

Tips to help keep your pets safe

HICKORY — In recognition of National Animal Poison Prevention Week, March 20-26, the Humane Society of Catawba County turned to the experts at American Society for the Prevention of Cruelty to Animals for a few poison-prevention tips:

Each year, the ASPCA Animal Poison Control Center manages more than 180,000 cases. The following common household goods and products are involved in more calls than any other items:

» Prescription and over-the-counter drugs, both of the human and pet variety, including painkillers, cold and flu preparations, and antidepressants. The ASPCA cautions pet owners to never give their four-legged family members any type of medication without first talking with a veterinarian. All drugs should

be kept out of reach, preferably in closed cabinets above countertops.

» Insecticides and insect-control products such as flea and tick preparations, and insect baits. Some species of animals can be particularly sensitive to certain types of insecticides, so it is vital that you follow label instructions exactly and never use any product not specifically formulated for your pet.

» Common household plants such as lilies, azaleas and kalanchoe. Rhododendron, sago palm and schefflera also can be harmful to pets.

» Chemical bait products designed for mice, rats and other rodents. When using any rodenticide, place the product in areas that are completely inaccessible to companion animals.

» Common household cleaners

such as bleaches, detergents and disinfectants. Gastrointestinal distress and irritation to the skin, eyes or respiratory tract may be possible if a curious animal has an inappropriate encounter with such products.

» The most common household items to watch out for: medication and products containing harsh chemicals top the list, but a few other common household hazards such as mothballs and fabric softener sheets might surprise you. Go to www.aspc.org and search "a poison safe home" for a complete list.

Always consult a veterinarian if you suspect your pet has gotten into something harmful. Also, keep the telephone number of the ASPCA Animal Poison Control Center — (888) 426-4435—as well as that of your local veterinarian in a prominent location.



Oreo is available for adoption.

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Hickory High School Interact Club students were guests for the Hickory Rotary Club's annual career day.

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Hickory Rotary Club holds annual career day

HICKORY — Thirty-five Hickory High School Interact Club students were guests of the Hickory Rotary Club for its annual career day on March 9.

Four seniors, 19 juniors and 12 sophomores were introduced to a variety of arts-related careers through Rotarians John Rambo, executive director of Hickory Community Theatre and current Hickory Rotary Club president; John Gordon Ross, conductor of the Western Piedmont Symphony; and Lisè Swensson, executive director of the Hickory Museum of Art.

Students spent time at Hickory Community Theatre, where the group was introduced to careers in professional theater with concentrations in performance, technical and administrative roles. Leanna Bodnar, professional dancer and guest director of "The Lion, The Witch, and The Wardrobe," introduced students to simple dance routines.

Western Piedmont Symphony Executive Director Ingrid Keller presented the Tesla Quartet, which provided an "informance." Responding to student questions, the quartet members explained how they warm up before performances and how re-

hearsals take place. Closing remarks were made by Ross on the role of the conductor, and with a peek into both the collaborative and the solitary aspects of the conductor's world.

Students were guests of Rotarians as they lunched at Lake Hickory Country Club. Swensson introduced special guest Caroline Collins, a 16-year-old soprano soloist and a junior at Hickory Christian Academy, who performed for club members and student guests. Accompanying Collins was Peter Corneliusen, composer and director of music ministry and organist at Corinth Reformed Church. High school junior Dixon O'Hair provided technical assistance.

Collins' performance was dedicated to Camp LUCK, a nonprofit organization that serves to improve the lives of children and families coping with congenital heart disease.

"Because my sister has a congenital heart defect, I understand how difficult it can be on the whole family when a child has a chronic illness," Collins said. "Camp LUCK provides support not only to the child, but also to the parents and even siblings."

Collins plans to use any donations

to help send children to the medically supervised residential camp free of charge. For more information about Camp LUCK, go to www.camp-luck.com.

Swensson was presented with a proclamation from Hickory Mayor Rudy Wright in recognition of her 13 years of service at the Hickory Museum of Art and pending retirement. Madison Yount, Hickory High School English teacher and Interact Club adviser, was recognized by Rambo for engaging more than 100 Hickory High School students in service activities in the community and was presented an honorarium. Interact is Rotary International's service club for young people ages 12 to 18. Interact clubs are sponsored by individual Rotary clubs to help students develop leadership skills while discovering the power of Rotary's motto: "Service Above Self."

The Hickory Rotary Club was founded in 1921 by Watt Shuford. The club has a long history of giving back to the community through its primary service avenue of education. For more information about the Hickory Rotary Club, visit www.hickoryrotary.org.

Store gasoline, other fuels safely

BY GLENN DETWEILER
Cooperative Extension Service

NEWTON — How do you store fuel for your lawn mower, weed eater, yard blower, chain saw,



Detweiler

home heater, auxiliary generator, or tractors? You may not have thought much about how you store gasoline and other fuels at your home or property. Most of us have at least one fuel-burning device and probably keep fuel in portable containers.

Fuel storage in any amount increases human, animal and environmental risks around your home and property. The question is, "How can we safely store and handle gas and other fuel liquids to keep our families, homes and property safe while using fuel-powered equipment?"

1. How much fuel do you buy and use? Purchasing and storing small amounts of fuel and limiting the duration of storage is best. This means buying the smallest quantity needed for use during the lawn-mowing season (six months or so). Do you have more than a gallon of leftover fuel at the end of a season? Next time, buy less and pour the excess into your car's gas tank or give it to someone who can use it. If old fuel is stored longer than six months, dilute one part old fuel with at least five parts new fuel to protect your engines.

2. Do you store fuels only in approved containers? It is important to use only safe, approved containers for fuel storage. Containers that are UL-approved (red for gasoline, blue for kerosene and yellow for

diesel) can be purchased in most local stores. The container should be clearly labeled to identify its contents and fitted with a non-spill (spring loaded valve) spout to allow pouring without spilling. If you choose not to use the non-spill spouts, make sure to put them back on the container to avoid vapor movement of gasoline. Storing fuels in uncovered or unapproved containers is dangerous.

3. Are containers kept in a well-ventilated, safe place? To avoid fuel vapors, which pose as a health hazard and fire danger, keep fuel containers and fuel-powered devices in secure, well-ventilated places. Storage in an unattached shed or garage is best. Avoid storing containers of gasoline in a garage attached to your home or in the basement. If one must store containers in the garage, keep containers off the floor where they can be damaged by your car. Keep them out of reach of children and pets, and make sure the lids are tight to prevent easy access.

4. Do you check on your fuels or machinery regularly? Periodically check for leaks from storage containers and fuel-driven devices, especially if they have not been used for some time. A small leak can add up over time. You can keep on top of things with regular inspection and maintenance. Always recycle or safely dispose of engine maintenance products related to liquid fuels and oils.

If you have any questions regarding yards, gardens, animals, pastures and crops, call 828-465-8240. The Cooperative Extension Service is a free agricultural educational service provided by North Carolina State University in cooperation with your county. We are only a phone call away.

Conover school hosts Scholastic Book Fair Workshop

CONOVER — Librarians and media specialists from schools as far away as Charlotte and Gastonia attended the annual Scholastic Book Fair Workshop at Concordia Christian Day School in Conover recently. The keynote speaker was Alan Gratz, award-winning young-adult author.

Scholastic book fairs are held by schools each year to raise money for essential library and classroom books and materials. Scholastic representatives at the workshop supported those fundraising efforts by providing workshop attendees with information about new

techniques used to increase revenues. Discussions were held among attendees to exchange successful marketing strategies.

Concordia Christian Day School provided door prizes, snacks and a "campsite" venue reflecting the book fair theme: "Happy Camper Book Fair — S'more Fun With Books!"

"We are honored that Scholastic chose our school from all the schools in the area to host this great event," said Jan Glenn, Concordia School librarian. "I enjoyed meeting with the Scholastic reps who have helped me grow our li-

brary, and I loved catching up on current trends with fellow librarians and media specialists. Spending an exciting evening with these talented people and amazing author Alan Gratz has made me really excited about our own upcoming book fair."

Gratz mesmerized the audience with true stories of World War II on which several of his books were based. Gratz has written several award-winning novels for teens and also has written plays, short stories, magazine articles and episodes of television shows. He lives in Penland.



Alan Gratz (center) and Concordia librarian Jan Glen (far right) are accompanied by Scholastic team members.

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