

Local veterinarians cloud ballot measure

By KEVIN HARDEN
Of the Emerald

A ballot measure that would end the use of the controversial decompression chamber to kill Lane County's unwanted animals may be running into trouble, not for lack of support, but because of the confusing support it is receiving from local veterinarians.

According to Diane Yeager, of the "Committee to Ban Decompression Chambers" in Lane County (CBDC), somewhat limited support for ballot measure six from area veterinarians may be confusing some voters.

The decompression chamber, a large cylindrical machine used to kill unwanted animals housed by the Lane County Humane Society by suffocation, was the focus of a controversy last September when several area residents, including the machine's operator, questioned its humaneness.

A petition drive by members of the CBDC gathered enough signatures to place a proposal before area voters in the May 23

primary, which would eliminate the chamber and institute the use of sodium pentobarbital as the only method of killing unwanted Lane County animals.

The veterinarians, originally in favor of the decompression chamber's use by the county humane society, changed their stand when realizing it was unpopular with the public, Yeager says. Since that change, several vets have agreed with the move to discontinue the chamber's use, but not through the proposed ballot measure.

"The vets say they have technical objections to the ballot measure," she says. "But we think their objections are just to confuse the voters."

Those objections include concern over whether the ballot measure would allow farmers to kill marauding dogs on their property; if the specified drug could be obtained in Lane County and if substitute drugs could be used.

Some vets have expressed concern that sodium pentobarbital cannot be found in the county, Yeager says, but the drug is widely used by several area vets.

Other vets say the proposed legislation would only allow sodium pentobarbital to be used in its pure form. But the measure, which only specifies the drug to be used, also allows for sodium pentobarbital mixtures, Yeager says.

Despite the vets' objections, their limited support of the measure's intent may confuse some voters into thinking they are in favor of banning the decompression chamber, but only through a new proposal to be considered later, she says.

"They (the vets) know better than to take a frontal attack on the measure," Yeager says. "So now they are using a back door approach."

Legislation similar to ballot measure six is now law in several states and cities around the nation, she says, and is not unique to Lane County. In most of those states which have built a lowcost spray-neuter clinic and discontinued the decompression chamber use, the unwanted animal population has decreased by nearly 50 percent.

The county's unwanted animal population is a social problem, Yeager says, which the vets haven't dealt with as yet. Their

opposition to a county-wide low cost spay-neuter clinic has caused some concern among CBDC members.

"The vets are approaching the measure not from what would be best for the animals, but from their pocket books," Yeager says. "The vets are a vested interest group whose actions are for purely financial reasons and I think people need to understand that."

Yeager thinks the vets' fear of the ballot measure is based on the belief that they stand to lose part of their income if a program of low cost euthanasia were instituted in the county. Statistics from states that already have a low cost program to kill unwanted animals show vets lose very little business, she says.

Some vets also fear a "domino" effect for the rest of the state if the measure is passed, Yeager says.

"If we get the spay-neuter clinic or the ban on the decompression chamber, then they're (the vets) afraid we'll set a precedent for the rest of the state," she says.

"If we win this one," Yeager says. "Then we plan to go statewide on this."

World at a glance

From Associated Press reports

Califano raps tobacco industry

WASHINGTON — HEW Secretary Joseph Califano Jr. charged Tuesday that the tobacco industry uses "sinister" advertising to entice 4,000 children and teenagers a day to take up smoking.

"All you have to do is look at the handsome Marlboro man, look at the handsome women," said Califano, himself a one-time heavy smoker. "You'll see it's targeted at the children."

Vandals ruin paintings

FRANKFURT, West Germany — In the third attack on European art in nine days, vandals smeared two paintings at the Stadel Museum here with a paste that caused the oils to run, police said Tuesday.

Experts were trying to determine whether they could restore the two damaged works, "Joyful Company" by 17th-century Dutch master Dirck Hals and a 15th-century triptych — a three-paneled painting — by an unknown Spanish artist.

Refugees return to Lebanon

BEIRUT, Lebanon — Thousands of refugees, prodded by their government, returned home to south Lebanon Tuesday as Israel started to relinquish the area.

Chartered buses trucks and private cars crammed with personal belongings, carried refugees to Israeli checkpoints and into the southern port city of Tyre.

Israeli soldiers worried about guerrilla infiltration, turned back refugees who lacked identification cards.

Living with, without noise — LA students tested on effects

By MELODY WARD
Of the Emerald

Students in Los Angeles are being tested to determine the after affects of living without noise by a group of researchers, including Sheldon Cohen, University psychology professor.

The noise study recently received a second grant of \$30,546 to continue observation of students living in the air corridor of Los Angeles International Airport from the Public Health Service.

"All the testing we do is in quiet, soundproof vans," Cohen says. "We wanted to see if sound proofing in the schools has had any effect on the kid's behavior."

Students were tested for absenteeism, hearing, verbal and math achievement, personal control and use of attention.

However, Cohen says the only obvious conclusion from the study at this point is that children who live in noisy areas have higher blood pressure.

The children tested are com-

pared with an equal number of students attending quieter schools. Cohen says the air corridor averages peak noise levels as high as 70 to 100 decibels during overflights, and that aircraft fly over the schools about every two minutes.

Cohen says the teachers also develop strategies for coping with the constant stream of air traffic.

Cohen explains continuing research will attempt to determine what effects removing the students from the noise will have. Since the study began, schools in the air corridor have been remodeled to filter out the noise. Now the students will be retested to see if that filtering has made a difference.

Differences between students attending noisy schools and students in quieter schools may be

attributed to influences other than noise levels, Cohen acknowledges. To help rule out this possibility, the researchers have tried to match the schools according to the parental income level, percentage of federal money received and ethnic distribution.

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Furthermore, interest is only

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