestablish a balance in the natural world — by accepting the idea that hunting is as natural as bird-watching."

Right on! Thanks, Hanne!

A belated Happy New Year! May 2006 bring you peace and good health.

Be true!

We welcome your contributions to this column — birthdays, anniversaries, and other good stuff.

Call us at 423-0383 or 829-2760, e-mail jtmwalrus@hotmail.com, or drop the item off at the Jamestown Press office, 42 Narragansett Ave.

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