

## How pets help humans will be symposium topic

The first symposium to explore the effect of animals on human health is scheduled for Nov. 5 in Eugene, an event sponsored by the Lane County Veterinary Medical Association.

The "Oregon Human-Animal Bond Symposium" will be led by three nationally recognized experts in the human-animal bond area.

They will introduce participants to the relatively new concept of using pets as a therapeutic tool instead of prescribing tranquilizers or other medication. The general public may also attend the symposium.

Participants will have the opportunity to attend six sessions including "Therapeutic Use of Animals with the Mentally Disabled," and "How to Establish People-Pet Programs: Guidelines for Placing Animals in Nursing Homes."

Symposium speakers are Leo Bustad, a professor of veterinary medicine and former dean of the Washington State University College of Veterinary Medicine; Michael McCulloch, a psychiatrist in private practice from Portland; and Linda Hines, director of the People Pet Partnership Program at Washington State University in Pullman.

The event is scheduled from 8:45 a.m. to 4 p.m. at the Valley River Inn, Eugene. It is being held in cooperation with the Oregon Psychiatric Association, Lane County Psychological Association and Oregon Association of Homes for the Aging.

Cost of the symposium, which includes a banquet lunch, is \$30. Those signing up in groups of three or more will be charged \$20 each, and students and senior citizens will be admitted for \$15. The preregistration forms must be postmarked by Oct. 22. The registration fee after Oct. 22 and at the door is \$45. Early registration is encouraged. Continuing education credit is available from some University departments.

For more information about the symposium, contact the Lane County Veterinary Medical Association at 2160 Rocky Lane, Eugene, or call 485-8461.

## Laid-off teacher becomes laid-back mother-for-hire

PORTLAND, Ore. (AP) — When Missy Gerber lost her job at Lake Oswego Montessori School and couldn't land another job in education, she decided to try something new.

Gerber and Monica Schneider, a friend, dreamed up a the idea of rent-a-mom last spring after she lost her job because of a staff cutback.

Gerber said she and Schneider would sit around the table and talk about setting up her business, "Other Mother."

"She got me excited about it," Gerber said.

Gerber said she didn't realize how successful the business venture would be. She said she had somewhat of an established clientele from teaching for three years.

"I started doing it while teaching at the Montessori School. Parents were always asking me to watch their children while they went away on vacation or a business trip."

She's expanded her services since then to doing anything from organizing birthday parties to taking children roller-skating or to movies. She'll dress up like a clown and serve as a hostess at

birthday parties.

When she house-sits, she takes care of pets and plants and picks up mail and newspapers. She also tutors children from kindergarten through eighth grade. Gerber said she charges from \$10 a day for house-sitting to \$35 a night for overnight baby-sitting.

Gerber said satisfied customers keep calling her back.

She said she is booked way in advance for both overnight baby-sitting and for extended periods, where she spends up to two weeks with her temporary family.

"It's tough to have your parents gone. No one does things exactly the way mom does, so I try to make it fun. It's better for the kids to stay in their own home where they know the routine. It's better than farming them out to friends," Gerber said.

Gerber said she wants to build a staff of resource people.

"I turn down so many jobs, it's incredible," she said.

She spends very little time in her Portland apartment. "Sometimes I wake up in the middle of the night and wonder where I am," she said. But she said she enjoys it.

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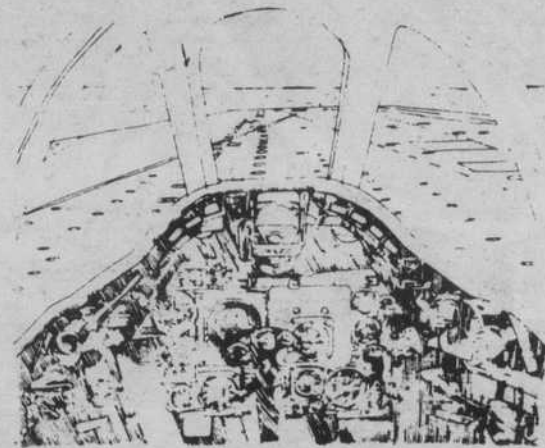
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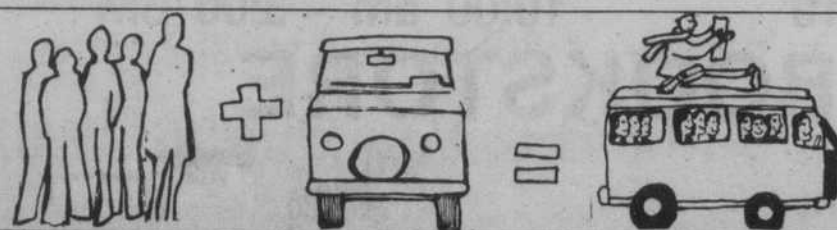
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