

Daughter joins dad at veterinary clinic

By **Jenna Larkin**
IVN Contributing Writer

Dr. Joe Hoelzle's lifelong fascination with animals began at the young age of 12 when he started collecting animal skulls in the high desert where he was born and raised.

Since that time Hoelzle has dedicated his life to the furry companions that many of us care so much about. That fascination was passed onto his daughter, Nina, who recently graduated with a doctorate in veterinary medicine and is now working by her father's side at Dr. Joe's Pet Hospital.

Nina began working in her father's clinic while she was in the first grade when it was located off of Redwood Highway.

"I remember getting off the bus and going and cleaning out the kennels and helping with the animals," she said.

Growing up with a father who is a veterinarian and having a clinic in the front of the house was interesting for Nina and her brothers. Although her older brother was not interested in the clinic, Nina soaked up as much information as she could and over the years, Nina's passion only increased. One of the few downsides Nina recalled was that the family would be in the middle of dinner and Dr. Joe would have to leave on an emergency call. On the plus side, a few of those emergency calls would be emergency cesarean sections on a beloved pet. Nina would then get the opportunity to help revive the babies and care for them.

Nina attended Evergreen, Lorna Byrne and just a few weeks of her freshmen year at IVHS. Due to an accident while at school, Nina had to drop out of high school and find alternative schooling. She did online schooling, but realized that was not for her. During what would have been her sophomore year in high school, she applied to RCC and was accepted. It was there that she finished her high-school career and received her associate of arts Oregon transfer degree.

She then transferred to Southern Oregon University where she eventually graduated with a bachelor's degree in science and biology with a minor in chemistry. From there, she attended Oregon State University and received her doctorate in veterinary medicine on June 15 of this year. Her first day at the clinic was July 1.

Through her extensive years of schooling, Nina had a brief phase where she dabbled in human medicine. Although it was interesting, she found that it could be limiting at times. She decided it was not for her and returned to veteri-

nary medicine where she found more diversity.

With the question of why not work for someone else or open your own office, why come back and work with your dad? Nina's reply was simple; she never even considered working with anyone else. Although she has worked alongside other veterinarians during her schooling, Nina considers herself lucky to have a special relationship with her father where she is still able to work with him and learn from him.

"It's always been my hope and dream to come and work here," she said. "I've always said I've been working my cliental since I was in diapers."

While neither of the doctors specializes in any one area, they both seem to have an interest in surgery. Nina has played with the thought of going back to Oregon State and working with some of the doctors there and learning new surgery techniques, but does not plan on going back to school to become licensed in animal surgery. With the knowledge she has received from her schooling, and what she could learn from other veterinarians and her father, she feels confident she can bring new techniques and ideas to the surgery room at the clinic.

With Dr. Joe's extensive knowledge from years of practice and Dr. Nina's ability to bring new ideas of veterinarian medicine to the Valley, the partnership of a father-daughter veterinary practice seems promising for the future.

Right now Dr. Joe seems content to have Nina back and working alongside him.

"I really enjoy it," he said. "One bad thing about being a single practice is not being able to bounce ideas off of anyone else; you are on your own. It's really great to have someone else here to be able to bounce ideas off of. I just want to welcome her back to the Valley."

Nina seems to share the same thoughts.

"It's kind of nice," she said. "There are times where I feel kind of stupid, not knowing the answers because I am still learning. It's nice to be able to just go to my dad and be able to ask those questions. I like to think that we complement each other really well."

Although Nina has graduated and received her doctorate in veterinarian medicine, she is not a fully licensed veterinarian. For the first year, a veterinarian doctor is issued what is called an intern license, which means that they have to work under a licensed Doctor of Veterinary Medicine (DVM). After the year is over, an intern is eligible to receive a license through the Veterinary Medical Examining Board.

Once Nina has finished her first year, Dr. Joe plans on semi-retiring and only working two to three days a week instead of the six he works

now. Future plans also might include expanding office hours. There currently are no plans on expanding the business, both seem content with the size of the clinic and the personal relationships they have with their cliental.

For more information or to schedule an appointment for a furry loved one, contact the office at 541-592-4589 or visit them during office hours: Monday, Tuesday, Thursday and Friday from 9 a.m. to 5 p.m.; Wednesdays from 9 a.m. to noon; and Saturday from 9 to 9:30 a.m. for pick-ups.



(Photo by Laura Mancuso, Illinois Valley News)

Dr. Nina Hoelzle listens to the heart rate of a Chihuahua named Keisha July 22.

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