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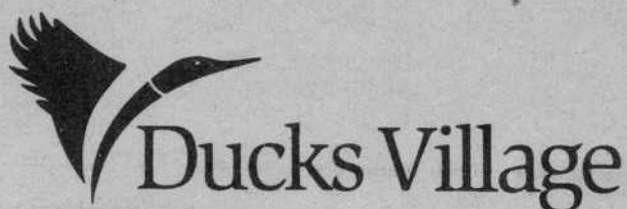
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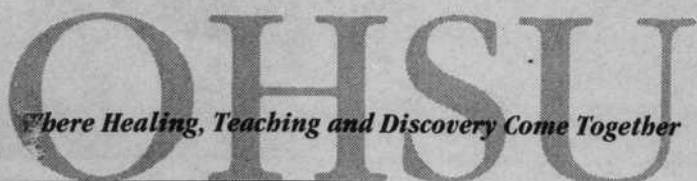
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Pet adoption

continued from page 1

adopting a pet from \$47 down to \$25. Starting April 3, pet owners wishing to recover a stray from Greenhill Humane Society must either pay to have the pet spayed or neutered or face a \$500 fine to get the animal back without the procedure.

Although some might think the \$500 fine is steep, Greenhill's charge for a spay or neuter procedure can be as low as \$100 for a dog and \$50 for a cat. But Brounsten said it's in an owner's best interest to have the procedure done as soon as possible.

"There's a good health basis for it," Brounsten said. "Spayed or neutered animals don't roam, don't get into fights as often, are less likely to be poisoned or hit by a car. Also, fixed animals become more affectionate and owner-oriented."

At VetSmart, a national chain of veterinarian clinics inside all PetSmart stores, a typical spay or neuter procedure can run between \$130 and \$145. Lori Murphy, hospital director of VetSmart in Eugene, said there are three reasons pet owners should have the procedure done right away.

"The biggest reason to get the procedure is to decrease the chance of your pet getting cancer," Murphy said. "Intact animals have a higher

rate of testicular cancer in males and uterine cancer in females."

The second reason, she said, is to ease the pet overpopulation problem. And a third is to help with a lot of behavioral issues.

Although Murphy said that pet overpopulation is a problem in Eugene, she said it seems that every community has a problem with pet overpopulation.

"I haven't seen any more problems here than in any other place I've lived," Murphy said. "I don't see a big difference from place to place, but I'm not on the front line like they are at Greenhill."

Regardless of whether pet overpopulation is actually a bigger-than-normal problem in Eugene, the national statistics concerning unwanted pets are staggering.

Dr. Celeste Moring, a veterinarian at Eugene's Westmoreland Animal Hospital, said that nearly 5 million unwanted pets are destroyed every year.

To help the overpopulation problem in Eugene, Moring said people can also volunteer with the Feral Cat Foundation, a group that captures stray cats and performs a spay or neuter procedure on the animal before releasing it.

"Talk to someone whose job is to put these animals to sleep," Moring said. "That's why it's so important to have your pet spayed or neutered."

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