

ation's 44th, as well as African-American, resident.

Ten years ago: Two airlines were killed, five injured when a U.S. military helicopter crashed in Afghanistan. "A Beautiful Mind" was named best drama and its star, Russell Crowe, the top dramatic actor at the Golden Globe Awards; Sissy Spacek was named best dramatic actress for "The Bedroom" and Moulin Rouge" was awarded the Globe for best musical or comedy.

Five years ago: Twenty-five U.S. troops were killed in Iraq, including 12 in a helicopter crash in Baghdad and five in an attack in Karbala.

OUR VOICE

The Facts welcomes letters of up to 200 words and guest columns of up to 500 words.

Writers should limit themselves to one submission a week.

All submissions must include an address and daytime telephone number to be used for verification. Letters which cannot be verified within 14 days of submission will not be published.

Mail letters to: The Facts, P.O. Box 549, Jute, TX 77531; fax to 379-265-9052, or email to opinions@thefacts.com.

Letters also can be dropped off at The Facts office at 720 S. Main in Jute.

Look at this piece of instinctual wisdom: Everyone should vote. In the last big election, only 90 million people voted out of more than 200 million eligible voters. That's terrible, we're told. But it's not terrible because a lot of people are ignorant. When I asked

don't have an opinion about it. "And don't reward or penalize candidates for their position on an issue you don't understand." Political life differs from private life. If you vote for a candidate while ignorant about issues, you'll pay no more than a tiny

ing of those words, but there's no doubt that such central planning leaves us less prosperous and less free. John Stossel is host of "Stossel" on the Fox Business Network. Contact him through his website, johnstossel.com.

Research an important part of pet care

In response to the article in the Jan. 4 paper, I would like to say "thank you" to The Facts for bringing pet care to our attention. This subject is very near and dear to my heart, and I would like to share some other ways to protect you and your four-legged family member.



NETTIE "SISSY" DUNN
GUEST COLUMN

Research: Many people don't ask some important questions before choosing one, such as:

tion regularly? (Medical care advances daily and responsible veterinarians want to learn new procedures and also make certain that their staff does, too.)

deserves (file a complaint). Another good site to do research is the Veterinary Abuse Network www.vetabuse.net work.com. Here you can find information on veterinary neglect, incompetence, malpractice, and abuse.

1. How many veterinarians are on staff?

In addition to asking questions, you should research the Internet. Brazoria County has many excellent veterinarians.

Also, take the time and look at www.spankyvoice.weebly.com. This site shows why cheap veterinary care is not always the smart choice.

2. If an emergency arises, how many qualified veterinarians will be available immediately?

Unfortunately, "bad vets" are out there and I don't want anyone to end up in the same situation as I did.

Another good source is this independent consumer advocacy website www.texasvetin.org. On this webpage click the first letter of your veterinarian's last name to see disciplinary reports that did not get posted on the TBVME site. By clicking on the veterinarian's name, you can see actual orders of disciplinary action that were taken.

3. Does the clinic do its own analysis, or does it have to send lab work out? (If lab work is sent out it takes longer, and time is important if your pet is ill. The clinic should be able to do blood-analysis testing in-house.)

Here are a few sites that are informative and might even have information on your Brazoria County veterinarian.

January 20 marked one year since I lost someone very important to me, and I still think about what I wish I'd known to protect my pet. Take the time to do the research on who you choose to be your veterinarian, and check the one you're using now. Please don't make the same mistake I did.

4. What after-hours services are available? (You need to know if you'll have to go somewhere else, and where, in case of an emergency.)

Visit the Texas State Board of Veterinary Medical Examiners website www.tbvme.state.tx.us. On the left side of their main page, click "Disciplinary Summary," then click "Docket A-Z." You will find an alphabetic list of veterinarians and disciplinary actions taken. There also is detailed information to help you make a complaint if you believe a veterinarian did not follow the standard of care your pet

Nettie "Sissy" Dunn is a resident of Angleton.

5. Prices: What's their range? How are payments made? Is there any accommodation for payments in case unforeseen veterinary bills occur?

6. Do the veterinarian and technicians do continuing educa-

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