

Kylee Ledbetter
Dog hair bows, Collars, Treats

Sentinel Photo/MATTHEW PACKMAN

KEEPING ANIMALS CLASSY — Flanked by both parents, Kylee Ledbetter works her stand of dog hair bows, collars and treats during Saturday morning's Pet Care Clinic at Buchheit in Centralia. **PICTURED LEFT TO RIGHT, Becky Ledbetter, Kylee Ledbetter and Craig Ledbetter.**

Animals take center stage at Buchheit's Pet Care Clinic

BY JUDITH JOY

SENTINEL FEATURE EDITOR

CENTRALIA — "We didn't know what she was or where she came from," said Tammy Travis, as she stroked Yadi's shiny black hair. At the time that Yadi was rescued by the Humane Society, she had no fur at all, and her skin was the consistency of an elephant hide.

"Her owner thought that was normal," added Travis, "so all they did was put baby oil on her." Travis, who is the treasurer of the Centralia Humane Society, was one of the many volunteers from a number of different organizations that had booths at Buchheit's yesterday morning in the company's first Pet Care Clinic.

Among the participants, were staff members of veterinarian Dr. A.J. Sprague's office, who was offering shots, microchipping and other services.

John Hendrickson, the manager of Buchheit's, said that as far as he knows, Buchheit's is the only store in Centralia that allows customers to bring their pets into the store when they go shopping. The same policy is followed by all Buchheit's stores — four in Illinois and Missouri.

"Centralia has taken the lead in being pet-friendly," said Hendrickson, adding that other stores in the chain had followed Centralia's lead in the successful management of the pet department.

About a dozen different booths were set up outside the store, a number of them representing animal rescue organizations. In addition to the Centralia Humane Society, also present were DASH, Washington County Partners for Pets, and the Centralia Animal Shelter, which is run by the city.

Many of the shoppers brought their own pets, among them was little Toby, a tiny Yorkie, who was found in the middle of a highway in Florida. Toby weighed less than three pounds when he was found, said his owner Linda Lenzini, who thinks Toby would have died the next day, if he hadn't been rescued, because he was in such terrible condition.

"He was so weak," added Lenzini, "that he couldn't even swallow a teaspoon of dog food and it turned out that someone had cut his vocal chords, so he couldn't bark. After having ten teeth pulled, and racking up a considerable bill at the vet's, Toby, who is about nine years



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ENJOYING THE KITTENS — Melissa Hixenbaugh, PICTURED, volunteer assistant with Domestic Animals Safe Haven (DASH), admires the pile of kittens at the organizations booth during Centralia Buchheit's Pet Care Clinic on Saturday.



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ROLLER PIG — Sharon Shelton, PICTURED, strolls her sensational swine Bella into the festivities of Saturday morning's Pet Care Clinic at Buchheit in Centralia.

old, is in good health and looking forward to enjoying his remaining years.

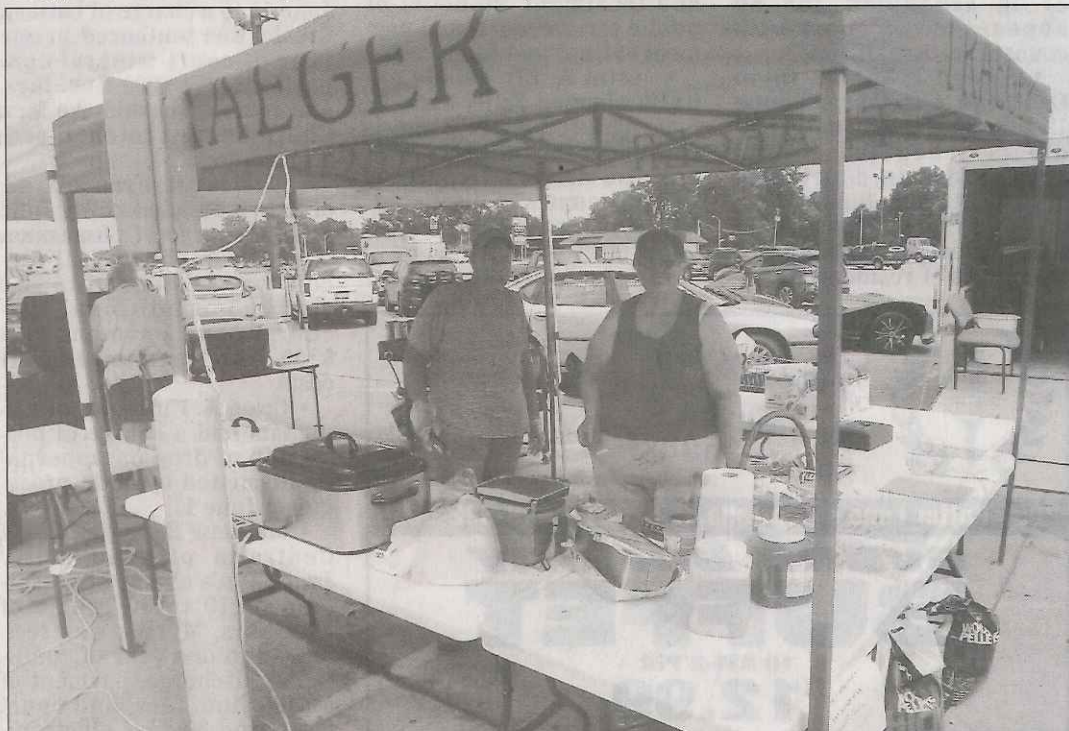
Perhaps the most unusual pet brought to the event was Bella, a pig, who was pushed in a stroller by her owner Sharon Shelton. Bella was wearing a denim skirt, a black cowboy hat and had two pistols strapped to her side. Bella, who lives in Texico and will be one year old in July, is a Mirco Mini, not a Pot-bellied pig, as many thought.

"Bella weights about 35 pounds, and won't get any bigger," said her owner, noting that she won't get as big as a pot-bellied pig. Buchheit's has a pot-bellied-pig of its own, who's name is Daisy May. Daisy May has been a store resident for seven or eight months and gets to walk around the store once or twice a day. The store also

sells live chickens, rabbits and ducks.

Back at the Humane Society booth, I was introduced to Bear, a friendly dog who has recovered from having his back broken on purpose by his former owner, who received a sentence of 18 months in jail for cruelty to animals. Bear has now recovered from his mistreatment, and is looking forward to finding a loving home with a new owner.

Also in need of homes were six darling kittens, about eight weeks old, who were being cared for by Marguerita and Ron Hays of DASH (Domestic Animals in a Safe Haven). The phone number for DASH is 249-6503; the number of the Centralia Humane Society is 532-0459, and the number for the Washington County Partners for Pets is 327-9471.



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GRILLMASTERS — Robert and Elizabeth Grote, PICTURED, offer up grilled goodies to attendees of Saturday's Pet Care Clinic at Centralia Buccheit. The couple have been serving up homemade meats and treats outside the department store for the last two months. According to the Grotes, they plan to maintain their grilled food stand until winter, weather permitting.