

The Walrus Says

By Jim Munro



Hey Day on the 16th is going to be a very special day because it's happening at a very special place. We asked Jessie Dutra, a serious writer when she can find time from her farm chores, to tell us about her home.

"With the upcoming Hey Day at our farm, we would like to take some time to share our family story. My name is Jessie Dutra. My husband Joe, our son Joey Jr. and I own the Dutra farm. This 140-acre farm is located on the central part of the island. We enjoy beautiful sunrises and views of the Newport Bridge and Narragansett Bay. Joe is a third-generation dairy farmer. We have been married for six years. Our son Joey was born in October 2002. Joe has walked in the foot-

prints of his father and grandfather for over 50 years now. Our son is the fourth generation Joseph Dutra to pass the threshold of our milking barn. Joey rides his John Deere tricycle around the barn just like his father did when he was young. As we watch Joey feed the calves and the barn cats, we look toward the future and wonder what it has in store for our family farm.

"The story of the Dutra farm began with the immigration of Joe's grandfather — Joseph (Jose) Furtado Dutra. An Azorean immigrant, he settled in Jamestown in the late 1800s. Our story, like many others on this island, is a celebration of the many Azorean immigrants who settled here and helped build this tight-knit town.

Our family has laughed, cried and shared births, deaths, and plenty of living with this community for four generations.

"Joe's grandfather was a man with many skills. He could be found peddling his milk and produce by horse and wagon, building sailboats or helping to construct the forts. He was an entrepreneurial man who worked hard and invested in land on the island.

"The original Dutra homestead is located near the school at Lawn and Watson avenues. He purchased the initial 40 acres of the Dutra farm in 1917. The remaining acreage was purchased in 1933. He married twice, losing his first wife at a very young age (possibly typhoid fever). He and his second wife, Maria Rosa, had two children, Joseph Furtado Dutra Jr. and Mary Dutra. Until his death in 1938, his life was his family and his farm here on Conanicut Island. I would be remiss not to mention that his daughter, Mary Dutra Sylvia, passed away this year. At the time of her death, she was the oldest resident born on the island. She will be missed.

"After his death, the farm was taken over by Joe's father, Joseph Furtado Dutra Jr. His focus turned toward strictly dairy cattle, where it remains to this day. He married Anita Legendre in September 1947. They had one child, Joseph Francis Dutra, my husband. Joe worked side by side with his father for as long as he can remember. He would help on the farm before taking the ferry to school. After school, he would be back on the farm helping again. Joe took over the business in 1972, upon completion of college at the University of Rhode Island. His father enjoyed retirement and working in his prized vegetable garden until his death in 1982. Joe's mother worked hard along with her husband and son to keep the farm sustainable. She passed away in 2003 at the age of 93, living long enough to hold her

grandson Joey.

"In 2002 we joined the Rhode Island Dairy Farms Cooperative. Our goal was to find a value added product to help sustain the small family farms. Working closely with four other Rhode Island dairy farms, we brought Rhody Fresh, a fresh local milk, to the people of our state in July 2004. The response was immediate and overwhelming. Jamestown, along with other communities, jumped in with tremendous support from the very beginning. We reached our third year goals within our first year of operation.

"Thank you! "This year has been the toughest year on record for our family farm. With over 30 inches of rain in two months, we were unable to pasture our cows, forcing us to buy feed. We lost one month of our three-month window for harvesting. Corn planting was delayed. This may affect our fall harvest.

"The weather, along with the government regulated milk prices have left us worried for our future. The price we are paid for our milk is equal to the prices paid 30 years ago. Rhody Fresh helps us to remain viable, but we will need to redefine our family farm to keep it sustainable for our next generation. "Now that you have the history, let me tell you about the present operation. Currently, we have 115 Holsteins, a herd of 48 milkers and the remainders are replacement heifers. Our facilities are tired but functional, with a pipeline milking system that was last updated in the 1970s. Our cows are milked twice per day. We practice rotational grazing. Our cows enjoy fresh pasture from April through November, weather permitting. We grow hay and corn for supplemental and winter feed. As you drive toward our milking barn, you will enjoy our cattle grazing in the pastures and a breathtaking view of Narragansett Bay.

"We welcome you to come share our working farm with us. Enjoy the beautiful scenery and

learn more about our operation. Take a tour of our barn, see our cows and calves, walk our pastures and enjoy a day at the Dutra farm.

We look forward to seeing you September 16th."

Thank you Jessie.

"He made the night a little brighter wherever he would go...The Old Lamplighter of long, long ago." Patty Vandal had the right answer as did Rose Fraley, Bob Kinder, Charlie Masso and Barbara-Ann MacIntosh.

John A. Murphy wrote, "Patti Page, no?" Anybody know?

Dr. Joshua Hatch of the Jamestown Animal Clinic introduces us to another fungus in his Pet Tip of the Week.

"Continuing with some problems that can affect both people and pets, we touch on a fungal infection commonly called ringworm. Ringworm has nothing to do with worms, but is named because the lesion commonly starts as a ring shaped area that slowly expands and tends to be red, itchy, and sometimes crusty. Ringworm is caused by a few commonly encountered dermatophytes or fungi that are found in most environments, and it is commonly spread by direct contact between skin or fur and skin.

"Pets may have ringworm on their fur but not have any lesions, but any areas of hair loss, redness, or crusting should be examined by your pet's doctor. Testing usually involves skin scraping and a special culture of the hair. Treatment typically involves shampoos, creams, and sometimes oral medications."

Thank you, Doctor and a big WOOF! to you.

Cathryn Jamieson is converting a room at her salon at 16 Narragansett Ave. into an English tearoom where she plans to hold a series of workshops for groups of eight to 10 people.

She's presently seeking suggestions for workshop topics and invites anyone with ideas to contact her at cjameson3@netzero.com

Stay tuned for information about an upcoming open house.

When did the Jamestown Community Theatre become a "controversial issue"?

Continued on next page



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