



on one side of Pony Swim Lane, you'll find condos, at the end, a giant Viking (with a totally inaccurate horned helm), looh starboard, as you head for the world famous pony swim, and you'll find an esoteric collection of sea things gathered from Chincoteague and beyond: Payne's Sea Treasures, once captained by Mr. Bob, now by Star Mondragon...





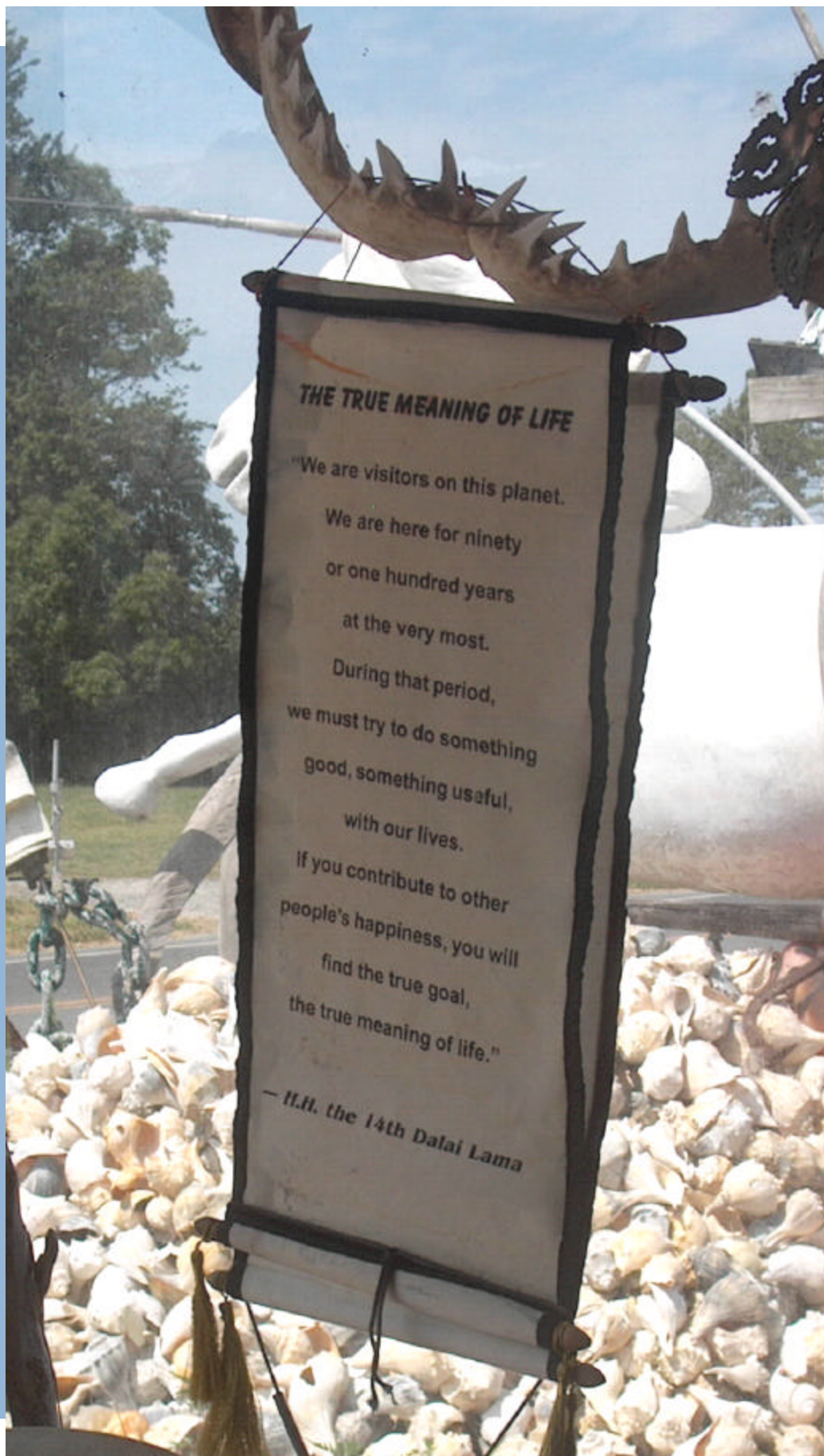












### **THE TRUE MEANING OF LIFE**

"We are visitors on this planet.

We are here for ninety  
or one hundred years  
at the very most.

During that period,  
we must try to do something  
good, something useful,  
with our lives.

If you contribute to other  
people's happiness, you will  
find the true goal,  
the true meaning of life."

*— H.H. the 14th Dalai Lama*


















Long ago, when I first went to Chincoteague, I found this "sea shell stand". Mr. Bob ran it at the time, a nice oldish guy, a slightly odd wizard with a magic shop full of hidden beauties and wisdom. I found shells, a glass fishing float that came here from Japan by way of Alaska, floating in the "string of pearls" of the Pacific currents, loosed from some fishing net in Japan, washing up on the shores of Alaska, trucked across country to another island in another sea. I got Mr. Bob's Special poster, a simple xerox of sea things, with his special shell rubber cemented on it. He gave it with great humility and ceremony, raising the gift above its deceptive simplicity. When I returned this year, I hoped against hope that the condos hadn't overrun Payne's Sea Treasures, that somehow, it was still there, even though Mr. Bob had to be a hundred by now. He is no longer with us, having passed on to the next world, or resting between them until he returns. A lithe young lady named Star has taken his place, as different from him as a young deer from a wizened loblolly tree. "Payne's" still echoes with Mr. Bob's unique wizdry, but Star's touch has given it a marvelous new feeling. there is random beauty in every corner, underfoot in the stones themselves, glinting with dropped shells and glass beads. Long may it stand.



























