

Puppy attends Vernonia High School

Pointer, one of the friendliest, most attentive and disciplined students at Vernonia High School, has very little in common with his classmates. In fact, they aren't the same species. Pointer, an eight month-old golden Labrador Retriever, is in training under the tutelage of VHS senior Katelyn McWhirter, to become a guide dog for the blind.

Each year Vernonia High School seniors must choose a project which incorporates an oral presentation, a research paper and a physical project. The physical portion of Katelyn's project is training Pointer in the areas of basic obedience and socialization.

An impressive element of Katelyn's project is the level of determination and commitment that is required to make it successful. She began by contacting the Guide Dog School for the Blind, located in Boring. After learning about the program, she scheduled a home evaluation in which guide dog leaders visit the home and meet with the prospective host family, ensuring that it is a safe and healthy environment for the dog.

Katelyn was accepted as a trainer, with the understanding that she must attend 4-H meetings three times each month. Additionally, she needs to be available to join other trainers

on weekends for outings at places such as Doernbecher Children's Hospital, sporting events and shopping malls.

These outings are vital to prepare Guide Dog puppies for some of the skills they will need to master in the future. Guide dogs must be comfortable around all types of people, and stay focused while working, whether in busy cities or in the country. They must be able to travel on all types of transportation, and negotiate surfaces such as stairs and elevators. They must be trained to ignore food temptations as well as distractions caused by other animals. Primarily, the dogs must be made to feel happy and eager to please.

Pointer arrived at the McWhirter home when he was about three months-old, and he will likely train with Katelyn until he is 15-18 months. The daily routine of taking Pointer to school has been challenging for Katelyn. She must attend to Pointer's needs, pay attention to her teachers and help her peers understand the importance of not "playing around" with Pointer. After his time with Katelyn, Pointer will be recalled to the guide dog campus for his formal training, which can take from six to nine months.

Katelyn will graduate this year and, at some point, will have to release her student to go on to his next level of education. It will be a difficult time for both because of the heartwarming bond that they have forged. Pointer will graduate next year, and he can thank a very special mentor for providing him with the some of the tools he will need to ease the burden of a blind owner for many years to come.



Katelyn McWhirter with eight month-old guide dog trainee, Pointer. Pointer is being trained to be a guide dog for the blind by McWhirter as her senior project.

DEADLINE 2004 DOG LICENSE

Elizabeth E. Huser, Columbia County Clerk, reports that the deadline for licensing dogs in Columbia County* is

MARCH 6, 2004

You may mail your rabies vaccination certificate (if not on file in our office) along with the appropriate fee to Columbia County Clerk's Office, Courthouse, 230 Strand Street, St. Helens, OR 97051. Commercial and non-commercial kennel licenses are available. Contact Clerk's Office for information.

To All Columbia County* Dog Owners

\$10 Penalty after March 6, 2004

\$25 Penalty after April 5, 2004 (Without Citation)

\$50 PENALTY IF CITATION IS ISSUED

Dog License Fees are due on ALL DOGS IN THE COUNTY* with permanent teeth or that are six months of age in 2004.

*Does not apply to the City of St. Helens, which will handle dog licensing for residents within the city limits.

FEES ARE AS FOLLOWS:

On or Before March 6, 2004

REGULAR, NOT SPAYED OR NEUTERED.....\$30.00
 DOG SPAYED OR NEUTERED.....\$12.00
 SENIOR CITIZEN-DOG NOT SPAYED OR NEUTERED...\$15.00
 SENIOR CITIZEN-DOG SPAYED OR NEUTERED.....\$5.00
 (Senior Citizen is 65 Years or Older - 1 per Household)
 REPLACEMENT TABS.....\$5.00

2004 APPLICATION FOR DOG LICENSE

Owner: _____

Residential Address: _____

Mailing Address: _____

_____ Zip: _____

2003 License No.: _____ Phone: _____

Dog's Name: _____

Breed: _____

Sex (Check one): Male Female

Neutered: Spayed:

A VALID (Good through Oct. 31, 2004) Rabies Vaccination Certificate MUST accompany this application or be ON FILE in the Courthouse, along with a spayed/neutered certificate if applicable.

WE WILL RETURN YOUR LICENSE AND DOG TAG TO YOU BY RETURN MAIL.

ASK ABOUT OUR OPTIONAL THREE-YEAR LICENSE

Three VHS wrestlers will go to state AA Finals

Three wrestlers from Vernonia High School qualified for the state AA Wrestling Finals, based on their performance at district finals last week.

Representing VHS at Memorial Coliseum, February 20-21, will be district champion Andrew Brookins in the 275 pound class, Travis Gwin, who was runnerup at 189 pounds, and Andrew Grittman, who took

third place at 215 pounds.

The VHS team finished sixth out of 13 teams at district, helped by strong performances from Royd Johanson, who placed fourth at 125 pounds, fifth place winner Patrick Rayburn-Hieronimus, 112 pounds, and Christopher Richardson, a 145 pound, sixth place winner.

"The whole team performed very, very well," said a pleased Coach James Brookins.

More information is available on the internet at <osaa.org>.

Red Cross Blood Drive

A Red Cross Blood Drive will be held Wednesday, February 25 from 1:00 to 6:00 p.m. at Vernonia High School.

Positive identification is required in order to donate.

VALLEY VETERINARY CLINIC



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\$8⁵⁰

Thurs 10 am-5 pm • 58376 Nehalem Hwy. S. Vernonia

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