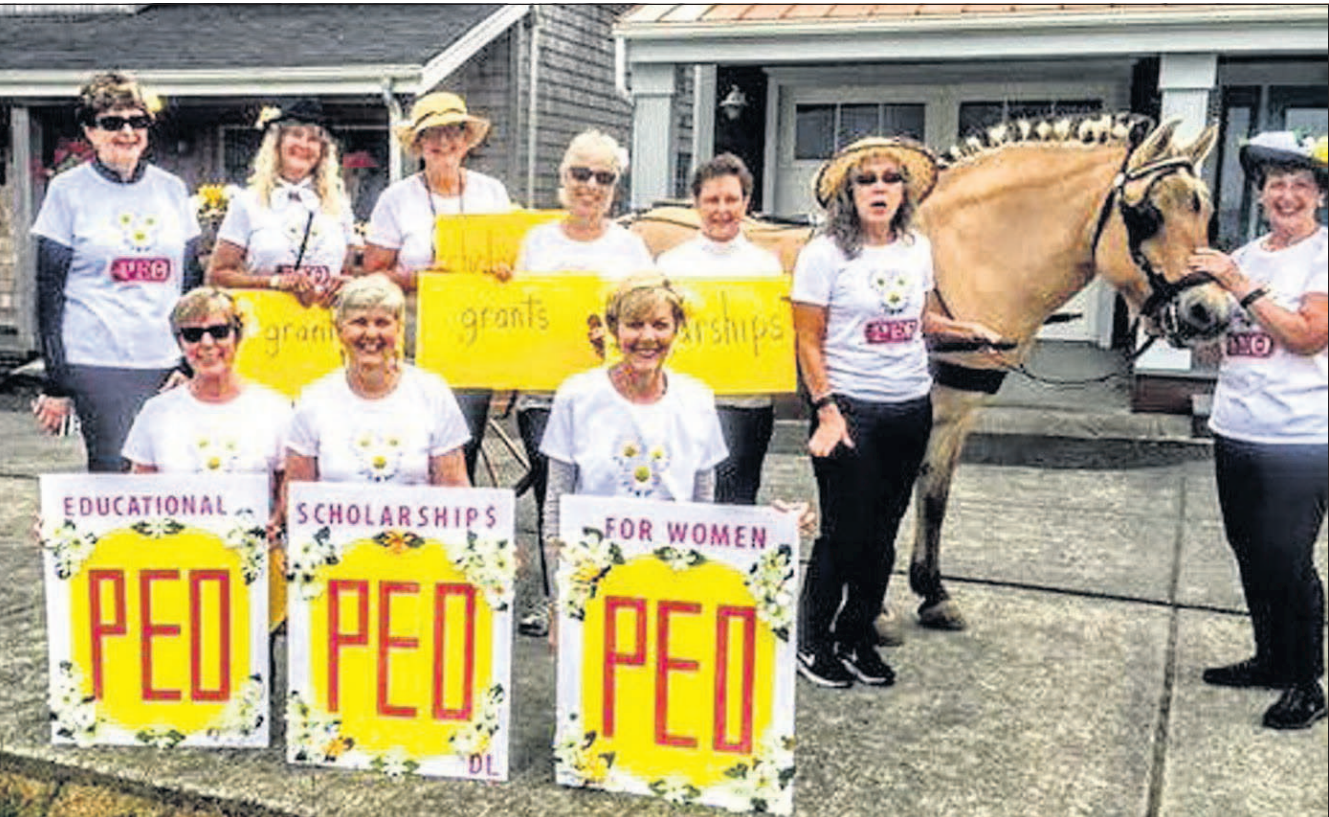


Norwegian horse joins PEO at Regatta parade



Submitted Photo
Astoria PEO Chapter DL's entry in the Astoria Regatta parade included a Norwegian fjord horse pulling a cart and members marching to raise awareness of PEO's mission to provide scholarships, grants and loans for women's education. Pictured, front row, from left, Jeannie Finkbeiner, Jean Sprouse and Eva McClintock. Back row, Diane Pinkney, Debrah Miles, Brenda Penner, Ann Bales, Sunny Pedersen, Melanie Ryan and Nancy Autio holding Sonja the horse.

Shopping by voice on Amazon or Google device could cost you

By ANICK JESDANUN
Associated Press

NEW YORK — In the name of convenience, Amazon and Walmart are pushing people to shop by just talking to a digital assistant.

Shopping by voice means giving orders to the Alexa assistant on Amazon's Echo speaker and other devices, even if your hands are tied up with dinner or dirty diapers. And next month, Walmart will start offering voice shopping, too, with the Google Assistant on the rival Home speaker.

Voice shopping is still new. But once you start using it, look out — you might never know if it's offering you the best deal. Because these devices can't say much without tiring your ears, voice shopping precludes some of the savvy shopping practices you may have relied on to find the best bargains — in particular, researching products and comparing prices.

You'd be leaving much of the buying decision to Amazon, Walmart or other retailers.

Hooked on Amazon

Amazon has had more than a year's head start, and dominates voice shopping. Google introduced shopping to Home in February, letting people order essentials from more than 40 retailers like Target and Costco under its Google Express program. Its partnership with Walmart means hundreds of thousands of items will be available to customers in late September.

With websites and apps, many customers place items in the cart, but change their



Amazon
Amazon shows models of the Amazon Echo Show. With Echo Show, Amazon has given its voice-enabled Echo speaker a touch screen and video-calling capabilities as it competes with Google's efforts at bringing "smarts" to the home. Amazon has been ramping up efforts to get more people to shop using the Alexa voice assistant on Echo speakers and other Amazon devices.

minds before completing the order, said Lauren Beitel-spacher, a marketing professor at Babson College in Massachusetts. Voice shopping eliminates those intervening steps.

And with Amazon so far ahead, voice shopping with Alexa is another way of getting you hooked on Amazon. Although Amazon allows some third-party ordering through Alexa, including pizza from Domino's and hotels through Kayak, general shopping is limited to Amazon's own store. If Alexa orders diapers for you just as you run out, for instance, Amazon locks in the order before you have a chance to visit Walmart.

"You can't get away from Amazon," Beitel-spacher said. "I don't know if gimmick is the right word, but (voice shopping) is part of a strategy to be omnipresent in consumers' lives."

Assistant in charge

Ask Alexa to buy something, and it presents you with something you've bought before or an educated guess based on some undisclosed mix of price, satisfaction rating and shipping time. Amazon won't provide more details. You can get a product's average customer-satisfaction rating, but not specific reviews, even on screen-equipped Echo Show devices.

Brian Elliott, general manager of Google Express, says that with most affiliated retailers, personalization occurs as the assistant learns shoppers' preferences, but the integration with Walmart will happen more quickly.

In some ways, shopping by voice assistant is a throwback to the days when you were largely limited to what sales representatives recommended at a physical store.

Amazon's website gives you a lot of information about most products, from color options and sizes to the specific reasons other customers hated a product you're considering. You're able to compare similar items and choose something cheaper if you're willing to sacrifice some features or take a chance on an unknown manufacturer.

And, of course, you can also compare Amazon's prices with those of other online merchants.

But with Amazon's voice shopping, it's back to what the company's representative recommends.

Voice shopping requires membership in Amazon's \$99-a-year Prime loyalty program, and it works with most of the tens of millions of items eligible for free shipping. But someone browsing on the web might find deals in non-Prime items; Alexa won't let you buy them.

In addition, Alexa's interactions with shoppers are constrained by the fact that listening and speaking can be a lot slower than reading and clicking.

And while Amazon's website won't necessarily list the cheapest option first either, the alternatives are easier to view on a screen.

Justin Evans, an engineer in Whitman, Massachusetts, bought oatmeal and smart plugs using Alexa to claim exclusive discounts, but he prefers browsing and reviewing products for general shopping. "I'm a less impulsive shopper than I think their target market is," he said.

MORE NOTES

Continued from Page 2B

Senior Lunch — 11:30 a.m., Bob Chisholm Senior Center, 1225 Avenue A, Seaside. Suggested donation of \$3 for those older than 60; \$6.75 for those younger than 60. For information, call Michelle Lewis at 503-861-4200.

Columbia Senior Diners — 11:30 a.m., 1111 Exchange St. The cost is \$6. For information, or to have a meal delivered, call 503-325-9693.

Warrenton Senior Lunch Program — noon, Warrenton Community Center, 170 S.W. Third St. Suggested donation of \$5 for seniors and \$7 for those younger than 60. For information, or to volunteer, call 503-861-3502 Monday or Thursday.

Seaside Rotary Club — noon, Outlet Mall, 1111 N. Roosevelt Drive, No. 206, Seaside. Lunch costs \$15. All are welcome. For information, go to <http://seasiderotary.com>

Survivors Circle — noon to 1 p.m., The Harbor, 1361 Duane St. Trauma Recovery and Empowerment Model Peer Support Group for survivors of intimate partner and sexual assault. Held in a safe confidential place to explore the causes, effects and methods of healing from trauma; emphasis is on empowering survivors. For information, contact Shannon Symonds at 503-325-3426 ext. 106.

Astoria-Warrenton Duplicate Bridge Club — 12:30 to 4 p.m., Astoria Senior Center, 1111 Exchange St. Anyone may play if

they have a partner; to request a bridge partner, call 503-325-0029.

Trivia — 6:30 p.m., Uptown Cafe, 1639 S.E. Ensign Lane, Warrenton. Teams of up to four players. Three \$2 games, winners take each pot. Rolling jackpot builds from week to week if no one answers jackpot question. For information, call 503-861-5639.

Jam Session — 6:30 to 8:30 p.m., Astoria Senior Center, 1111 Exchange St. Open to the public. For information, call 503-325-3231.

FRIDAY

AAUW Walking Group — 9:30 a.m. Seaside Branch of American Association of University Women weekly low-impact group walk, followed by coffee and fellowship. For information, call 503-738-7751.

Senior Lunch — 11:30 a.m., Bob Chisholm Senior Center, 1225 Avenue A, Seaside. Suggested donation of \$3 for those older than 60; \$6.75 for those younger than 60. For information, call Michelle Lewis at 503-861-4200.

Columbia Senior Diners — 11:30 a.m., 1111 Exchange St. The cost is \$6. For information, or to have a meal delivered, call 503-325-9693.

Community Skate Night — 5 to 9 p.m., Astoria Armory, 1650 Exchange St. Admission \$3. Limited roller skate rentals available for \$3; roller blades available. For information, call 503-791-6064 or go to www.astoriaarmory.com

SELF-HELP GROUPS

Al-Anon (Astoria) — 7 p.m. Tuesday, Peace Lutheran Church, 565 12th St.; 12 p.m. Wednesday, First United Methodist Church, 1076 Franklin Ave. For information, call 503-325-1087; 7 p.m. Thursday, Crossroads Community Church, 40618 Old Highway 30, Svensen. For information, call 503-458-6467.

Al-Anon (Tillamook) — 7:30 p.m. Wednesday, St. Albans Episcopal Church, 2102 Sixth St., call 503-842-5094 for information; noon Friday, 5012 Third St., call 503-730-5863 for information.

Al-Anon Family Groups information, Oregon Area Al-Anon website. oregonal-anon.org

Celebrate Recovery — 6 p.m. Thursday, The Table Church, 852 Broadway, Seaside. Faith-based 12-step program designed to help anyone struggling with hurts, habits and hangups, including drugs and alcohol, anger, co-dependence, domestic abuse or sex, food or pornography addictions. Being religious not required. Free dinner and child care provided. For information, call D.B. Lewis at 503-741-5977.

Eating Disorders Anonymous — 1:10 to 2:10 p.m. Wednesdays, River Zen Yoga, 399 31st St. A 12-Step program. For information, call Susan Williams at 510-417-5553.

Kick Butts Group Meets (Nicotine Anonymous) — 6:30 to 7:30 p.m. Wednesday, Seaside Public Library, 1131 Broadway.

Men's Sexual Purity Recovery Group — Tuesday nights. Part of the Pure Life Alliance (www.purelifealliance.org) in Portland. For information, call the confidential voice mail at 503-750-0817 and leave a message.

Narcotics Anonymous — The Northwest Oregon Area of Narcotics Anonymous (NWOA) holds meetings in Clatsop County. For full schedule details, as well as upcoming special events, call the Helpline at 503-717-3702, or go to www.nworegonna.org

TOPS (Take Off Pounds Sensibly) (Astoria) — 5 p.m. weigh-in, 5:30 p.m. meeting Tuesday, First Lutheran Church, 725 33rd St. For information, call Trisha Hayrynen at 503-298-9058.

TOPS (Seaside) — 9:15 to 10:15 a.m. meeting Tuesday, North Coast Family Fellowship Church, 2245 N. Wahanna Road. All are welcome. For information, call 509-910-0354.

TOPS (Warrenton) — 9 to 9:45 a.m. weigh-in, 10 a.m. meeting Wednesday, First Baptist Church, 30 N.E. First St. For information, call Marilyn Barnard 503-861-2918 or Jeannie Pike 503-861-1404.

More than 200 doomed Puerto Rico dogs saved by airlift to US

Pups faced a grim future

By RICARDO ARDUENGO
Associated Press

SAN JUAN, Puerto Rico — They were a mix of breeds and sizes, ranging from puppies to seniors. All faced a grim future in Puerto Rico animal shelters, where chronic overcrowding results in many dogs being euthanized.

That changed Wednesday for 205 abandoned canines that arrived on the U.S. mainland in an airlift organized by animal welfare advocates working to ease the load.

"The shelters in Puerto Rico have no choice," said Kimberly Alboum, director of policy engagement and shelter outreach for the Humane Society of the United States. "They run out of room and, unfortunately, they have to euthanize for space. It's heartbreaking for the staff and it's devastat-



AP Photo/Bebeto Matthews
Alba Crivello, 7, separated by a glass door, sits and plays with puppies secured inside a kennel at the Animal Haven animal shelter Thursday in New York.

ing because these animals are all highly adoptable."

The island territory has struggled with dog overpopulation for years due to factors such as poorly funded shelters and low spaying and neutering rates.

It's common to see packs of what locals refer to as "satos"

ment. Christina Beckles, founder of the Puerto Rico-based Sato Project, said fewer dogs are ending up on Dead Dog Beach thanks in part to a campaign to spay and neuter in Yabucoa.

But there have also been setbacks, including a deep economic crisis that led many islanders to decamp for the mainland and leave their pets behind.

"People are leaving the island in droves because they can't afford to live here," Beckles said. "I would never condone someone abandoning an animal, but I understand."

While various organizations have airlifted dogs out of Puerto Rico in recent years, this latest effort is believed to be the largest number in a single trip.

Many of the animals came from two shelters: One in the hills above Mayaguez that has a hard time finding people to adopt its animals because it is so remote, and another in a condemned building with

no power or water near Cabo Rojo that had to clear its entire population for a badly needed renovation.

Dellymar Bernal Martinez, president of the Saint Francis of Assis Animal Sanctuary in Cabo Rojo, cried as she hugged a departing beige, medium-sized dog that had been born at the shelter three years earlier. "It's bittersweet. I'm sad she is leaving but she is going to a better place."

The dogs were checked by veterinarians, taken to the San Juan airport and then flown in two planes provided by a group called Wings of Rescue.

They landed in Fort Lauderdale, Florida, dogs peeking nervously out of their carriers as volunteers unloaded them and transferred them to waiting vans. One plane-load of dogs was destined for shelters around the state. The other aircraft refueled and went on to North Carolina, with its canines continuing on to various shelters including Animal Haven in New York City.

About two dozen ended up in air-conditioned pens at a facility run by the Humane Society of Broward County in Fort Lauderdale.

"They'll all get adopted," shelter director Mary Steffen said. "They will go fast."

Associated Press writer Ben Fox in Miami contributed to this report.

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