

Thank you UT Veterinary Medical Center

By Steve Hunley
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If like me, you have a pet you realize that precious creature is a part of the family. Regular readers of The Focus will recall the frequent mentions of my little Jack Russell terrier, Opie. From the time I saw him, I instantly bonded with him. Naturally, my love for Opie has become something I get teased about regularly by my family. My son, Stephen, for whatever reason was describing the pecking order in our family once, telling my wife Kim, "I guess Dad loves you best, then us kids..." and suddenly stopped and started over. "I guess Dad loves Opie best, then you, then us kids..."

Recently, when returning from lunch with Opie, I noticed that he was doing his best not to put weight on his right back leg. Needless to say, I was concerned and I picked him up and we were off to Tazewell Pike Animal Clinic. Opie's regular vets, Dr. Joanne Hibbs, Dr. Lori Smith and Dr. Meghan Zeise did a great job in their initial examinations. Their preliminary diagnosis was torn cruciate ligament in his right rear knee and he would need surgery.

At that point his regular vets recommended that I take Opie to the UT Veterinary Medical Center.

I knew the UT Veterinary Medical Center was a wonderful place from past experience, but I will confess I was still both nervous and worried.

Opie had his knee surgery and it was very successful. I quickly established a regular pattern of visiting times. I was astonished by two things: how quickly he recovered and the care he was receiving. Opie's incision healed very quickly, he was watched carefully for any sign of infection and immediately began to go through the doggie equivalent of rehab. There are quite a few steps in our house and I wanted to be certain Opie would have no difficulty going anywhere in his house he wanted to go.

The staff at the UT Veterinary Medical Center is very invested in their animal patients. Over the next six weeks, it became absolutely obvious that everyone there truly cares about each and every one of the animals in their safe-keeping.

Opie's staff cuddled with him and gave him constant attention; the doctors checked him regularly and the staffers supervising his rehab handled him both expertly and gently. Each time I visited Opie, I was given a detailed progress report. It was not merely medicine, but medicine administered with a big dollop of affection and understanding.

In all candor, Opie could not have received better care and treatment anywhere. The folks at the UT Veterinary Medical Center treat their patients just as we would if we only had the necessary skills.

I've been so impressed I've told my wife Kim that if I have to go to the hospital, I want to be taken to the UT Veterinary Medical Center.

If your pet needs some very special treatment, I would tell you without hesitation to try the UT Veterinary Medical Center.

You may well think this column is an advertisement, and perhaps it is, but I can assure you, it's not for payment. It's out of repayment and pure old-fashioned gratitude.

Opie and I and our entire family thank you UT Veterinary Medical Center!



Pictured at the UT Veterinary Medical Center are (Front row, left to right): Dr. Diane Hendrix, Carol Toff, Lauren Webb (with Opie), Dawn Hickey, Janice Staggle, (back row) Tonya Foster, Dr. Hannah McLean, Ashley Calantoni, Jordan Neely and Dr. Marti Drums. Not pictured are orthopedic surgeons Dr. Kyle Snowden and Dr. Whitney DeGroot.

Hardy Johnson 'keeps going' on 89th birthday

By Steve Williams

Hardy Johnson, longtime shoe cobbler in Fountain City, only stopped working for short periods of time on his 89th birthday last Wednesday.

His son Jim, who manages Custom Shoe Rebuilders at 5503 North Broadway St., would normally have been working too, but he had to take his mother-in-law to the doctor. Earlier Jim also had been gone to Michigan a few days to represent the family at the funeral of his father's brother-in-law.

The shoe repair orders had backed up.

Hardy Johnson kept going.

A lot of folks are 89 years old, but not many still work six days a week like Hardy — or on their birthday.

Johnson's day was brightened early that afternoon when next-door neighbors from Hancock's Automotive and Alignment brought over a half-dozen chocolate cupcakes with chocolate icing and a senior coffee.



Hardy Johnson's 89th birthday wasn't all work. He received cards, cupcakes and a fitting cap.

"He's the most excellent human being I've ever encountered in my 60 years," said Vickie Hanson. "He's real. He's the same every day. He's just got a smile on his face all the time. It makes you feel good to be around him."

Hardy is the third in his family's four generations of shoe cobblers. His grandfather, William Carson, was the first.

"His shop was on what used to be 2nd Avenue," said Johnson, who believes 2nd Avenue is named

Council to consider short-term rental ordinance

By Mike Steely
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The ordinance to regulate signs in the city was debated passionately for years before a final version was adopted. An ordinance to regulate short-term rentals may face the same drawn-out struggle.

The growing popularity of Airbnb and other corporate and private rentals of homes and rooms nationwide is perplexing the Metropolitan Planning Commission and the Knoxville City Council. On Tuesday evening the council may actually consider a first reading of the ordinance.

The MPC passed their "no recommendation" along to the council on a split vote, 8-4. Some homeowners and neighborhood associations object to including R-1, R-2A, and R-3-E neighborhoods, those areas with finer homes, in the ordinance to allow short-term rentals.

More than 300 short-term rental homes open their doors to temporary visitors, especially during major festivals, UT home football games and holidays. Some of the upper-scale homeowners and neighborhood associations want homes in their zones excluded from permitting rentals. It is estimated that more than 8,000 people have taken advantage of the brief rentals in the city.

From the city's perspective, the short-term rentals have been operating illegally since there has been no ordinance to permit them and no way to regulate them to ensure public safety or collect taxes on the rentals as a business.

The proposal would permit but regulate short-term rentals in all zoning districts but limit to owner occupied residences in residentially zoned areas. The proposed ordinance would establish two types of rentals: Type One in residential areas



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