



KELLY'S CORNER

by Jan Kelly



Long overdue, a new service thrives in Provincetown, a service for locals and tourists alike, a kennel. No longer do we need to seek an out-of-town facility where both pets and owners are strangers, for now we enjoy a place of physical and emotional comfort for both pet and owner. Should you wish to travel your vacation also becomes your pet's vacation. The anxiety of leaving your pet also finds relieved knowing you have found the perfect friend who will dog-sit. With all that stress gone for both parties, it's time to party.

That's what it seems like when I visit KC's Animal Resort. A party with pups dominating, but nicely so. The only dog I hear bark is Brandy, faithful friend of owners Chris and Karen. But that's Brandy's job and once she recognizes you, the job's done and she quiets down like the rest. Tyler Roderick greeted me also. At 12 years old, Tyler has done a grand job all summer walking the dogs, vacuuming, doing laundry and jumping in whenever assistance was needed. Erin Hussey of Wellfleet is also a student and Lisa Martin takes her 10-month-old daughter, Heather to work. Heather loves to watch the dog baths, but falls asleep as soon as the hair dryer goes on. We can call KC's Animal Resort a "Townie" business since it provides year round service, year round employment and a year round rental of the Silva home to locals—a solid, steadily growing local business.

How did all this come about? Since the first day any of us arrived in town the lack of a vet and the lack of a kennel has been a problem. Being a town of animal lovers and not necessarily car lovers, attention for one's pets was problematic. Dr. Fred Pappalardo relieved the distance problem, but we still needed a "Pet Hotel."

Karen Silva has been an animal lover all her life. Chris, her husband, said that he remembers her walking her rabbit "Bugsy" on a leash from Mechanic St. to the beach at Sal's Place. Maturing from her childhood passion for all animals, Karen attended the University of New Hampshire and received a degree in zoology. "I then thought of vet school, but I didn't want four more years of study. I started grooming dogs at our

home, upstairs in the tub as a home occupation. In two years I had 100 customers. I would keep the dog overnight when the owners were away. It was a challenge. I've always wanted lots of animals. So Chris, standing in the backyard watching me groom a dog said, 'Hey, maybe we should open a kennel!' I was eager to get out of the 9 to 5 and loved the idea. And look what I've done! Now, I'm working 80 hours a week, 7 days a week!"

It took three years to finally acquire the land. Only the area on Shankpainter Road and the old A&P were possible sites due to the noise factor. "Then Bill Dougal helped us with the business plan. We wanted to hire him, but he wouldn't take any fee."

"Yes," Chris joined in, "He and Karen worked side by side night after night. We couldn't have gone through all that without him and he is right on projection for the business. We had a lot of family support. Our families helped paint. Louise Crawley, Karen's mother, works the desk. Chris Enos at F.A. Day's Propane, my boss, was so understanding of my schedule and Karen's boss, Benson, Young and Downs Insurance were great. Letting her set a flexible schedule until she left the job for good. There was and is a lot of community effort. So many people volunteered and helped us get going. The guest houses have been great, putting us

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— Karen Silva

on the website, our employers, our families and so many townspeople helped make this happen.

You can see that most of the success comes from Karen and Chris, an earnest, smart, handsome couple wanting a life of meaning, an employment and an active life that keeps the mind and heart alert. A consuming interest is a key to a happy life and actuating it into a livelihood is a challenge. Here the challenge is well taken.

I asked how young Chris, age 8, views the business. Karen let me know "he's a big part of the business. Without him we would have to close. He feeds and walks the dogs. He jumps into his clothes in the morning and helps. At

Christmas I had 20 dogs here and I have 22 stalls—we were busy. Fortunately young Chris was on vacation. He was running dishes as fast as I could fill them. he's very good at play sessions with the dogs too."

Both Chris and Karen are eager to offer more time for the dogs. Rather than expand and end up with a factory, they want that personal touch with each dog because "that's someone's beloved pet." Other animals Karen takes right up to her and Chris's bed.

Besides dogs there is a separate cat's quarters. Ferrets and hamsters have also been kennelled. But dogs account for the bigger part of the business. Off season business is good with many repeat clients. After a dog has stayed a spell, they can't hold it back on its next visit, it runs right downstairs. It's dog camp.

What Karen likes best are the puppies and she wants to keep every one of them. Little Chris calls a 12-week old pug there "Scrunchy Face."

"The work is very tiring, but rewarding," says Karen. "We now have a new groomer so we have two groomers. Marje Bobbins of Vermont has been pet grooming for 25 years." Chris notes, "Our goal is to arrange it so that Karen doesn't

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have to work 80 hours a week."

When asked if they have any information for pet owners to prep their animals Karen suggested, "People have to understand that grooming is a strange situation for their pet, a change. It's like a child going to camp. Some adapt well, some have separation anxiety. Sometimes a situation other than a kennel is a better solution. If a dog is anxious I sit and cuddle him and he may end up upstairs with us. A kennel is not for all. Know your pet. And of course, we warn about fleas and necessary vaccination certificates. All that is in the brochure."

"Overall, we love the work. We're glad to be doing such a venture and to be reaching a goal. People can vacation

with their pets without inconveniencing households that are better off without pets due to allergies or other problems. They can visit with their pets, take them for a walk, take them to the beach. It's all about caring an

removing stress. Next we're going to put in some picnic tables. Owners can have lunch with their dogs."

Karen and Custodio Silva Jr. offer year-round kennel care. The office at 79 Shank Painter Road is open Monday

through Friday between 8:30 AM and 5:00 PM, Saturday between 9:00 AM and 4:00 PM, and Sunday between 9:00 AM & Noon and 4:00 and 5:00 PM. Pet grooming is available 7 days a week by appointment. The kennel will be closed for two weeks between September 19th at 5pm and Monday, October 4th at 8:30am. This will permit them to accomplish maintenance and painting chores.

As I left this busy but calm place of love and business, Karen was checking the reservation sheet so well-kept by "Granny" Louise Crawley. She uses red ink and the sheet is so filled and refilled with names and notes and times it looks more like pasta with red clam sauce than data, but it works. We wish you well, Silva family. Your success story was immediate and will continue!

