

# Veteran vet plans to retire

## Compassion key in his 50-year career

By Caitrin Vadnais  
1st Place, Feature Writing  
Division: 5-6

Dr. Charles H. Barnes, who has been our family vet for over 10 years, and the community's vet for almost 50 years, is retiring!

I can't believe that in August of 2008, he will have been practicing veterinary medicine for 50 years. He was born on a cattle ranch, and because he wasn't going to inherit the ranch, his uncle suggested he become a vet because it would be a "good life." So he took his uncle's advice and off he went to veterinary school in Davis.

When he graduated from veterinarian school, there were 51 people in his class and only two were women. Now classes have around 120 people and usually only 35 are men. Girl power!

Dr. Barnes' wife, Patricia, works at the Presbyterian Church and he has three daughters. The oldest is a minister in a church outside of California; the second is a vet technician; the third works on a ranch, just like where Dr. Barnes grew up.

After vet school, he thought that he should serve his country by joining the Army. After serving two years in the service, Dr. Barnes felt he had fulfilled his duties and settled in Vacaville in August of 1958. His partner was Dr. Roy Cobble, who helped him start his practice.

Dr. Barnes laughs telling a story about how one year his partner dyed his poodle red and green for Christmas! "Even though it didn't hurt the dog," says Dr. Barnes, "he sure did look funny!"

One time he was called by one of his clients at 4:45 a.m. before the sun came out.

"Charlie, come quickly! Our dog is dead! But he's in a very peculiar position!" So Dr. Barnes rushed out to the ranch and, sure enough there was the dog, perfectly still, but his rear end was sticking straight up in the air and his feet were firmly planted out in front of him. Well, Dr. Barnes went over and laid his hands on the dog and the dog miraculously came back to life!

In reality, the dog had gotten his dog collar and chain stuck between the boards in the deck and had done the smart thing — stayed perfectly still so he didn't choke himself until someone noticed he wasn't moving. That's one smart dog!

I asked Dr. Barnes what qualities make a good vet. He said, "First of all, you have to get along with people in order to treat their pets.



Rick Roach/The Reporter

Writer and pet owner Caitrin Vadnais holds Shamrock so Dr. Charles Barnes can conduct an exam at his veterinary office in Vacaville.

After all, you're not talking to the pets, you're talking to the owners," he said.

Also, if you want to become a vet, you mustn't be squeamish, he said.

"You see a lot of horrible things." You also have to be able to deal with sad things, such as putting animals down when it's their time to go.

One final necessity is math. "You have to know a lot about math, biology and science to be a good vet."

Dr. Barnes lives in Vacaville because it is such a wonderful place to live, and he doesn't want to leave a place where he is loved. He is so nice and he helps a lot of Vacaville pets, and for that we thank him.

He hopes to retire in 2008 and celebrate an

entire 50 years of being a vet. My family will especially miss him. When we found out our cat, Earthquake, was diagnosed with cancer on his nose, Dr. Barnes helped us find the correct vet to perform laser surgery on him. Then, after the surgery, he called us while we were at the supermarket just to check up on Earthquake.

How many doctors would call just to check up on your cat?

Several years later, he helped us decide that it was time for Earthquake to go to heaven and I know that he is there waiting for us, up there. We recently found out that our dog Rosie has cataracts in her eyes, causing her to slowly become blind. Dr. Barnes is trying to help us either get a guide dog for her or

find a vet hospital that can perform surgery and remove the cataracts from her eyes.

He is one of the last of the "old school" veterinarians, who will still go out to people's homes to perform euthanasia, or to treat pets, or help pet owners who are too old or sick to come into the office.

"He is the most compassionate doctor I have ever worked with," says Diana, a feeling echoed by his partners and many clients. I know that the whole community will miss him terribly when he retires.

The author is a sixth-grader at Notre Dame School in Vacaville. She is a student in Mrs. Brunke's class.

## Preteens should have cell phones

By Riley McCracken  
1st Place, Opinion Writing  
Division: 3-4 Grade

Everyone in today's world has cell phones. People at work use cell phones, our parents have cell phones, teenagers have cell phones, and people even use cell phones to call their boss!

Everyone I know has a cell phone except for me.

Children can be just as responsible with cell phones as adults.

So why don't we have cell phones? All you need are fingers to dial the numbers, a mouth to talk and allowance money to pay the bills. Last time I checked, I had all that, but still no cell phone!

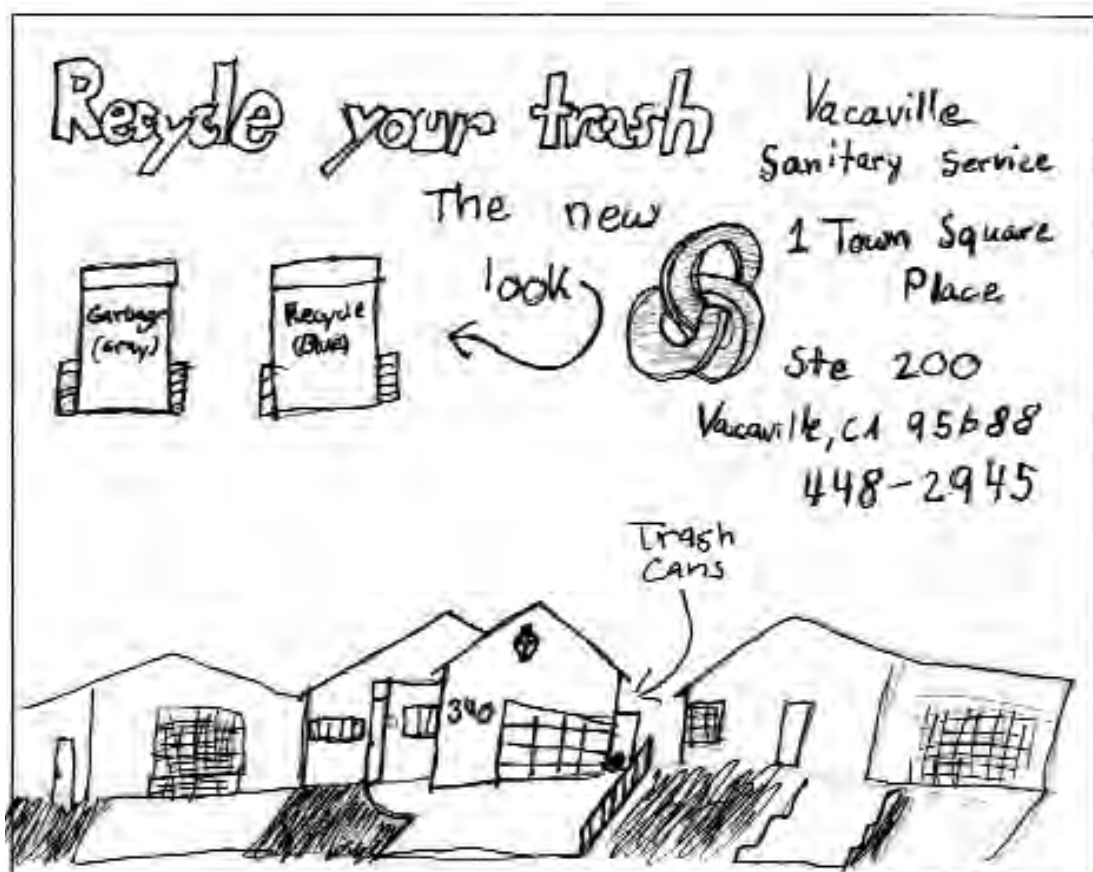
I think preteens should have cell phones. Not just to call their friends, but to stay in contact with their parents.

Here are some good reasons: To call your parents if you get lost, at school if you don't know if they are picking you up, if you go to the mall and you want to go to a store or to just to tell them you love them.

These are just some of the good reasons why preteens should have cell phones.

The author is a fourth-grader at Holy Spirit School in Fairfield.

## Design-an-Ad winner



This advertisement for Vacaville Sanitary Service, designed by Jessica Winters of Hemlock Elementary School earned her an honorable mention in The Reporter's Design-an-Ad competition. Jessica was a fifth-grader when this entry was submitted.

## Design-an-Ad winner



Maribel Abarca earned an honorable mention for this advertisement that she designed for Hometown Buffet in The Reporter's Campus Star Design-an-Ad competition. Maribel was a sixth-grader in Padan Elementary School when she submitted this entry.