

NEWSLINE

NHS plan to clear sites of asbestos

HOSPITAL bosses were today looking for a firm to remove asbestos in all of the North-east's NHS buildings. This comes after it was revealed one-in-three NHS Grampian buildings are not up to scratch. NHS Grampian faces a £169 million maintenance backlog on its estate.

Puppet-making fun at library

AN ACTIVITY session is being held for kids at Banchory Library. And five to 10-year-olds will have a chance to make and decorate a hand puppet at the free event on Wednesday from 2pm to 3pm.

Macbeth role for kids' TV star

A STAR of children's television is set to be the main attraction in a North-east production of a Shakespeare classic. James McKenzie, star of BBC's Raven, will play Macbeth tomorrow at Finzean Hall. Doors open at 7pm with the play starting at 7.30pm.

Airline helps seal deal for Laurel

New partnership at aquarium

LAUREL has been alone since her partner was swept out to sea a year ago.

By Sally McDonald

But today she was getting to know the new love of her life, Togo - a toy boy 19 years her junior. He flew from his home in Denmark to Aberdeen yesterday and had to clear immigration at the city's airport before meeting his Scottish companion. But Togo, from Esbjerg, is not a macho Dane. He is the one-year-old harbour seal destined to partner Laurel, St Andrews Aquarium's own member of the

endangered species, who celebrated her 20th birthday last month. And their union was made possible thanks to airline bmi Regional, which has a base in Aberdeen, who handled the challenging task of transporting Togo. John Mace, aquarium manager,



UNION: Togo, above, has been flown over to partner Laurel at St Andrews Aquarium.

"Great big adventure"

John said: "We were so very lucky. We're also grateful for bmi for their help in assisting with the journey for Togo and making it as straightforward as possible."

aquarium since she was a pup, has lived a single life since her partner Hardy was swept away during a freak storm in 2010.

The airline's operations boss Paul Alcock said: "We were touched by the story of Togo and his journey to start his new life. We're pleased to have been able to help him on his way."

Togo, who is about one fifth her size, was named in honour of Esbjerg's charity effort which raised £1 million for UNICEF's work in his namesake country. Togo's carer in Denmark, biologist Charlotte Thøstesen, said: "We are so excited for him. This is a great big adventure for this young seal."

After clearing immigration at Aberdeen, Togo was transported by road for the final leg of his 778-mile (1,253 km) journey. Laurel, who has been with the

smcdonald@ajl.co.uk



A FRESH START: Togo the seal arriving at Aberdeen Airport.



COMMENT No way to treat our servicemen

NEWS: Soldier's battle for house - Pages 4&5

"WHY does a soldier who has been fighting for his country have to be homeless before they can put a roof over his or her family's head?"

That is the question Dean Ramsey has every right to ask. That is the question the authorities at every level of government - and not just our city council - needs to review. Dean has spent 10 years serving his nation in some of the world's hotspots. He was even honoured with the Freedom of the City of Aberdeen.

He and his loved ones deserve better than to run the risk of being shunted on to the homeless list as they return to civilian life. No doubt this case raises questions over the shortage of social housing in Aberdeen. But it raises more over the way we treat our returning heroes.

Best in world line up for city

NEWS: Top designers in running - Page 3

THE plans for Union Terrace Gardens have caught the imagination of some of the finest designers in the world.

We should be proud that people behind projects like the new World Trade Center and the Princess of Wales Memorial Garden are lining up to breathe new life into Aberdeen and create a world-class city centre.

COLUMNIST

You can't beat old fashioned cuddles MOREEN SIMPSON, PAGE 20

EDITORIAL POLICY

THE Evening Express is committed to serving our community and maintaining the highest editorial standards.

We adhere to no political party nor have leanings to any sectional interest. We aim to report honestly and accurately.

The Evening Express conforms to the newspaper industry's voluntary Code of Practice, administered by the Press Complaints Commission.

If we have made an error please call us on (01224) 344150. In most cases we can correct inaccuracies in the next edition.

If however, you feel we have fallen below our usual high standards please write to me, Alan McCabe, Editor, at Lang Stracht, Mastrick, Aberdeen AB15 6DF.



MADCAP: Patch Adams held a workshop on using laughter to promote healing.

Patching up problems with lots of chuckles

Therapist uses fun to cure woes

By Sally McDonald

MORE than a hundred giggling guests turned out for the party.

Clowning around in giant underpants amid a sea of brightly coloured balloons, it was everything the birthday boy could have wished for.

But the centre of attention was not a six-year-old. He was Patch Adams, the doctor-come-clown immortalised in the Robin Williams movie of the



CELEBRATION: A birthday party was held for doctor-come-clown Patch.

"He is truly inspirational"

same name. And the party - to mark his 66th year - was right here in the North-east.

Sharing the moment with Patch - who believes that laughter and joy are essential for healing and good health - was Sharon Miller, Scotland's first professional laughter therapist.

Sharon told the Evening Express today: "It was fantastic, a great night." Sharon - who embodies Patch's fun-filled philosophy - is holding a public

Laugh In at His Majesty's Theatre, Aberdeen, on July 31.

She said: "Patch is a truly inspirational man. We had the party for him during a two-day workshop at the Findhorn Foundation near Lossiemouth on loving work and loving play. "There were a lot of people there from the NHS."

Sharon's company Joyworks!

provides laughter therapy for NHS staff and patients and is now hoping to interest Grampian Health Board in her skills.

Sharon, from Glasgow, who has more than 20 years of experience in education, training and the arts, also uses her skills in the corporate sector.

She said: "Joyworks! exists to empower people to bring about change. These days 70% of illnesses are caused by stress, and we laugh three times less than we did in the 1950s.

"Our mission is to unite people through laughter and the creative arts."

It's a mantra Patch - real name Hunter Adams - has been promoting for four decades.

Patch first came to fame through the book Gesundheit: Good Health is a Laughing Matter and his work to launch a hospital built not on finance and cure, but caring and fun.

Laughter is the best medicine

JOYWORKS! boss Sharon Miller said our bodies like laughter for these reasons: It produces endorphins, brain chemicals which accelerate the body's healing process and act as a natural painkiller. It decreases the stress hormone, cortisol.

It gives a cardiovascular workout and helps tone muscles. It increases Natural Killer Cells and T cells. This helps fight potential viruses and tumours. It improves respiration and circulation.

It helps boost our immune system and oxygenates the blood and major organs. Our minds like laughter because:

It unleashes inhibitions and breaks down barriers. It is a great team-building tool and encourages communication. It encourages positive thinking and creativity. It relaxes and energises.

smcdonald@ajl.co.uk



SESSION: Joyworks! is run by Sharon Miller.

LETTERS - OLD ATTITUDES WILL HOLD BACK CITY

Advertisement for Advanced Group triple glazing. Features: DOUBLE GLAZING IS DEAD! GET 44MM TRIPLE GLAZING! 5 WINDOWS FROM ONLY £895. 5 WINDOWS & 2 DOORS FROM ONLY £1695. ROOFLINE PRODUCTS FROM ONLY £995. 3M X 3M VICTORIAN CONSERVATORY FROM ONLY £5995. GET IT NOW & DON'T PAY TILL JAN' 2012! ADVANCED GROUP The triple glazing company. NORTH: THE OLD PETROL STATION, STONEHAVEN ROAD, NEWTON HILL, ABERDEEN AB39 3NN. CALL OUR FREE 24 HR HOTLINE: 0800 316 7981. OR CALL YOUR LOCAL NUMBER: ABERDEEN 01224 433 739 • STONEHAVEN 01569 739 314 • DUNDEE 01382 848 964. www.theadvancedgroup.co.uk