

# CATS

Continued from Page 1

The real trouble began last fall, Marszalek and Schierer say, when a man began renting a home owned by Allabaugh on Ellsworth Hill Road across from the barn. The man was angry that one of the cats was going underneath his porch.

Marszalek and Schierer say the man owns three dogs and called the Society for the Prevention of Cruelty to Animals (SPCA) to ask if the cats could be sick. The woman said the man told them that the SPCA informed him that "all barn cats are diseased" and to stay away from the animals.

Schierer says she was in disbelief and called the SPCA herself, only to be advised the same thing - that all barn cats are diseased. Schierer called the local SPCA again at a later date and the person who answered the phone at the time said the SPCA would never say such a thing.

Since Sweeney, executive director of the SPCA of Luzerne County, says the SPCA would never tell someone that all barn cats are diseased.

"Let me assure you that no one here has ever said that," Sweeney said. "How would we know that a barn cat is diseased? Are there diseases out there in cats that are allowed to roam? Certainly. But all cats don't have these diseases."

According to Sweeney, animal control is the responsibility of each municipality but that smaller municipalities, such as Dallas Township, do not have an animal control officer.

Sweeney says the chances of a feral cat ever being placed in a home situation are slim. But Marszalek and Schierer have been catching the cats and placing them into homes, including their own. They have also taken some of the cats to Blue Chip Animal Rescue in Dallas in hopes of having them adopted.

Marszalek and Schierer say they know the cats in the barn are healthy because they took the cats they had trapped to a veterinarian who gave the animals a clean bill of health.

On the morning of Jan. 9, Marszalek and Schierer dumped a can of cat food onto the edge of the roadway near the barn. A black cat ventured from the barn and meowed repeatedly, but was too fearful to go near the food.

The man renting the house

crossed the street and yelled, "Don't go on that property!" He refused to provide his name to The Dallas Post and, although he denied posting a sign that reads, "Caution - area - rodent - poison. Keep out. This means you," Marszalek and Schierer allege he is the one who hung the sign.

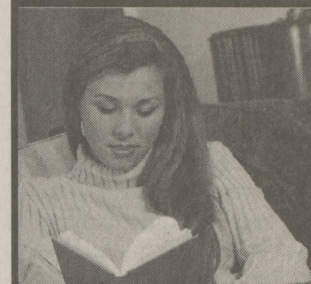
An additional sign on the barn reads, "Do not feed the wild cats. The SPCA has been notified and the police. They have told us how to get rid of them. The first step is to stop feeding them. Stop trespassing on private property or the police will be contacted again. We have asked you to stop many times and now we must take action. Someone is going to get hurt if they scratch or bite. The food you are putting out is bringing in wild animals to the barn. Stop now or further action will have to be taken - owner of property."

Allabaugh learned that Marszalek and Schierer were near the barn on Jan. 9, though the women did not go onto the property. Allabaugh called police from her job and left work to meet two Lehman Township officers at her home. The Lehman Township police officers said Dallas Township police did not respond because they were on the scene of a traffic accident.

According to the police report by Dallas Township Police, investigating officer Jason Mislevy was dispatched to the barn at 10:12 a.m. on Jan. 9 for a report of a dispute in progress. Mislevy was assisting the Pennsylvania State Police with a motor vehicle accident in Franklin Township, so officers from Harveys Lake Police handled the incident (although this reporter witnessed Lehman Township Police respond) until the officer was able to leave the accident.

"This officer spoke with a Brenda Allabaugh who stated that a Wilma Sheer (sic) and another individual entered onto her property and feed (sic) cats at her barn," states the police report. "Allabaugh stated that the cats are strays and that she has been in contact with the SPCA of Luzerne County. Allabaugh stated that she was advised by SPCA officials not to feed the animals so that they will not remain at the barn and leave."

Allabaugh would not comment any further, other than to say that Marszalek and Schierer are harassing her.



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# MEMORIES

Continued from Page 1

Baird, an original member of the Irem Temple Jazz Band, started his own band, the Bobby Bird Dixieland Jazz Band, in 1952 and, in 2000, was awarded the Pennsylvania Jazz Society's "Musician Jazzer" award. His band played for area colleges in clubs and restaurants, for parties and events and for organizations to benefit the community. The Dallas Rotary, Back Mountain Library and Fall Fair, the Cherry Blossom Festival and the Fine Arts Fiesta have all been helped

by the band's performances.

Baird recalls playing for Hillary Clinton and Ronald Reagan and has appeared with performers Rosemary Clooney, Peggy Lee and Ed Sullivan. As a member of the Scranton Philharmonic, he worked with Skitch Henderson and famed trumpeter Doc Severinsen, best known for leading the NBC Orchestra on "The Tonight Show Starring Johnny Carson."

Today, Baird is happy living with his wife, Pat, and their dog, "Shadow." He still enjoys playing solo pieces at churches and with the Dixieland All-Stars in Scranton, but fondly looks forward to fishing at his summer place in

Hay Bay, Canada, for walleye.

This Tuesday, Jan. 20, Baird will be the trumpet soloist at an inaugural celebration at Penn State Wilkes-Barre Campus where, with accompanist Debbie Kelleher, he'll play an arrangement of "America the Beautiful."

According to Bill Bachman, a long-time friend and instructor at Penn State, "Bob Baird could very well be, at 78, the only U.S. Navy Band trumpeter still playing exactly 60 years to the date of Harry Truman's inauguration in 1949."

The event at Penn State/Wilkes-Barre is scheduled for 11:30 a.m. and open to the public.

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