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Pet Tips 'n' Tales

by Mary Ellen "Angel Scribe"

A classroom ham!

After 30 years of teaching, Ms. Patty Wilson (Ms. Patty) wanted an extra special classroom pet for her special education students. "In the past my classrooms have had fish, rabbits, and a cat," said Ms. Patty. "I searched for a mini-pig and discovered that most people selling them didn't have background breed information or a clear direction on how to care for the animal, or they appeared to be getting rid of an unwanted animal."

Ms. Patty was waiting for the perfect pig! Not just any pig would do! Then she saw an ad from "Sharp's Little Pig Town".

"Their pigs were neutered, box trained, and socialized," said Ms. Patty. "They cared about their animals and were available for additional support and questions. I had cats, dogs and horses growing up and currently live on a farm where we raise Black Angus Cattle, but I was unfamiliar with little pigs, so support while raising one was welcome."

Ms. Patty double-checked with Bohemia Elementary School's administrators about having a classroom pig before adopting Hampton. The breeders felt that Hampton would be a good match for the P.C.H. (Patty's Classroom Helper) job of de-escalating frustrated students or calming students struggling with behavioral expectations. Hampton's job description also was to be the honored recipient (incentive) for students to earn prized "pig time".

During the school year, Hampton accompanies Ms. Patty to her classroom, where he has a home-away-from-home area. His "playpen" has a bed, food and water, toys and a litter box filled with paper pellets from the farm store. And yes, he does use his litter box, just like a cat or rabbit!

"Hampton was not named when I adopted him," said Ms. Patty, "and on my drive to work, I heard the name 'Hampton' on the radio, which fits him perfectly."

Hampton is mellow in the mornings and rides to school in a pet carrier grunting softly or sleeping. On their way home, he rides quietly for the first 10 minutes and then loudly squeals the remainder of the way. He knows it is dinnertime and he loves eat-

ing! He is definitely a 'pig of routine' who prefers that you stick to 'his' schedule! If his food does not arrive at what he thinks is the designated time, he lets you know by loudly squealing his demands.

"Both male and female students equally enjoy Hampton," said Ms. Patty. "They compliment him by calling him 'handsome' or 'cute'. Some children have asked, 'Does he have gel in his hair?' and 'Why isn't his tail curly?'. One of my third graders, Sarai, said, 'He squeaks cute and has a cute nose.' Richard said, 'I like how Hampton squeaks loud, and the way he eats.' And O'Shea said, 'I like it when he puts his nose under your arm, and the way he gets dressed up. Hampton is like the pig on Charlotte's Web, but he doesn't talk.'

Hampton has warmed up to our class, other teachers and the administrators. Initially he squealed around everyone, but now is he more comfortable and gently grunts and squeaks. The children have learned that like any pet, when you approach them slowly the animal is more receptive to being petted.

While class is in session, Hampton wanders the room. The children give him a quick 'Hello', scratch or pet, then immediately return to participating in class. He responds by wagging his little tail, grunting or squealing (which sounds like a dog's squeaky toy). He is a comfort, not a distraction, and has risen to meet all his job challenges.

Hampton is intuitive with children! When some students do something "unexpected," or another teacher sends them to my class for a break, we have discovered that the child is acting out because they are sad or frustrated. When they 'hang out' with Hampton (to redirect frustrations or to de-escalate emotions) they relax and calm down with his full attention. Some students are even motivated to earn 'pig time' for excellent behavior."

During Ms. Patty's breaks, Hampton has outdoor recess "play time" where he runs and plays to stretch his short legs.

Down the hallway from Hampton's classroom is Mrs. Stevens' classroom. She has collected toy pigs for 25 years. Her class is referred to as the "Pig Pen". However, Mrs. S. never thought to adopt a 'real' pig.

"My students agree that 'Ms. Patty's Pig'

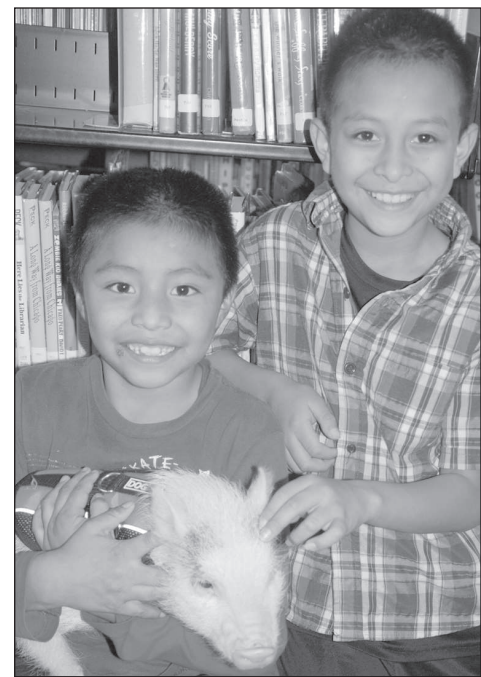


Photo by Mary Ellen "Angel Scribe"
Osberto Pablo-Mendoza and Nery Perez Ramirez love their class's baby pig, Hampton, who weighs 12 pounds and will top out at 30 pounds.

motivates them to come to school. They just can't wait to see Hampton! They've said that 'having a pig helps them learn how to care for others (animals), and to be gentle and kind'. Which is what we aim to teach. Hampton has no worries that I might "Pig-nap" him to add to my Pig Pen collection, everyone knows that he loves his 'job' and Ms. Patty!"

TIPS

"Hampton still has a thing or two to learn at school," writes Randy Peyser, author of "The Power of Miracle Thinking", "Last year, I met a pet pig, Hamlet, being walked on a leash!"

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ROBERTS

Continued from page 1A

difficult choice they faced. In fact, the worksession came and went without clear direction on which of the four candidates the Council would choose to appoint.

As a large crowd filed in at the start of the regular meeting, the Council discussed how they might narrow down their options, including what to do in the event of a tie vote, though a few minutes later, Councilor Jake Boone made a motion to appoint Kenneth Michael Roberts. The motion received a second, and Roberts quickly found himself being sworn in by City Attorney Carrie Connelly.

Roberts, the KNND radio personality and former Army Corps of Engineers employee, joined 20-year old student Henry Lan-

caster, former Coast Fork Willamette Watershed Council Director Pam Reber and IT consultant Greg Ervin in seeking appointment for the remaining year of a four-year term that Murphy could not complete, citing work and family commitments. Each candidate answered a slew of 14 questions in a 15-minute interview, questions designed to help discover what they felt were the roles of the City Council and the councilors who serve on it, in addition to the challenges the City faces now and in the future.

Councilor Mike Fleck applauded the interviewees for showcasing "more knowledge than we typically see" from potential appointees to the Council. Boone said he could po-

tentially serve with any of the candidates, though he added that Roberts had "stormed the interview."

Perhaps a passion for the position led the Council to lean Roberts' direction.

"I feel this is my destiny," he had said. "I want to serve. I want to be involved."

Roberts listed activities with the altar society at his church among his community activities, in addition to involvement with the Concerts in the Park series and KNND. He cited an outstanding school system and tourism opportunities among Cottage Grove's strengths and the repair of important city infrastructure as an ongoing challenge. Roberts called himself a "public person" who has brushed

up on the issues while covering Council meetings for KNND for the last year and a half. He would get his first chance to weigh in on Council deliberations early on in Monday's meeting, speaking and later voting in favor of the City's purchase of a mobile camera that will be used to show city employees the inside of the City's sewer system.

After the appointment, Councilor Boone addressed the other candidates, speaking of a year that will see three Council seats and the Mayor's seat up for election in the fall.

"2016 is an election year," Boone said. "By all means, run."

"I encourage you to adopt this program to create licensing and sale regulations," he said. "Today's kids are living in a world where they're much more savvy, more independent, more ready to experiment than ever before. This is important to kids right here in our community."

Councilor Jake Boone was the lone voice to speak — and later vote — in opposition to the ordinance.

"I'm not convinced that the problem is going to be helped by this ordinance," Boone said. "Evidence that the County cites showed that kids by and large are not getting tobacco from retailers. They're getting it from family, from other kids who get it from their family members. The vast majority of input on whether teens start using tobacco is coming from their friends and family modeling that behavior. Smoking is bad, but I don't think this is a tool that's actually going to make that happen (decrease tobacco use.) This ordinance is bad. It's less bad than it was, but I can't in good conscience support it."

Thus the licensing program, minus the licensing fee, passed by a 6-1 vote. As per the Council's rules, the ordinance will be considered again for final passage at a subsequent Council meeting.

TOBACCO

Continued from page 1A

Health Officer Dr. Patrick Leutke touted the program as a way to curb tobacco use among young people. Leutke said that licensing can help decrease the initiation of youth to tobacco use, of interest because data shows that use among area 11th-graders increased for seven of eight varieties of tobacco products in 2014.

"Kids tend to frequently stop in convenience stores, where

there are ingenious marketing strategies including discounts, flavored products, packaging that appeals to young people and strategic ad placement," he said.

The amended county ordinance, Leutke said, specifies that the \$200 fee charged for a license can only be used to administer the licensing program. Penalties for selling tobacco products to minors were also added for the employee in addition to the business owner. Four such violations in a two-year period would result in the revocation of the sales license.

At the November meeting, Councilor Jake Boone presented information that he said showcased that many of the functions the County's program proposed to handle were already the work of the state of Oregon. After presenting the information, the issue was tabled to allow the Council to review it, and the issue was tabled again at the Council's Jan. 11 meeting due to the absence of two councilors.

City Manager Richard Meyers put forth two versions of the proposed ordinance, and the Council eventually chose the version that exempted paraphernalia sold in medical marijuana dispensaries from potential penalties and did not charge a \$200 licensing fee for local retailers. Meyers said he felt the Cottage

Grove Police Department could take on certain aspects of the monitoring of local retailers, including decoy operations to determine which retailers may be selling tobacco to minors. Councilor Mike Fleck said that he had proposed eliminating the fee prior to the meeting.

"I spoke to several local business owners, and they were in favor of the ordinance," he said. "The fee was their only heartburn. The money it raised was negligible, but its (the program's) impact could be substantial."

Several citizens, including many officials with South Lane School District, voiced support for the tobacco licensing program, many citing personal experiences with the devastation caused by long-term tobacco use. Dr. Jim Harrison said he's been urging patients to quit for 30 years, though he said that the most effective deterrents to tobacco use had been increasing its cost, decreasing access to products and decreasing the modeling of such behavior in the community.

"With this program, you have a chance to be more effective than doctors and nurses can be in reducing the damage caused by smoking," Harrison said.

Lincoln Middle School Principal Jeremy Smith also voiced support for the ordinance.

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