

Godfrey the goose finds a warm roost to rule in Knox

By Eileen Leonard
KNOX — "I'll cook your goose," is not a phrase you'll hear uttered at the home of Dave and Terri Mirabile on Drumm Road in Knox.

"When I first found him, I called up the neighbors to see if he belonged to them," said Terri of their pet goose, Godfrey. "We'll be right there for him, heat up a pot of water, they all joked."

On January fifth of last year, Godfrey showed up at his newly-adopted residence during a fierce snowstorm. "I thought he was a goner," she said of the goose. Dave Mirabile, who works for Sherpa Builders, prepared a warm

place for Godfrey in their garage, where the goose still goes when he needs shelter.

Not knowing how to care for such an animal, Terri asked Guilderland veterinarian Edward Becker. "What do I feed this thing?" She said. Dr. Becker advised her to feed the goose chicken feed, lettuce, cracked corn, and bread. Godfrey likes to eat grass, too. And, of course, they need to ensure Godfrey has water each day.

The Mirabiles had inquired at a wildlife sanctuary about the wild goose, and the sanctuary said they would take him. But before long, "He became part of the family," said Terri.

"In the summer, he goes down to the pond every night, but on cold, windy nights, he goes in the garage," said Dave.

One of Godfrey's favorite people is 12-year-old Jenna Mirabile, who, along with her 15-year-old brother Nicholas, helps take care of Godfrey. During the warm weather, Jenna fills up a large bucket with water which Godfrey enjoys sitting in when he's not in the pond.

Godfrey also likes following Jenna around the yard.

"The bird runs right after Jenna, just like in that movie *Fly Away Home*," said Terri. "And when you call him, he comes."

The Mirabiles named their



Honky-dory: Jenna Mirabile, 12, of Knox and her pet goose, Godfrey, both ducked as they posed for a picture.

pet Godfrey because, "We got him for free," said Dave. In addition to getting along well with the family's dog, Sierra, and cat, Chunkman, Godfrey acts as a so-called "watch goose."

"He's very boisterous," explained Dave. "He doesn't attack, but he'll honk and sometimes hiss at strangers."

Every morning, around 5 a.m., Godfrey makes noises similar to a rooster. Then, around 7 a.m., he starts pecking on the Mirabiles' front door for his handout of stale bread.

According to Terri, Godfrey was gone for a two-week period last year. She took a walk in search of him, and saw some wild turkeys and some wild geese, assuming Godfrey joined them.

However, being well-known in the neighborhood worked to his advantage because the children on the school bus spotted Godfrey.

"My neighbor captured him in a sack and brought him back," she said.

Because Godfrey gets fed a lot, he is probably considered overweight for a goose, and therefore unable to fly. When approached by strange animals, he flaps his wings in defense.

Somewhat comical looking with his bright orange webbed feet and large beak, Godfrey is there to stay — even if he doesn't lay any golden eggs.

"He rules the roost here," said the Mirabiles.

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Laudato back at helm as GOP chairman

By Andrew Schotz
GUILDERLAND — With unanimous support, Paul Laudato reassumed the position he gave up two years ago: chairman of the town's Republican committee.

With about two-thirds of the members of the committee present Tuesday, Laudato was named to replace F. Lee Jones, who announced earlier this month that he was resigning.

Hiram Eberlein, the committee's vice chairman, said that a voice vote was taken and no one voted against Laudato. Because he expected at least some opposition, Eberlein characterized the mood of the meeting as "quiet."

"The longer things go smoothly, the better it is for the organization," Eberlein said.

The Guilderland Republican Committee has been divided lately, as top officials have criticized Republican town board members Anne Rose and Timothy Sheehan, mainly for making appointments that the party has disagreed with.

Sheehan has said he is prepared to run for re-election in November even if the party doesn't support him, and is

working on a slate of candidates to join him.

Laudato is one of the critics. He said last week that Sheehan has "almost slammed the door" by acting against the party's wishes.

Sheehan and Rose were not at the committee meeting Tuesday because a town board meeting was held at the same time.

Laudato was party chairman for five years before he resigned to run for the county legislature. He said last week that he now has extra time for party business because he doesn't have a job he recently had — counsel for former state Sen. Michael Hoblock Jr., who lost an election to Democrat Neil Breslin last fall.

Eberlein said that there will be "some reorganization" at the next committee meeting, as some positions on an executive committee subgroup are filled.

He expects the party to make a decision by "some time in May" on its candidates for November: when supervisor, two council seats, town clerk, one town justice, and receiver of taxes will be on the ballot.

Tax exemption deadline March 1

GUILDERLAND — March 1 is the deadline for Guilderland School District residents over age 65 to apply for a partial school property tax exemption for the 1997-98 school year.

The exemption is based on a sliding scale and affects seniors with incomes of less than \$26,900. The deadline for continuing applicants is May 1.

For information or an application, residents should call the town assessor's office in Guilderland, Bethlehem, Knox, or New Scotland.

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