

TV found to cause problems in kids

Many parents are concerned about the content of television programming, particularly the impact of TV violence, but a study published in the April, 2004, issue of *Pediatrics* raises questions about whether babies and toddlers should watch television at all.

The study of 1,345 1- and 3-year-olds found that for every hour per day pre-schoolers watch TV, their chance of developing attention deficit problems increases by about 10 percent. And the more television, the more risk. One-year-olds who watched three to four hours of television had a 30 percent to 40 percent increased risk of attention problems compared to children whose parents kept the TV off.

Interestingly, it wasn't the content of the programming that was causing attention-span problems, but the unrealistically fast-paced images on the screen. Those images, the researchers suggested, may

alter normal brain development in very young children.

Two out of every three small children live in homes where the TV is on at least half the time, and one out of every three small children live in homes where the TV is on nearly all the time. According to a 2003 Kaiser Family Foundation report 56 percent of children in non-heavy TV homes can read by the age of 6, compared to only 34 percent of children in heavy TV homes.

It's difficult for parents to keep their children totally away from the TV, but efforts in that regard will be rewarding for their children. So the time has come, not just for TV Turn-off Week, April 24-30, but TV Throwout Month. Many American homes have a TV for every person, which surely makes it more difficult for family members to know each other as individuals. A television set in the family room is fine, but get the TVs out of the kids' bedrooms. The statistics all but guarantee that a kid will flip on the latest rerun of Star Wars before picking up a book on the solar sys-

tem.

The American Academy of Pediatrics saw enough of the studies on the effects of television to declare that older children should be limited to one to two hours of daily entertainment media. The academy recommended no television for children 2 and under. The latest study on television and attention problems makes it even more important to pay attention to what we are doing to our kids.

So often, we park our kids in front of the electronic baby sitter because we are tired and/or busy. That excuse is no longer valid now that we know that the passive baby sitter in our home may alter a child's brain perhaps even more permanently than a bag of dope.

More research is needed to examine how TV watching affects brain development, but the study's findings should be enough to convince parents that the safest course is to turn off the TV when the little ones are around. That won't do their children any harm, and it may do a lot of good.

Pioneer Museum has new officers

Have you run, walked, jogged or ridden past the Vernonia Pioneer Museum lately? If so, you may have noticed a flurry of activity surrounding the Museum. The Museum volunteers have been at work.

The museum will be open during River Fest on April 23, 1-4:00 p.m. Come see what's been done and what still needs doing. Be sure to sign the guest book as the Museums funding is partially dependent on the number of visitors.

Guided tours are available for groups, classes and organi-

zations. Drop by on the weekends or call 503-429-3713 and leave your name and phone number for a return call.

You can help preserve Vernonia's heritage by signing up to help at the Museum. Assistance is needed in the short term (an hour, half-day, all day) and in the long term.

New officers are President Genny Schwab Fisher, Vice-Presidents Carol Johns-Cline Davis and Donna Webb; Secretary Barbara Larsen and Treasurer Kathy Larsen.

Trout stocking at Vernonia Lake for Youth Angling event April 23

Young people interested in learning to fish will find a great opportunity April 23, from 9:00 a.m. to 2:00 p.m. at Vernonia Lake.

The Oregon Department of Fish and Wildlife will stock more than 3,000 rainbow trout for the event, as part of the Youth Angling Enhancement Program. ODFW also supplies rods and reels for use by young anglers who do not have their

own fishing equipment. Planned activities include a casting contest with prizes, and fish printing.

The program is made possible by the Oregon Legislature in partnership with the Oregon Wildlife Heritage Foundation, which is working with ODFW to develop and promote youth fishing opportunities throughout the state.

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**ENJOY River Fest
April 23.**



**Mike James
Horseshoeing
503-429-4017**

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Fair & Plant Sale will have plants plus information

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grown by Nelson's Nursery in Warren and Shaft Farms in Scappoose, both members of the Columbia County Master Gardener chapter. Many other vendors will be there with gardening wares, also.

There will be a plant clinic

and education tables with literature on vegetables, ornamentals, roses, shrubs, conifers, and identifying garden pests. Learn to identify weeds with a "match the weed" quiz. Master Gardeners will be there to help solve gardening problems.

There will be examples of

composters, a cold frame and a mason bee nesting box. Raffle tickets for a variety of prizes will be on sale for \$1.00 each.

For more information, contact the OSU extension office at 503-397-3462, or go to <www.mstrgardener.org>.

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Pet of the Month

Columbia Humane Society in St. Helens has a variety of wonderful pets available for adoption. Find the pet that's right for you in the shelter at 2084 Oregon St. Monday through Saturday, 11 am. to 5 pm.



Jacques is a wonderful male Shepherd/Husky mix, about 1 year old. He is very sweet natured, and very affectionate. He can also be quite playful, and somewhat goofy. He seems to get along well with other dogs, and will make a great family pet.

All pets placed for adoption are current on shots, spay/neuter and a free 14-day local vet visit included.

The Columbia Humane Society is a No-Kill non-profit shelter dedicated to helping friends find each other since 1985.

The Pet of the Month is Sponsored by:

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