

## Is your deck, porch, balcony safe for company?

When you dust off the grill and prepare to party on your deck, porch, or balcony this summer, will your structure safely take the heat, rather, the weight? Taking steps to ensure deck safety could prevent a tragedy. The State Building Codes Division (BCD) of the Department of Consumer and Business Services offers five tips:

1. Prevention is better than any cure, so if you're planning to build a deck, porch, or balcony, get a permit from your local jurisdiction; you are required to do so if it will be more than 30 inches above the surrounding grade. A permit ensures that the structure has met safety, strength, and stability standards and that it has been inspected by a professional before guests ever set foot on it.

2. If your home has a deck or balcony more than 30 inches above grade, check with your local building department to see if the deck or balcony was properly permitted when it was built. If so, the structure was determined safe at that time; however, Oregon weather takes a toll on wooden outdoor structures. Find out whether or not structural conditions have changed or the wood has deteriorated enough to make it unsafe.

3. Any time a deck, porch, or balcony is so crowded people have difficulty moving about, it is probably overloaded. Don't be timid about ushering guests into other areas.

4. You (or a qualified inspector) should inspect your deck, porch, or balcony twice a year and repair or replace the follow-

ing:

- Split or rotting wood
- Loose or missing nails, bolts, or screws.
- Missing, damaged, or loose support beams and planks.
- Wobbly, loose, or missing handrails or guardrails

5. If you have any doubts about the load your deck, porch, or balcony will safely handle, get an expert opinion from a structural engineer. You can find listings for structural engineers in your phone directory.

If repairs are found to be necessary, you may need a permit. Call City Hall to ask which building jurisdiction you should contact. For more information, visit BCD's web site at <[www.permitsprotect.info](http://www.permitsprotect.info)>.

## CAT grant offers home repair loans

Does your home need repairs? Perhaps your roof needs to be replaced, faulty wiring or plumbing need to be upgraded, or a new furnace installed. Low-to-moderate income homeowners may qualify for loans with no interest and no monthly payments for various structural repairs, foundation work, or energy saving measures.

Homeowners living in City of Vernonia and throughout Columbia County may apply for the loan program to rehabilitate homes and perform critical health and safety repairs.

City of Vernonia is partner-

ing with Community Action Team, Inc. (CAT) to apply for an Oregon Community Development Block Grant to provide loans for home repairs. There is a Public Hearing on June 21, 2004 at 6:30 p.m. at Vernonia City Hall. All homeowners interest are urged to attend.

CAT is seeking applicants from Vernonia and throughout Columbia County for zero percent, deferred payment loans. No payments? Please contact Katie Lewis at CAT. The office is located at 125 N. 3rd St., St. Helens, OR 97051. Phone 503-397-1675 or 1-800-955-1675, fax 503-397-1672.

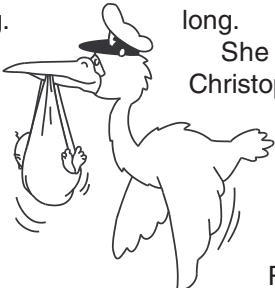
## Welcome Additions

### Keilyn Rae Futter

Keilyn Rae Futter was born May 12, 2004, the first child of Tandle and Mike Futter of Beaverton. She weighed 7 pounds, 8 ounces and was 19 inches long.

Grandparents are Gunny and Dayle Cox of Vernonia and Robert and Anna Futter of Pilot Rock.

Great-grandparents are Fyrne Taylor of Hillsboro, Bill Futter of Pilot Rock, and Kay Christensen of Roseburg.



### Sadie Elizabeth Gump

Sadie Elizabeth Gump was born May 28, 2004, to Jeana and Justin Gump of Vernonia. She weighed 6 pounds, 7 ounces and was 18-1/2 inches long.

She joins her brother, Christopher Kaiser, 12, and two sisters, Laura Kaiser, 10, and Savannah Gump, 2, at the family home.

Grandparents are Ray and Jennifer Gump of Cornelius, Bruce and Terri Jenness of Keizer, and Beverly and Gearhard Bachmayer of Vienna, Austria.

## Bits & Bites

By Jacqueline Ramsay



town and then remembered the wait on the hill?

Thank goodness, the lake is on my side and so is Farm-woman's Nursery.

Yes, believe it or not, I got out in my yard with rake, hoe, shovel, and a good friend. I almost don't think it's my yard. By the time this is in print the woodchips will be in place. Whoopee.

Have you priced a 2-yard dumpster lately? Well, I have, now I'm looking for a strong back with a pick-up that can go to the junk dump.

How have gas prices affected your around-town travels? Are you keeping MPG records with each fill up? Got a new air filter for your car lately? Not

Ah - how many times a day have you started for something in

that it helps gas mileage, but a new set of wiper blades helps keep a cleaner window to enjoy the view as you travel.

I didn't make it to the Council meeting on June 7, but I understand Horse Poo on the trail was again the topic of the evening. I like horses as well as the next fellow but, as with dog poo, if I'm on a walking path, I want to walk not skip, hop or side step. Maybe there should be a Carry Your Horse Poo Bag and use it sign at the head of the trail. Yes? No?

By now school is Out. More kids and dogs running around, cars zipping here and there. So be careful, you may hit a duck crossing the road or a flying skateboard.

If you don't understand my humor you haven't lived in Oregon long enough to enjoy the changing weather.

The South American four-eyed fish can simultaneously see objects above and below the waterline with equal clarity. Maybe some of the lake fish are learning this trick with only two eyes.

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## New times for Comm. Church

Beginning June 27, Vernonia Community Church has announced a new schedule for services and activities.

Sunday breakfast will be at 9:00 a.m., with worship at 9:45 a.m., and B.L.A.S.T. at 10:00 a.m.

For questions or additional information, call Pastor Grant at 503-429-6790.