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FARTHER EAST

Paws For A Good Cause

I wouldn't call this column a love letter, necessarily, but a thank-you to pet owners from Westhampton to Montauk.

Many reading this column—of course, I'm assuming there are "many" to begin with—who own pets have adopted them from the Animal Rescue Fund, Last Chance Animal Rescue, Southampton Animal Shelter and similar facilities. When one dog owner says to another, "She's a rescue," it is understood immediately what is meant. Thanks to generous, good-hearted people, there are fewer animals who are homeless and waiting their turn in a kill shelter.

I have a dog named Sophia who is an example. She was found at a kill shelter in Georgia and, along with other dogs, was brought up to Eastern Long Island by the local organization Gimme Shelter. We had agreed to foster a dog until a family could be found to adopt it, so we welcomed Sophia, who was 4 months old.

A few weeks later, when we were informed a family had been found, we asked them to send us the adoption forms instead. That was five years ago. (Sophia is still not sure if she likes the other adoptee in the house, her "half-sister," Sage.)

There are no lack of events on the East End to celebrate and encourage pet ownership, especially of those who would otherwise have miserable lives, but it's time to make room for a new one. I'm letting you know about it now because I expect that when we get closer to the event, sponsorship and other participation opportunities will be gone.

This past May, the Southampton Village trustees unanimously agreed to close off half of South Main Street on Saturday, October 7, the heart of Columbus Day weekend, so that Southampton family pets will have a chance to shine at what is being called "Paws on Parade" this fall. Hosted on the grounds of the Southampton Historical Museum, canines, accompanied by their owners, will strut their stuff on a 20-minute walk from the museum to the Bathing Corp.

Sean Deneny, who works at Town & Country Real Estate, is the organizer of this event. He said of "Paws on Parade" that "it is a true family event—and what could be more family-oriented than the Southampton Historical Museum? Just as our pets complete

our families, the museum completes our town and, consequently, our memories. We couldn't be more proud than to include the Southampton museum as a recipient of the proceeds of this celebratory event."

The Southampton Animal Shelter will showcase a variety of adoptable dogs for those considering additions to their family. Match the Pooch, Indiana Bones, Romancing the Bone and Look-Alike Challenge awards will be presented on the museum grounds. Bring your cameras and iPhones, as photo ops will occur with members of the Stages Children's Theater Group dressed in character prior to their 23rd annual "Frankenstein Follies" held at Bay Street Theatre in Sag Harbor.

Mr. Deneny says that a Chinese auction,

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balloons, face painting, and much more will be announced prior to Columbus Day weekend. St. John's Episcopal Church will provide a midway watering station with treats, among other surprises. Return transportation to the museum grounds will be provided, if needed. On that Saturday, October 7, doors will open at 9:30 a.m.

In conjunction with the "Paws on Parade" event, the Southampton Historical Museum will host its first annual "Ties & Tails" cocktail and hors d'oeuvres party at the museum's Rogers Mansion. Television sets will showcase up close and personal photos of the day, as well as Disney's "Lady and the Tramp." Silent auction items include four VIP tickets to both "Live with Kelly Ripa & Ryan Seacrest" and the popular program hosted by Dr. Oz. (Not sure if winners' pets will be welcome on the set!)

The collective events are designed to provide financial support to a variety of nonprofit organizations, such as the South-

ampton Animal Shelter and the Southampton Historical Museum, as well as local volunteer fire departments. Designed to be a more inclusive event, the adult early-bird registration fee (which is another reason why I'm informing you now) is \$20, with children 12 and under free. Early-bird "Ties & Tails" tickets are at \$125, which include two "Paws on Parade" admissions.

According to Mr. Deneny, "Too often we go to the well with our local village restaurateurs and retailers, whose annual revenues are tied to seasonal traffic." With that in mind, he has secured sponsors with the Southampton office of Town & Country Real Estate, Farmers Insurance, Subaru and Hubert's Lemonade, with more to follow. Those who want to participate in some way can contact Mr. Deneny at 631-903-7887.

If memory serves me right, there is a big Animal Rescue Fund event on Columbus Day weekend, too. I don't think there is any conflict at all, because my satisfying experience has been there are plenty of pet lovers to go around on Eastern Long Island.

From paws to gunslingers ... Okay, maybe not the smoothest segue, but I want to let Westhampton-area readers know that this Thursday, August 10, at 6 p.m., I'll be at the Westhampton Free Library to give a talk on "Dodge City."

And I just want to mention that sometimes writing and publishing something can result in unexpected pleasure. (This is in addition to publishers who pay royalties on time.) Last week, I received an email from Charles Masterson. He is 80 and lives in a retirement community in Dallas. Bat Masterson had four brothers, the youngest being Thomas Masterson Jr. Imagine how much fun it was to read that his grandson loved the book and that I had "filled in some gaps in family history."

Hope to see you at the Westhampton Library.



Tom Clavin lives in Sag Harbor. "Dodge City: Wyatt Earp, Bat Masterson, and the Wickedest Town In the American West" has just been published by St. Martin's Press. For more info, go to tomclavin.com.