



BLUE JAY CORNER

April the giraffe in labor for 16 months

By Abby Bradley

April is a 15-year-old giraffe and has had three calves. Even now she is pregnant with her fourth calf, which is the first calf for the father, Oliver.

April is being held at the Animal Adventure Park in Harpursville, N.Y. This will be Animal Adventure Park's first giraffe calf. Most calves weigh up to 150 pounds, can be around six feet tall at birth, and are birthed hooves first. The average life expectancy for giraffes is 25 years.

Giraffes are pregnant for 15 months, but April has now been pregnant for 16 months. The

live stream broadcast of April in her habitat has been broadcast since February 23, 2017.

The park has set a contest to name April and Oliver's baby once it arrives. There have been 110,000 names submitted. Signs show that April will possibly give birth during an upcoming winter blizzard striking the park.

April even has her own website, aprilthegiraffe.com, on which zoo officials said, "We are not confirming active labor, but will state all physical signs are headed in the right direction."



What do you want to be when you grow up?

"Treek Hill and a monster."
-Andy Meyerkorth, 1/2 day Preschool

"I think I want to be a 'cooker', a massager and a make-up artist."
-Alexi Stoner, Kindergarten

"A farmer."
-Wyatt Huntley, First Grade

"I want to be a marine biologist."
-Payten Shrader, Fourth Grade

By Erika Dietze

Spring Sports Begin

By Ashley Cue

The spring sports season began on March 6 when the track teams and boys' golf team began practicing. The girls' track team has 28 girls going out.

"Varsity boys' track has commenced. We have 16 boys going out for track, consisting of one senior, four juniors, six sophomores, and five freshmen. We will be taking advantage of the nice weather and preparing for our first meet on March 28 in Auburn," varsity boy's track coach Rachel Jenkins said.

The teams have been practicing indoors for the first week, while the track was being paint-

ed. The track teams have a total of 8 meets, not including districts and sectionals.

The boys' golf team drastically increased from 5 members last year to fourteen. The golf team also has 8 meets, not including districts and sectionals.

When asked what to expect from this golf season, Coach Shawn Shineman replied, "Well, I am hoping that the increase in numbers will increase the competition for spots and really drive the kids to do their best in/with their practice time. The state only allows 5 golfers to compete at the varsity level. I'm also hoping for warmer weather."



Photo by Amy Skillen

Dalton Brake and Ben Lucas help with the FFA petting zoo while holding a rooster.



Photo by Amy Skillen

Mr. Skillen cheers on his team at the Rock Port basketball girls' and boys' bowling party.



Photo by Amy Skillen

Shelbie Gaines watches Isiah Barbee hold a pig during the FFA petting zoo.



Photo by Tori Jordan

Wyatt Huntley poses for a picture while doing a classroom activity.

Cooperation

working together toward a common goal

March's character word, cooperation, ties in perfectly to events going on at Rock Port Elementary recently.

Tuesday, March 14, was the third quarter Project Lead the Way open house, when students in kindergarten through fourth grade showed family, friends, and community members what they have accomplished on their latest STEM projects.

According to the PLTW website, the program wants to empower students by helping them become "... people who know problem-solving strategies, think critically and creatively, communicate and collaborate with others, and persevere when something does not

work the first time."

Cooperation is becoming increasingly important as our world become smaller due to advancing technology. RPE students are getting great opportunities to become successful in our changing world.

In addition to PLTW activities, the annual Room Parents Scholastic Book Fair was in the library. This is an opportunity for students to see how adults cooperate and collaborate to help provide them with more books in their lives. Thanks to many volunteers, the Book Fair was again a success and Room Parents was able to donate many new books for Rock Port Elementary students.

Teacher Appreciation Project

Rock Port students are currently writing letters to teachers in anticipation of Teacher Appreciation Week May 1-5. Students are asked to turn in letters no later than Tuesday, March 28, to a teacher or the offices.

BLUE JAY corner
Student newspaper of Rock Port R-II Schools
600 S. Nebraska Street
Rock Port, Mo. 64482
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CHAPTER EIGHT

Written by Carolyn Mueller
Illustrated by Christopher Grant

The Van Arsdale family has many fond memories of Jim the Wonder Dog. My brother, Son, and I have grown up hearing stories about our incredible father. Now that we're just a couple of old dogs ourselves, it's important for us to remember and pass on these true tales so that the legend of our father will never be forgotten.

The city of Marshall, where Jim lived at the Ruff Hotel, continues to celebrate Jim, helping his story to live on many years after his death. Jim's grave is in Ridge Park Cemetery. He is the only animal with the privilege of being buried there, and people routinely bring treats, dog toys, flowers and coins to honor him.

The Ruff Hotel is gone, but in its place lies a beautiful garden, built to honor my father. Visitors can stroll through quiet pathways lined with lovely flowers and bushes and read Jim's story on sign posts as they go. Every year in May, the city celebrates Wonder Dog Day to commemorate the legend of its "most famous citizen." Dogs come from near and far to participate in a doggie parade and a Frisbee contest! It's truly a special day celebrating the life of a very special dog.

One question remains to be answered, though. How did he do it? How did Jim understand humans so completely and thoroughly that he could complete any task asked of him, in any language? How did he predict the future? How did he know how to



identify all of those trees? Lots of scientists and inquiring minds have pondered over the years just exactly what animals know, and how they know it. People may never truly be able to understand the animal mind.

In his time, Jim was tested. Doubters tried to prove that he was actually just a trained dog, or responding to his owner's body language, or perhaps simply relying on dumb luck. But the truth is, no human could ever figure out exactly how my father did "his stuff." And no one ever will. Jim is a mystery to everyone, especially Sam.

Sam never tried to explain Jim. His powers were as peculiar to him as they were to any observer. The clumsy, runt of the litter had surpassed everyone's most basic expectations. Jim changed Sam. Sam had been a man who believed that a dog was an

animal with a job to do, put on this earth simply to help him hunt quail. Sam was always kind and gentle with animals, but in his eyes they were not family or even companions. Dogs were useful for hunting, and that was all that really mattered about them.

After Jim though, Sam changed. He saw that dogs might be capable of understanding and communicating in ways he never thought were possible. One look into Jim's eyes told people that these animals were made of something more. Sam began to appreciate each and every dog as a unique, intelligent being, an animal that could become not just a companion, but family.

That's how Sam treats me, of course. I may not have the powers of my father, but I know that I am respected and loved.

Jim was only with us for 12 years, but in that time he made a huge impact on those around him. You know, I really think that dogs live such a short time for a reason. We don't need decades, like humans do, to figure everything out. We already know the best way to live. Never waste a day. Always be there for others. Always enjoy good food. Listen to those around you. There is nothing worth more than loyalty and love.

All dogs live as examples for our owners. But Jim went beyond just that. He listened and understood in a way that no dog could ever replicate. His incredible abilities helped to bridge a unique connection and an understanding between dog and human. Maybe no one will ever solve the mystery of his abilities. But we can look back, celebrate and appreciate him for who he was.

He was Jim. And he was a Wonder Dog.

PAPER TRAINING

A garden was built to honor Jim the Wonder Dog. In what ways could a person be honored in a newspaper? Can you find an example of someone being honored?

Learning Standards: I can read historical fiction and make text-to-text and text-to-world connections.

For a companion teaching guide, visit mo-nie.com and use download code: teachmo17.

Special thanks to Marshall Tourism Commission

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