



## A "Furry Affair" puts the Fun in Fundraising

by Stephanie Boosahda

Yes, they raised the roof at the Wianno Club a few weeks ago, but it wasn't the type of roof raised in the Award-winning 1985 movie, *Witness*.

This roof raising was much more impressive: in less the 30 seconds, people from all ends of the Cape, all walks of life, and as diverse as the animals they love, bid and raised \$10,000 to re-do the roof at the Centerville MSPCA adoption facility.

Mary Littleford's bid of \$5,000 started the bidding and it literally did not take a minute to raise another \$5,000. This was just one of the many unexpected highlights of this year's "Furry Affair."

A committee of thirty and a sold-out crowd of 200 made this, the Cape Cod MSPCA's 9th Annual Furry Affair, an "overwhelming success." According to one of the state MSPCA development officers, Laura Hoag, the event far exceeded fundraising expectations.

"Last year we were thrilled when we netted just about \$16,000, and this year, our net looks to be just over \$30,000 thanks to all the volunteers, a very dedicated committee, and the tremendous support of the community," said Hoag. "Saturday's support really shows how the community has faith in us accomplishing our mission. We wouldn't be able to survive without them."

The MSPCA's mission is to care for and adopt out thousands of homeless and unwanted animals each year. They shelter a wide variety of purebred and mixed-breed dogs and cats, as well as rabbits, guinea pigs and many other small animals.

The Nevins Farm & Equine Center in Methuen is a unique center for horses and other farm animals, including goats, cows, sheep, pigs, chickens, geese and ducks.

A DEDICATED, SERIOUS, AND FUN-LOVING CROWD

After a wonderful buffet dinner, which Hoag explains only included humanely-sound meats and free-range food products, the live auction kicked off with Charles Marshall, a firefighter from the West Barnstable fire station. With Marshall's approach of the stage, auctioneer Cat Wilson, from WCOD, needed little more help in firing up the already lively crowd.

Group Three of the West Barnstable Fire Department donated a dinner for ten with the Group 3 Firefighters; the bidding started at \$100 but continued for quite some time.

Amidst the popping up of numbers, the Wianno Club staff continued to add elegance to the event delivering coffee and delicately delicious desserts.

Cat continued the live auction with art pieces, including an original acrylic by John Woodruff, donated by the Black Cat Tavern; a Seven Night Stay at San Francisco's Nob Hill Inn, donated by Holly Rogers; A Taste of Cape Cod gift basket with certificates including over a dozen restaurants and valued at \$1,200; Custom Family Portrait by Amy Radar; and Wine, Cigars, and a James Bond collector's assortment donated by Shawn Donnelly, Carter Luke, and Scholastic.

Each item garnered more enthusiasm than the previous with placards popping up and down like basketballs in a free throw contest.

There was also a silent auction, with items spanning a vast array of categories, including something for everyone from original artwork to handmade accessories.

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For more information about pet adoption visit [www.MSPCA.org](http://www.MSPCA.org) then click on Adoption Centers. This website has a lot of helpful information as well as interesting opportunities.



To bid or not to bid on the Silent Auction Photograph by Stephanie Boosahda

As Heather Donnelly, the Cape Cod Adoption Center's Event Coordinator said, "This event wouldn't even be possible without all of our contributors – there were over 350! They helped our volunteers to make this such a tremendously successful event, our best ever."

Hoag added, "The Wianno Club was an absolute dream to work with and such an ideal location; we are very grateful to Mary Littleford for helping us get this location. We're thrilled that we've been invited back next year."

"The community support," she noted, "recognizes that by helping animals, we're helping to create families... the bond is so strong between pets and families. All the monies raised will stay on the Cape."

She further explained that even with the \$30,000 raised, the Cape still needs added support from the MSPCA-Angell and other funding sources.

The Centerville MSPCA facility is an independently funded, stand-alone humane organization with no public funding. It's an "open" shelter, which means it takes in all breeds of animals, all types, all ages, in all health conditions, and with a variety of health care needs.

Donnelly also notes that among the endless opportunities for volunteers is the chance to foster a pet. "When fostering a pet, the volunteer has the opportunity to, for example, have a pet for the summer, help it to feel secure and ready it for adoption."

Like other fostering situations, she continues, "the MSPCA provides food, cat litter, and all sorts of assistance to foster families including medical care. Fostering opportunities range from as little as two weeks to six weeks."



Volunteers Linda Doll and Maria Silva. Photograph by Stephanie Boosahda.

The Furry Affair wasn't all about raising roofs and raising money; it was also about volunteers – subtly and with specific tribute and celebration. Steven Cassell, a new pet owner, but already a dedicated MSPCA volunteer was honored with the Guardian Angel Award, given in recognition to an outstanding volunteer.

Cassell spent endless hours landscaping the Centerville facility and otherwise upgrading the Center. "He did all kinds of work around the shelter," state MSPCA President and Sandwich resident Carter Luke explained.

"He saw things that needed to be done and did them. He's a professional contractor and donated his expertise. He's a real good example of an incredibly great volunteer."



MSPCA President Carter Luke addresses the guests as images of animals up for adoption rotate on the screen behind him. Photograph by Stephanie Boosahda

Luke went on to say, "The Furry Affair celebrates the people who help as well as raising funds; it's a friend raiser, too. By helping animals and bonding together we all make this a better world. With leadership like Mary Littleford's and the committee, we all win."

Another "Furry Affair" is planned for May 21, 2011 and will again be held at the Wianno Club in Osterville, but there's no need to wait that long to get involved. While surfing the MSPCA site for a place to order tickets, check out info on the upcoming Walk for Animals, a Cape event to be held on September 12th at Aselton Park.

Like Harrison Ford's roof raising, at the Furry Affair the Cape's MSPCA was witness to a grass roots success and it has the community to thank. Donnelly, Hoag, and Luke all are Cape people with endless praise for the volunteers, committee members, contributors, attendees, workers, and all involved.

Said Luke, "We can't thank them enough and we couldn't exist without them."



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She was first published at age fifteen and has been writing for publications ever since.

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