

The Walrus Says

By Jim Munro



The welcoming storefronts of Narragansett Avenue took on a different and emptier look yesterday as Paws and Claws closed its door for the last time.

After almost two years of negotiations with the building's owners, tenant Barbara Szeptowski was evicted as of the last day of February.

Since August of 1999, Paws and Claws has sold pet supplies, but more importantly has been a haven for homeless animals and a place for the island youth to meet and socialize.

"Thanks to the bond with Cathy Gregory, Jamestown's animal control officer, and the staff of the Jamestown Animal Clinic, we were able to save a lot of animals' lives," Barbara said. There was also a close connection with the Potter League for Animals, of Middletown, because, at that time, all of the island's found and abandoned pets went across the bridge.

Since the store's opening, Paws and Claws has helped 573 gerbils, rats, mice, parrots, hamsters, guinea pigs, hedgehogs, cats, dogs, rabbits, ferrets, parakeets, canaries, and one turtle in finding new homes. "And that doesn't count the sick opossum from Pemberton Apartments, the mink someone thought was a ferret and let into the Conanicut Marina store, the owl hit on North Road, or the Canada goose with the broken wing Cathy Gregory and I captured one evening in the mud pond by the bridge toll houses," Barbara added.

One of those dogs is our 11-year-old Vallhund, Joshua rescued out of a Florida kennel. Then there was the phone call in the spring of 2005 from the Bridge and Turnpike authority office asking her to come and get one of the geese back with its flock. It had gotten separated on bridge property and was with the wrong flock and was being beaten up. The goose was liberated and returned to its family.

But it wasn't only animals that were the beneficiaries of the amenities at Paws and Claws. "When the store opened, it quickly became a place where kids could hang out, help take care of the pets for adoption, meet other kids, do community service, and brighten our days. For a few winters we had the 'Kids Club,' a Sunday afternoon hangout for kids whose parents were getting divorced. It gave

these children a stress-free spot to meet with others going through the same difficulties," Barbara explained.

During the final days leading up to closing, Paws and Claws placed five cats and two rats into new homes, and last weekend the store held an eviction sale to empty out its inventory. It was also a reunion as pets adopted out of Paws and Claws showed up for the event.

But it wasn't all gloom around the store in recent days. It wasn't the end.

Former councilman Guy Settignano offered a building he owns at Frigate and Beacon to Barbara to headquarter her shelter fund-raising and educational programs. She said the Jamestown Shores Association and the tree committee that now meet there will be allowed to stay free of charge.

Barbara said that "since the building and lot are zoned as a public meeting place, we now have the ability to set up an office to run the fund-raising and permitting effort for the Jamestown Animal Shelter. After lengthy discussions with town and state officials, we will work to build a permanent shelter rather than a 'demonstration' shelter which would have been temporary, and which would have been torn down a lot earlier then we expected due to the fast tracking of the affordable housing project."

She said animals will not be kept at the north end building. But, some will be brought in for instructional programs for children and organizations such as the Boy Scouts working on merit badges.

Packing up boxes at Paws and Claws on Sunday, Barbara asked us to tell our readers that she has two dogs waiting to be adopted. Cognac is an older lab-terrier mix and Blue is a Tibetan terrier, about eight-years-old that was abandoned on Beavertail Road.

Despite everything, Barbara said, "There are still pets to be adopted and the need for an island animal shelter."

WOOF!

"Yours, Anne," the small but powerful musical based on the best seller "Anne Frank, the Diary of a Young Girl," opens tomorrow night at 7:30 at the Central Baptist Church.

Other performances are Satur-

day at 7:30 p.m., Sunday at 4 p.m., Friday, March 9, and Saturday, March 10, at 7:30 p.m. and Sunday, March 11, at 4 p.m.

The cast of exceptionally talented actors are Hannah Cordes in the title role, Matt Bolles as Otto Frank, Jeanne Spinosa plays Edith Frank, Becky Brazil is Mrs. Van Daan, Terry Horsley as Mr. Van Daan, John Andrews is Mr. Dussell, and Michael Liebhauser as Peter Van Daan.

The roles of poets, students and singers are played by Camille Baker, Allie Brown, Danielle Brown, Erin Brown, Kelsey Donohue, Rashelle DeValerio and Dana Larkin.

Mary S. Wright is artistic director. Becky Brazil serves as music director; Joan McCauley, producer; Donna Gavin and Maria Liebhauser, assistants to the producer and director; Erin Brown, stage manager; Allie Brown, assistant stage manager; Danielle Brown, costume designer; and Janet Grant, accompanist. Tickets are available at Baker's Pharmacy, The Secret Garden, Pleasant Surprise in Newport, and Midnight Sun in Wickford.

Break a leg!

Kudos to the St. Mark boys' sixth grade CYO basketball team that is headed for the playoffs for the second year in a row.

The boys have played together since the fourth grade and had another great season with nine wins and three losses. Coach Mary Heath said she has "really enjoyed coaching the boys the last three years. They are so unselfish with the ball, and every one of them enjoys passing as much as shooting, so we have tons of open shots. All the boys share in the team's success." Mary's most proud of the way her team runs the give and go play - "like butter," how hard the players work for the rebounds and how dedicated they are to the team.

Mary said, "Adam Southworth received the season's comic relief award when he faked out an opponent on a fast break by circling the ball around his waist a couple of times before passing to his teammate breaking to the basket. After the ball fell through the net the crowd in the bleachers erupted in laughter when realizing Adam had just designed a new ball fake."

The squad consists of Owen Heath, James Chamberlain, Matt Raffanelli, Tyler Woodword, Eric Stroud, Tim Archer, Nathan Lambert, and Kevin McDermott.

Great job, guys!

Whatever happened to acid rain?

Or Suzi Chapstick?



It was 50 years ago this month that John Doty and his sister Nancy (Doty Frade) danced to the popular song "Side by Side" in the annual St. Patrick's Day Kiddies' Revue and Roaring Twenties show. It was staged at the Recreation Center to benefit St. Mark Church.

Poser: Oh, we don't have a barrel of money.....

Keeping a pup or kitten up-to-date on their shots will prevent future problems says Dr. Joshua Hatch of the Jamestown Animal Clinic in his Pet Tip of the Week.

"We have had a lot of questions about vaccines for new puppies and kittens in the last few weeks. The standard for all puppies and kittens involves boosting them to common infectious diseases when they are most susceptible.

"When pets are born they have their mother's antibodies to many common diseases circulating in their systems. Between eight- and 16-weeks of age those antibodies break down and the new pets have to start making their own protective antibodies. By boosting an animal's immunity at three- to four-week intervals from ages six- or eight- weeks till they are 15 or 16 weeks old we do our best to prevent disease and allow them to start protecting themselves.

"Animals that skip booster shots, or wait till they are more fully grown, risk contracting diseases that are otherwise preventable.

You and your animal's doctor can decide on what are the right vaccines for your pet, but prevention is the key to keeping these little guys healthy."

WOOF!

A reader of John A. Murphy's column Murphy's Law has trumped our readers by coming up

with the answer to the poser, "oh happy Africa," to which we had no replies. The answer is "Skokiaan," and was sent in by Roy C. Elswick.

John credited the response to a "high quality reader."

Hmmm!

A reader who identifies himself as a Jamestown neighbor/friend of all animals, e-mailed inquiring about a lone sheep.

"What is the story with the lone sheep at the community farm on Eldred Avenue? I drive by this poor, lonely guy on my way to work every morning and wonder why he is all alone. Was he a b-a-a-a-a-d sheep so he is being separated from the flock? Or is he doing community service and mowing the lawn? Seriously, why is he all by himself? I feel sorry for him. Can't he have another sheep to keep him company?"

Afraid not. A representative of the farm said that it is nothing more than a "sheep in a pasture" and doesn't understand why people are concerned about a sheep.

It's obviously just a loner.

Saturday's full moon is the Sap Moon, Crow Moon or Lenten Moon.

Be true!

Call in your stuff for this column to 423-0383 or 829-2760. You can e-mail us at jtnwalrus@hotmail.com, or drop your items off at the Jamestown Press office.

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