



M.C. Wallo

MILD TEMPERATURES INVITE MORNING STROLL.

Town Residents No Longer Out in the Cold: Officials Stock Emergency Shelter in Aquinnah

By MAX HART

Whether fleeing the deep drifts of a blizzard or the howling winds of a hurricane, Aquinnah residents will no longer need to travel down-Island to seek shelter.

Through donations made by the Aquinnah-Gay Head Community Association, the town will now have adequate facilities for a temporary emergency shelter at the new town hall able to accommodate up to 10 people, Camille Rose told selectmen at their regular meeting on Tuesday.

Ms. Rose, who heads a town emergency management task force, said the donations include 10 inflatable beds, polar fleece blankets and pillows, and three storage boxes. Kitchen supplies were also provided, including eating utensils, instant soups and other non-perishable foods. The equipment will be stored in the town hall.

"Now we just need to make sure everyone knows that it is available," Ms. Rose told selectmen.

The news comes weeks after one of the worst blizzards in decades closed roads, knocked out power and stranded thousands across the Island. Aquinnah, in the extreme westernmost reaches of the Island, had no emergency shelter in place during the blizzard, leaving residents without power scrambling for a warm place to sleep.

Marvin and Betty Joslow, who live off of Lighthouse Road, lost their power and heat during the night, and called the police to transport them to the town shelter. Mr. Joslow, the town constable, was surprised to find there was no place in Aquinnah to stay.

"I was shocked the town had nothing to offer us," he told selectmen at their Feb. 1 meeting. "I felt our health and safety were in jeopardy, and the

town was not geared up at all to meet our particular needs."

Mr. and Mrs. Joslow were transported by Aquinnah and West Tisbury police to the West Tisbury School, where the Red Cross had set up a shelter in the gym.

The Red Cross has already certified the old town hall building as adequate shelter for up to a category-three hurricane, but it still needs a generator and a kitchen in order to meet Red Cross standards. Ms. Rose said the committee is looking into applying for several grants through the Department of Homeland Security that could be used to buy a generator as well as pay for the upgraded kitchen. Ms. Rose said once that happens, the town could provide even more places to sleep.

"This is just temporary," she stressed. "The Red Cross is eager to provide us with more materials, we just need to upgrade the old town hall. The 10 beds are just a start."

In other business this week, housing committee member Mary Elizabeth Pratt said the town is looking for a tenant to live in the old Vanderhoop homestead for the summer. Bill Brown of MV Multisports requested permission from the board to stage part of a 13-mile road race through Aquinnah on June 5 as one of a series of events planned to mark the 30th anniversary of the movie *Jaws*. Selectmen agreed, pending approval from the town's fire and police departments.

Martha's Vineyard Commission executive director Mark London and several members of the commission opened the meeting with a presentation describing the Islandwide planning initiative now under way.