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Emerald board hires next editor-in-chief for 2001-02

■ Jessica Blanchard hopes to reach out to more students in her new position

By Kara Cogswell
Oregon Daily Emerald

Jessica Blanchard has moved up through the ranks of the Oregon Daily Emerald quickly in the last year and a half, and now she has reached the top. Emerald board members announced last night that Blanchard will be the 2001-02 editor-in-chief.



BLANCHARD

Despite her success at the paper, she said getting her foot in the door was not easy. Blanchard, who transferred to the University in 1999, said because she had been editor-in-chief of her community college paper, she expected to obtain a position on staff at the Emerald without any trouble.

"I came in and I was so cocky," she said.

Blanchard said she applied to be a

news aide but was turned down because they said she was "overqualified."

Instead, she began writing freelance stories for the paper on a regular basis, and was soon hired on to be a reporter on the higher education desk. Later, she moved up to become a desk editor, and then a special section editor before attaining her current position of managing editor.

Board chairman Larry Tergesen said the three candidates running for editor-in-chief were among the most qualified applicants he had seen during his six years on the board.

Although the decision was a difficult one, Tergesen said Blanchard's previous experience as managing editor, and her knowledge of the paper made the difference.

"She demonstrated she had a very clear idea of what the Emerald should do," he said.

Her term as chief will commence with fall term 2001 and run the length of the school year.

Board members were also impressed by Blanchard's concern for the University and for her staff, said production representative Melissa O'Connell.

"Her heart's really in the right place, plus she has all the experience and ability to back it up," O'Connell said.

Advertising representative Doug Hentges said he was struck by Blanchard's poise and leadership style during her presentation to the board.

"Jessica was very decisive, eloquent, and intelligent," he said.

As editor-in-chief, Blanchard said she will focus on campus outreach among her priorities. She said she will strive toward improving relationships between the Emerald and student organizations that have been strained in the past.

She also said the Emerald needs to cover issues important to all students at the University. Often, non-traditional students are overlooked on campus, Blanchard said. As editor, she will work to ensure their perspective is represented as well.

The Emerald is a student newspaper, Blanchard said, and its content should reflect the concerns of its audience.

"What we need to focus on is making sure every story that goes in the paper is relevant to students," Blanchard said.

Animal massage bill rubs legislature the right way

By Rebecca Cook
The Associated Press

AUBURN, Wash. — Family dog looking a little stressed? A bill passed by the state House on Tuesday would give owners a new resource for pampering pets: licensed animal massage therapists.

It's no joke to Diane Morrison, as she kneads the glossy shoulders of a horse named Stamper, a grandson of famed racehorse Seattle Slew.

"It's just like any other athlete," Morrison said as Stamper turned his head to nibble curiously on her sweatshirt. "They feel a little bit sore when they work out too hard."

A common practice in the horse racing industry, animal massage is starting to make its way into the lives of household pets and into state law.

Morrison works at Emerald Downs racetrack as a licensed massage therapist — for humans. She gets paid for working on jockeys' and grooms' aching muscles. But track rules require that all professionals on the backstretch be licensed. Since the state doesn't specifically license animal massage, Morrison's horse work at Emerald Downs is strictly voluntary. At private farms, she charges \$50 for a full-horse massage.

The bill that passed the House unanimously would allow animal massage therapists to gain formal state recognition, thus allowing

Morrison and others to be paid for their work at the track.

"It will give some credibility to the profession," Morrison said of the bill. She's worked hard to convince skeptical trainers, especially the old-timers, to let her massage their horses.

"If it works, they'll try it," she said. "If they see their friends' horses working out better, they say, 'I'll try that too.'"

Convincing the horses is another challenge.

"I've been stepped on, bit, kicked, bodyslammed, et cetera. But I love it," said Morrison. Stamper, a gentle but mischievous 2-year-old, threw her off-balance a few times as he paced his stall. The horses let her know when she's hit a tender muscle. They also let her know when the massage feels good, by leaning into her pressing hands.

"They know you're there to help them," Morrison said.

Veterinarians like the bill because it clarifies that animal massage should not replace medical treatment. The bill specifies that animal masseuses cannot diagnose or treat injuries or illnesses. The bill also requires 100 hours of combined training and experience before a massage therapist can be licensed to work on animals.

"It was really a good idea to get out in front of this issue early," said Rep. Kathy Haigh, D-Shelton, a veterinarian.

Horse massage is already a thriving business in big horse racing states such as California and Kentucky. There's even a horse massage school in Virginia, where they added dog massage to the curriculum about six months ago.

With the demanding workout and travel schedules that race horses endure, Haigh said massage could certainly help their well-being.

"A lot of these horses really are stressed," Haigh said. "I am sure the massage therapy is very good for them."

She said normal petting and stroking is probably enough to keep cats and dogs happy. But she wouldn't be surprised if pet massage becomes more popular for on-the-go owners.

"If somebody's too busy and they're afraid their pet isn't getting petted enough, maybe they would want to pay for massage therapy," Haigh said. "Perhaps that might become an area of the future."

House members got in a few laughs as they considered Senate Bill 5621. As lawmakers approved a minor amendment, a handful neighed like horses instead of voting "nay."

"This is a bill that has been massaged quite a bit throughout the session," said Rep. Bruce Chandler, R-Granger.

The bill now returns to the Senate for agreement before going to the governor.

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