

# PETS

Continued from Page A1

**Q: What are the main things the vet looks for at an animal's wellness exam?**

A wellness exam includes five vital assessments: temperature, pulse, respiration, nutritional status, and pain assessment.

We also check over the entire animal: eyes, ears, skin, lymph nodes, etc. We like to get our hands on the critter, feel their abdomen and other parts of their body. We might find a large mass or something else that you may not know about.

**Q: Anything specific pet owners need to know about different animals?**

A: For any animal, wellness is important. But for some animals, we like to check certain things.

For example, in cattle, reproductive wellness is important. Horses' teeth should be checked annually and their feet, too.

Some critters might not need some of the assessments we do, but basically regular wellness checks are advised for all pets – rabbits, birds, snakes, as well as of course, dogs and cats.

**Q: What are specific things people need to watch for?**

A: An animal's natural instinct is to hide disease because they don't want to appear weak.

We can't emphasize

enough that they can be feeling bad for weeks before something becomes obvious. So by doing regular and frequent wellness checks and blood work when they are healthy, we can catch illnesses earlier.

And with senior animals, don't assume changes in their behavior are because they're getting older. Age is not a disease. We also advise that senior pets with a chronic condition have blood work done annually.

And just like with humans, pet obesity is a big problem, which can lead beyond just being overweight, to other issues such as arthritis, diabetes and heart conditions.

**Q: Let's talk about food. Is it okay to feed pets the same food day in and day out, or should they get a variety?**

A: Once you find a high quality food that's formulated to meet all their nutritional needs, it's best to keep them on the same food for their life stage. And remember: If you are feeding your pet a low quality food it's just like eating fast food every day. The same bad food every day is just like multiplied junk food.

The amount is important, too. One pitfall people don't realize is that scoops of food should be measured in cups – one "scoop" should be equal to one measuring cup. We have free measuring cups available if people want to be sure they are feeding their pet the right amount, and nu-

tritional guideline pamphlets available, too.

**Q: How about wet vs. dry food – which is better?**

It depends on the animal. There are both wet and dry high-quality pet foods. We can help give people an idea of what's best for their pets.

**Q: How about homemade food or scraps from the table – yes or no?**

Scraps are bad. Even a healthy food for humans may be unhealthy for your pet.

Most pets are at least half to one-tenth our size, so what many seem like a small amount to us, can still be a lot of sugar, salt, fat or just plain calories to them.

We also discourage people from creating their own diets – such as all natural or all raw foods – for their pets, as this may be missing vital minerals and nutrients.

**Q: How about making your own pet treats? Recipes are out there, but is that safe?**

A: That's okay, but just be sure the ingredients and amounts are safe. The American Society for the Prevention of Cruelty to Animals has good poison control information, too, which we encourage people to research. We recommend that you use that same time and trouble into spending time with your pet. Grab a tennis ball and get outdoors with them. It's good for you, too!

*Stafford is one of three veterinarians, along with Colleen Robertson and Laura Meadows, at John Day River Veterinary Center, located 4 miles west of John Day at 59989 Highway 26. Call 541-932-4428 for more information.*

## WRITERS SHARPEN SKILLS



The Eagle/Angel Carpenter

**Humbolt Elementary School students in grades 3-6 participated in the March 14 Student Writers' Workshop held at Eastern Oregon University in La Grande. The event was hosted by the Oregon Writing Project. Other students from Grant Union Junior-Senior High School and Monument and Dayville schools also attended the day-long event where they sharpened writing skills including, descriptive writing, found poetry and fantasy.**

## Expert: Pesticide ban is no solution

By Mateusz Perkowski  
Capital Bureau

SALEM – A pesticide expert has warned Oregon lawmakers that legislation proposing to ban neonicotinoids could prompt a return to more toxic chemicals among farmers.

Neonicotinoid pesticides were blamed for pollinator die-offs in Oregon and critics say the chemicals also have sublethal effects that are responsible for poor bee health.

House Bill 2589 would prohibit the application of "nitro-group" neonicotinoids, including clothianidin, dinotefuran, imidacloprid and thiamethoxam, but the Oregon Department of Agriculture could

make exemptions to the ban in "unusual circumstances."

Paul Jepson, director of Oregon State University's Integrated Plant Protection Center, said a "blanket ban" could disrupt farmers' transition to more environmentally gentle methods of controlling pests.

Growers have relied on neonicotinoids as they've used fewer broad-spectrum organophosphate pesticides in recent years, but may take up the older chemicals if the ban is approved, Jepson said during a March 26 hearing on multiple pesticide bills being considered by the House Committee on Agriculture and Natural Resources.

While neonicotinoids can pose a problem for pollinators, such risks can be managed effectively, he said.

Farmers in Oregon have a history of responding to such hazards and state and federal regulators are being diligent in regulating neonicotinoids, he said.

Over time, farmers can tran-

sition from broad-spectrum pesticides to more pest-specific techniques, such as encouraging predatory insects, Jepson said. "It sounds slightly airy-fairy, but believe me, it isn't."

Rep. Paul Holvey, D-Eugene, said he introduced HB 2589 due to concerns that neonicotinoids are affecting not only pollinators but other insects and birds.

Though there are studies to support arguments for and against banning neonicotinoids, research generally indicates the pesticides are harmful, he said.

Holvey noted that in 2013, the European Commission — a governing body of the European Union — voted to restrict three neonicotinoids: clothianidin, imidacloprid and thiamethoxam.

"We need to take precautionary measures to ensure the sustainability of our environment," he said.

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### Nominate Your Educational Hero

Educators play an extremely important role in our community and are often underappreciated.

This year, Doug's Motor Vehicle Repair is saying "Thank you, educators" by honoring an "Educator of the Month."

Each month one local educator will be highlighted in the Blue Mountain Eagle and will receive a \$50 gift certificate from Doug's Repair. Educator of the Year will receive \$1,000 to be donated to school of their choice.

Nominate your Local Hero by picking up a nomination form at the Blue Mountain Eagle or Doug's Repair, or download a copy from the Blue Mountain Eagle's website - [www.bluemountaineagle.com](http://www.bluemountaineagle.com).

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## BUSINESS NOTES

### Barbershop moves

Blue Mountain Eagle

JOHN DAY – Nick's Barber Shop has moved to a new location, 630 S. Canyon Blvd., in John Day.

Owner Nick Ballou, who started the business in January, continues to offer all

the same services, as well as mobile services to shut-ins and hospice patients. He said the new location is handicapped-accessible.

Hours are 9 a.m.-5 p.m. Monday-Friday, and 10 a.m.-4 p.m. on Saturdays, and the phone is 541-620-2672.

### The City of Mt. Vernon seeks to fill 1 vacant position on their Budget Committee. If you are registered to vote in the City of Mt. Vernon and interested in becoming a Budget Committee member you can pick up an application at the Mt. Vernon City Hall Monday through Friday, 8-5.

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## NATIONAL SEXUAL ASSAULT AWARENESS AND PREVENTION MONTH

sex without consent = sexual assault

Help is available for victims of sexual assault in Grant County. If you or someone you know has been a victim of sexual assault, please call:

Heart of Grant County  
**541 620-1342**

Grant County Victim Assistance Program  
**541-575-4026**

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