



LORNA BYRNE MIDDLE SCHOOL Students of the Month for November received certificates of honor. They are (from left) sixth-grader Thea Barker-Cortrecht and (not shown) Ben Milner, seventh-graders Kieran Rose and Nicolas Dowd, and eighth-graders Sierra Pappas and Alex Dominguez. The students were selected for recognition based on attendance, attitude, and grades. (Photo by ‘Illinois Valley News’)

SCHC’s Joe Patton recognized as ‘PA of Year’

Joe Patton, a physician assistant at Siskiyou Community Health Center, was recognized Tuesday, Nov. 22 for a “sustained career of contributions to the quality of medical care delivery and to the physician assistants of the state of Oregon.”

The honor was bestowed by the Oregon Society of Physician Assistants.

Ben Johnson, society president-elect, presented Patton a plaque commemorating the honor. Patton was given the “PA of the Year” award during the OSPA annual awards ceremony in

Newport in October.

Patton began his career in medicine by volunteering at the former Takilma People’s Clinic in 1973, helping with receptions, bookkeeping and payroll.

He set up a unique barter system for people in the clinic -- allowing patients to pay for their medical care by donating “in-kind” services with whatever skills they had -- before completing training and licensure as an emergency medical technician and X-ray technician.

Following his 1985 graduation from Medex NW

at the University of Washington, Patton earned licensure as a family medicine physician’s assistant. He returned to the rural Takilma Clinic, which became Siskiyou Community Health Center (SCHC), a federally qualified health center, in 1993.

For five years, Patton also worked part time at the Grants Pass Health Dept. Since ‘95, when SCHC expanded to Grants Pass, Patton has cared for patients in Cave Junction and Grants Pass.

He has been “an exemplary primary medical pro-

vider his entire career, providing care for medically underserved populations. He has contributed his time to teach future clinicians by precepting PA students from Medex and other schools.

“He has maintained membership in the state professional organization and has faithfully attended continuing medical education conferences to update and expand his knowledge.

“For more than 30 years, he has dedicated himself to improving the health and lives of his community,” said the society.

RVMC among ‘Top 100 Cardiovascular Hospitals’

Rogue Valley Medical Center (RVMC) in Medford again has received national recognition as one of the “100 Top Cardiovascular Hospitals” for 2005.

“RVMC has received this prestigious designation five times, and is the only hospital in the entire West -- including Washington, Oregon, California, Idaho, and Nevada -- to achieve this level of excellence,” said RVMC.

The national honor is based on statistical data gathered for the annual “Solucient 100 Top Hospitals: Cardiovascular Benchmarks for Success” study, which appears in the Oct. 31 issue of “Modern Healthcare” magazine.

The study analyzes hundreds of hospitals around the nation and identifies facilities, such as RVMC, that have significantly lower mortality and complication rates than their peer hospitals. The success of these benchmark hospitals is largely due to the dedication of their highly skilled physicians and nursing staff and continuing investments in cardiovascular technology, RVMC said.

Hospitals do not apply for the honor;. It is based solely on an independent analysis of outcome data.

RVMC said that it offers the most comprehensive cardiac-care program in the region, serving patients from nine counties across South-

western Oregon and Northern California.

RVMC’s new Cardiac Center on the third floor of the patient tower opened in August. The Cardiac Center is the largest unit in the hospital, featuring a top-of-the-line, newly commissioned cardiac monitoring system, telemetry, continuous oxygen saturation monitors, and six new mobile units to continuously monitor patients’ vital signs.

Also this year, RVMC celebrated a major milestone with the 50,000th cardiac catheterization, a minimally invasive procedure to diagnose and treat many cardiac conditions without open-heart surgery. Last year, local physicians and RVMC

nursing staff performed 3,000 cardiac catheterizations and 800 coronary stent procedures.

Cardiovascular disease is the number-one killer in the United States. According to the key findings in Solucient’s research, if all hospitals in the study performed at the same level as the top 100 facilities:

- *10,000 more cardiac patients would survive each year.
- *1,100 more cardiac patients would be complication-free.
- *Post-operative infection rates would drop as much as 23 percent.
- *Average cardiac-related costs would drop nearly 15 percent.

‘Bird flu’ outbreak unlikely for North America, says ODA

Despite the widespread attention to its threat to human and bird populations, there have been no cases of the highly pathogenic strains of avian influenza in North America, let alone Oregon.

This winter flu season, public and animal health officials agree that there is little potential at this time for the state to be affected by the same kind of avian flu that has infected dozens of people in Asia, added the Oregon Dept. of Agriculture (ODA).

With a comprehensive surveillance plan in place -- along with a detailed response plan should even a low pathogenic avian flu show up in the state’s bird population -- there is no need for Oregonians to be overly worried.

“There is a level of concern but, at the same time, avian influenza is definitely not an unknown,” said Bruce Mueller, ODA field veterinarian. “This disease has been around for many years and has been dealt with effectively by states and the poultry industry.”

Each year, there is a flu season for birds, just as there is for humans. The same aspect holds true for

both -- there are some forms of the flu that are worse than others.

High path avian influenza is more lethal to birds than low path and represents a more serious concern. However, even a high path strain doesn’t necessarily translate into a public health

threat.

The first thing Oregonians need to remember is that the high path H5N1 avian influenza virus reported in Asia and eastern Europe is not present in the United States. There have only been three high path avian influenza outbreaks

ever in this country.

The most recent case was last year when an H5N2 high path outbreak in chickens was confirmed in the South. The disease was quickly eradicated and limited to one flock. There were no reported cases of human illness at that time.

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Sheriff wins authority lawsuit against county commissioners

A lawsuit brought by Sheriff Dave Daniel against the Josephine County Board of Commissioners related to “interference” with his authority has been decided in his favor.

Besides having to repeal an order in which they declined to fund the pay difference involving promotion of a sergeant to lieutenant, the county board is to pay legal fees. They are estimated at \$10,000.

The ruling in Daniel’s favor came from Judge G. Phillip Arnold, of Jackson County Circuit Court. The suit was filed in July, and the case was moved to Jackson County to avoid possible conflicts of interest.

“I feel vindicated and am happy this is over,” said Daniel. “The citizens elected me to the position of sheriff, and I am honored to hold this position.

“I will continue to do the job to the best of my ability,” he said.

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