



Tuesday, December 1st, 2009



### **Bravest to the rescue: 9 kittens, cat rescued from chilly fate in Coney Island**

NEW YORK, NY- It was the purr-fect rescue by the New York City's Bravest. A bundle of nine shivering kittens and a mama cat abandoned in a fish tank outside a Coney Island firehouse are fe-line fine this weekend, after being saved by some big-hearted firefighters with a soft spot for animals. Firefighters at Engine 318 and Ladder 166, known for their heroic Brooklyn water rescues, were returning from a run Sunday when a cacophony of meows alerted them to another hairy situation. "They were soaking wet and freezing cold," said

Firefighter Giancarlo Andriano, who spied the crying kittens huddled together in the glass tank in a grocery cart parked on the side of the firehouse. The large black mom was roaming around the nearby Dumpster in the freezing rain. "They were all in pretty bad shape," he said. An assembly line of beefy firefighters helped towel dry, clean and feed the hungry cats and used a space heater - and their strong arms - to keep them warm in the firehouse. The kitties were also beginning to warm their hearts, but sadly, a busy firehouse is no place for 10 feisty felines, said Firefighter Steve Shedd. Instead, he spent the day working the phones. "People were telling me there's nothing they could do for us," he said, noting many shelters and rescue groups said they were filled to capacity due to a massive overpopulation crisis of needy kittens and cats. After a call for help to the Mayor's Alliance for NYC's Animals the felines found a home at the Humane Society of New York, where they were delivered in a cardboard box by the Alliance's Wheels of Hope program. "We are PACKED but we looked around and we thought we could manage them," said Humane Society Executive Director Sandra Defeo. The shelter has 175 cats and kittens, and many wonderful dogs that are also desperate for a new home. The nine adorable gray and black tabbies, which were part of two litters - about 5 weeks and 8 weeks old - are being monitored and treated before they become available for adoption. The mom, a sweet, black domestic short-hair named Neptune, will be also up for adoption next week if the firehouse decides they cannot keep her. Meanwhile thousands of cats and kittens around the city are in need of good homes. "We are hoping New Yorkers will open their homes like New York's Bravest to the hundreds of wonderful cats and kittens waiting during this holiday season for a home of their own in shelters," said Mayor's Alliance president Jane Hoffman. ([Full Article](#))

**Receptionist has been at Weyco longer than firm's president has been alive**



Glendale, Wisconsin - Rose Schulz insists we shouldn't make a big deal out of the fact that at 87, she is working full time - and has worked for the same company for 51 years. "Oh my goodness; I don't know why," she said when asked for an interview. "I'm just a plain Jane." On one hand, that may be true. A lifelong Milwaukeean, Schulz was raised in Bay View and has lived in her home near the airport for 58 years. Widowed 25 years ago, she shares the home with the youngest of her three children. She knits and bakes. "I like just plain everyday living," she said. On the other hand, how many 87-year-

old women could jump in their Chevrolet Malibu, drive nearly half an hour to the Weyco Group in Glendale and, with breaks, work from 7:45 a.m. to 4:30 p.m. every weekday? What's more, Schulz has been working for Weyco, an importer and marketer of shoes, and its predecessors for longer than the company's chief operating officer has been alive. Her 51st anniversary with the company is Tuesday. And here's a kicker: Schulz is a receptionist - from a bygone era. When the main number rings at Weyco, Schulz answers the call - "Weyco Group, Good morning" - or the phone will just ring for awhile until she can. You only get voicemail if the person you're transferred to can't pick up the phone. "Oh, I hear that," Schulz said, referring to what some first-time callers say. "I'm talking to somebody human?" Chief Operating Officer and President John Florsheim, 46,



said Schulz worked a couple of other jobs at the company before becoming the receptionist about 40 years ago. She and her candy bowl were a presence when he was a child visiting his father, Thomas Florsheim Sr., at the office, just as she is for his own children today. "I know a lot of companies have gone to automated answering software, but we just feel it's nice to have a human touch," he said. About 200 people work in the office and in a distribution center at Weyco, which handles Florsheim, Nunn-Bush and other men's shoes. Many of the office workers pass by her desk each day;

she's the first person any visitor to the office will see. At her desk, Schulz wears a headset and pushes one of about 100 buttons depending on which extension a call should be routed to. Schulz never turns on the desktop computer. Schulz said she might have retired had her husband, Joseph, lived longer after his retirement. But now she plans to continue working as long as she is healthy, partly because she feels valued by the company. "So often they've said, 'Rose, we want you here as long as you want to be here.' And that means a lot." [\(Video\)](#)

### **Wrong Number Miracle**

SAN DIEGO, CA- Virginia Saenz could hear the desperation in the voice of the telephone message. It was 5 a.m. on the day before Thanksgiving, and the caller, Lucy Crutchfield, was trying to tell her daughter that she'd send money for groceries -- but she'd have to miss a mortgage payment to do it. But Crutchfield dialed the wrong number. Instead of getting her daughter, she got Saenz, a real estate agent from the San Diego suburb of Tierrasanta. "I know right now we are all struggling," Saenz said. "Lisa on the phone, she sounded so desperate for her daughter, it broke my heart." Saenz did the only thing she could think of -- she called Crutchfield back and said not to worry. Crutchfield would pay the mortgage, and Saenz would handle the groceries. "She said, 'You have the wrong number ... don't worry any more,' " Crutchfield recalled. For Crutchfield, it was a holiday miracle. Her house is already in foreclosure. Her mother recently passed away, and Crutchfield is now trying to pay off her house. She had a money order prepared to make a mortgage payment on that house -- but was going to cash it in when her daughter called asking for money. "I thought I was going to lose that house, too," Crutchfield said. Saenz told Crutchfield to keep her money and promised to take care of her daughter. The real estate agent then called Crutchfield's daughter. "I asked her what she would



like, what her kids like, and then I felt really bad because she said she only wanted eggs and milk," Saenz said. "When somebody only asks you for eggs and milk, they are in a really bad situation." So Saenz went grocery shopping on Thanksgiving morning with her 14-year-old son in tow to tell her what kids liked to eat. They bought food for a Thanksgiving dinner and enough groceries to get Crutchfield's daughter through the end of the month -- her next payday. She said the act of giving made "the day special for me." "I helped somebody," Saenz said Friday. "I think it's what anybody would have done."

### **Eight decades after she had to leave school, great-grandma, 100, receives high school diploma**

STATEN ISLAND, NY- Mary Arnott celebrated her 100th birthday with family, friends - and a surprise high school diploma more than 80 years in the making. Forced to drop out and care for her siblings after her mother died, the former New Yorker never got the chance to graduate from St. Peter's Girls High School in Staten Island. The school recently awarded her an honorary diploma after hearing of the centenarian's inspiring life story. "Finally," Arnott said yesterday from her home in Toronto. "It's one of the biggest things in my life." Born in Brooklyn as Mary Adele Sachs, Arnott spent her childhood in Staten Island as one of 13 siblings. She enjoyed going to the Catholic academy and still remembers the names of all her classmates. Her report cards contained nothing but As, she said. When her mother died in childbirth, Arnott had to pull out in the 11th grade and watch after her younger brothers and sisters. "When I left, I didn't feel all that bad about it," she recalled. "It was only later that I'd realized what I had missed." Arnott went to night school and later worked for 12 years as a secretary in Manhattan. She left the city for Toronto after getting married in 1940. Through a lifetime of triumphs and tribulations - she survived scarlet fever, lost her husband and 30-year-old son within a few months and traveled the world - Arnott always regretted not earning a diploma. Then her granddaughter Allison Arnott contacted St. Peter's. "Her life story more than made up for the months she didn't spend in school," said Mary Haugen, the school's assistant principal and president of the alumni association. Haugen sent the diploma with a picture of what would have been Arnott's graduating class circa-1925. The surprise gift was the highlight of Arnott's birthday party a few months ago. "It meant everything," Arnott said. "I cried." The diploma hangs proudly above her bed atop certificates from universities attended by members of her family. "It was actually more meaningful to grandma than what I thought it would be," Allison Arnott said. "She felt it was really a milestone achieved." Arnott remains healthy and active, swimming twice a week and enjoying the occasional glass of wine. The belated badge of honor had Arnott reminiscing about the times she had in the city earlier in her long life. "I remember going back and forth on the Staten Island ferry. I loved that," she said. "I have so many fond memories."