

## Search is on for area's cutest dog

By K. Williams Brown

Statesman Journal

June 3, 2009

Is your dog the cutest in the Mid-Valley?

Let's be honest with ourselves here. Of course, everyone's dog is the most adorable, precious angel ever to walk this Earth and just so happens to be as smart as Stephen Hawking.

But tonight, there will be only one First Wednesday Dog of the Year Poster Pup.

The stage for the competition is on Chemeketa Street NE between Liberty and Commercial streets. Registration starts at 6 p.m. (entry is \$10), and the pups will strut starting at 7 p.m.

They'll be judged on things such as charm, personality and physical appearance.

Because the sheer cuteness of puppies would make the competition unfair, they have their own category.

"The criterion for this candidate is simply to be cute, cuddly and irresistible," the event's press release says.

If your dog doesn't win, you can soothe his (and your) spirits by visiting the doggie vendor fair on Chemeketa Street, which runs from 5 to 8 p.m. and will include all sorts of pet-related businesses.

And you can enjoy dining at many downtown restaurants that will offer outdoor seating, the better to gaze into your canine companion's eyes.

"Doggywood" will happen from 5 to 8 p.m. at the Reed Opera House, 189 Liberty St. NE, where dogs can get their pictures taken with a (presumably friendly) pony and humans can make a dog puppet, plus much more.

Not a pet person? It's OK, no need to fret. Plenty of people-centric things will happen, as well.

On State Street, the merchants will bring a little taste of the World Beat Festival, which is later this month.

At 5:15 p.m., the Oregon State Defense Force Band will march. At 5:45, it's time for the Sisters of the Moon belly dancing. Check out Polynesian dancing and ukulele strummers along the way.

At 6 p.m., it's time for the South Salem High Jazz Band; then at 7 p.m., there's going to be a Vietnamese Lion dance.



**Timothy J. Gonzalez | Statesman Journal**  
Sushi wears a printed scarf during last year's Dogs Days on First Wednesday.

### If you go

What: A special dog-centric First Wednesday

Where: Downtown Salem

When: 5 to 8 p.m. today

Cost: The event is free

Information: Go to [www.gofirstwednesday.info](http://www.gofirstwednesday.info)

The night is rounded out at 7:30 p.m. with Philippine dancing.

Meanwhile, fans of the Salem Art Fair & Festival will want to be at the Wild Pear, 372 State St., at 5 p.m. for the unveiling of this year's commemorative poster, created by local artist April Waters.

As with all First Wednesdays, there will be some great live music around town — at Chemeketa and Liberty streets, at the Equitable Center, at 170 Liberty St. and at Grand Vines — as well as tons of art gallery exhibitions and artist visits.

For information, call (503) 480-1111 or go to [www.gofirstwednesday.info](http://www.gofirstwednesday.info).

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