



JOURNAL PHOTOS / MICHAEL DINNEEN

'Lucky' Lynn warms up to a heater at what may be her permanent home at Petland, 2111 Davison.

# Monkey biz

Or: 'The day Lucky Lynn visited the circus'

By TERI BANAS  
Journal staff writer

Sometimes true stories can read like fictional ones.

Such is the case of "Lucky" Lynn the spot-nosed monkey, who lived happily inside Petland pet store in Flint, owned by former Flint Generals hockey player Bob Perani.

Sometimes true stories can read like fictional ones.

Such is the case of "Lucky" Lynn the spot-nosed monkey, who lived happily inside Petland pet store in Flint, owned by former Flint Generals hockey player Bob Perani.

One day, "Lucky" Lynn went to the circus and had an adventure right out of the story book tale of another adventurous monkey, "Curious George."

The only difference is — "Lucky" Lynn lives.

Petland businessman Bob Perani is in the business of selling pets.

But Tuesday, he said he may never sell his store's mascot, a 3½-year-old named Lynn, after the harrowing experience she had that day following her "purchase" and monkey-napping.

Before the day was over, Lynn's worrisome disappearance had elicited the aid of several Flint Spirits notables, including the hockey team's general manager, and the Flint Police Department.

Turning into an animal's super sleuth himself, Perani and company turned a rescue attempt into a "chase" through the streets of Flint Tuesday morning — starting at the IMA Sports Arena, where the Shrine Circus is performing.

AS LUCK would have it, Lynn was returned uninjured to her Petland home at 2111 Davison by an officer hot in pursuit of a bad-check writer.

Now, safely tucked indoors, Lynn can resume normal living: eating bananas and

entertaining folks by chasing the store's dogs and cats.

Said Perani: "It was quite a morning and afternoon — just like cops and robbers."

It started Monday night, when a man, seemingly respectable and dressed in a suit coat and tie, walked into the store at 8 p.m. Perani recalled the man "seemed

Said Perani: "It was quite a morning and afternoon — just like cops and robbers."

It started Monday night, when a man, seemingly respectable and dressed in a suit coat and tie, walked into the store at 8 p.m. Perani recalled the man "seemed very animal conscious," and dropped names of local veterinarians.

By 8:30 p.m., the man had settled on Lynn, just 18 inches tall and the store's resident mascot of eight months.

Although her selling price was considerably higher, Perani said he agreed to \$1,414 because everyone who knew the tame and affectionate Lynn realized she needs a "real" home.

After writing out a second, \$45 check for some bird books, the man left with Lynn in arms.

THE TRANSACTION left Perani with a nagging feeling.

Tuesday morning, his suspicion was confirmed when he contacted Genesee Bank and learned the customer's checking account had been opened in December and quickly closed that month.

Both checks bounced.

Meanwhile, store manager Lisa Prichard began telephoning local veterinarians, searching for someone who might know the customer, or at least have spotted him and the monkey. She turned up no leads.

"At this point, we knew something was wrong. Obviously, he was fraudulent. And

## MONKEY

CONTINUED FROM C1

we were very concerned about the monkey's health," said Perani.

Then, Prichard placed a chance call to the Shrine Circus. She learned a matinee performance was scheduled for that afternoon and a man had shown up, mingling suspiciously in the lobby with a monkey in tow.

After filing a complaint with Flint police, Perani drove to IMA Arena, where the part owner of the team found the Spirits' coach and general manager, Rick Dudley, assistant coach Don Waddell, and goalie Ray LeBlanc. The three said the man and monkey had been there, but left minutes earlier for the bus stop.

RALLYING the troops, Perani ran out the door and spotted the man entering a taxi cab.

"It was like a chase," he recounted. Perani, Dudley, Waddell and Prichard jumped into his van in pursuit.

The group began dialing cab companies on Perani's car phone searching for the cab and its destination. The first dispatcher they contacted told them what they wanted to hear: Yes, they had a man with a monkey in one of their vehicles, and they promptly gave its destination.

Perani and his team called the police, and met them back at the IMA with the information.

Back at IMA, Perani surprisingly met face-to-face with the culprit, who denied all. He said he

had dropped Lynn off with friends at a local, nearby address.

Perani then learned that police had tracked down the Flint address and found Lynn inside.

"The guy's a pro," said Perani, adding that police told him the man had served time before on bad-check charges. "When I approached him, he looked at me like: 'What are you talking about?'"

LYNN WAS returned to the store in the arms of a Flint police officer, and received a rousing welcome.

"Oh yes, she got a royal welcome when she came in. We were all very concerned. Especially in (cold) weather like this, monkeys are very susceptible (to illness)," Perani said.

"She was happy to get back into the store."

Appearing hungry, she was fed her favorite treats: candied cherries and avocados.

"The last time I saw her, she was snuggled in the back room, holding her little (stuffed toy) panda bear and sitting on top the (space) heater."

"She's home now."

Perani said he doubts he'll sell her again.

"Sometimes, with an animal like this, they need a home atmosphere with kids to play with. She loves kids, for instance, and especially loves little girls to scratch and pet her."

But if he does consider selling Lynn, "We'll check out the whole thing."