

ANIMAL HEALTH ADVOCATE

Lamoille Valley Veterinary Services Newsletter

April 2001

Lamoille Valley Veterinary Services ♦ *Owner/Veterinarian:* Paula J. Yankauskas ♦ *Associate Veterinarians:* Valerie A. Yankauskas and Cindy K. Pratt ♦ *Veterinary Technicians:* Ann Boyea, Freda Pike and Mike Fawcett ♦ *Head Receptionist:* Claudia Niles ♦ *Receptionists:* Nicky Tobin and Robin Ferris ♦ *Veterinary Assistants:* Kimberly Penney, Carole Younkman, Kati Scott, Crystal Maxham, Melissa Patch, Heather Kyser, Lynn Maroot and Owen Durivage ♦ *Student Assistant (Veterinary and Administrative):* Robert Cookson ♦ *Hospital Manager:* Deborah J. Beier ♦ *Office Manager:* Amanda M. Pough ♦ *LVVS Pet Food & Supply:* Enid Rosenblum, Sarah Martin and Sharon Anderson ♦ *Hospital Cats:* Luna, Herriot and Rosie



As we write this, we are still shoveling out from "Nor'easter 2001" as the local news station named the latest storm. It seems doubtful at

times like these that Spring will EVER come, but the blooming of gardening catalogs in the mail gives us hope!

This Spring is BLOOMING with special events! Join us Sunday, May 6, 2001 for our annual OPEN HOUSE. Games, tours, an art contest for kids and Helen A. Cath, Pet-Ographer are all planned for this year's celebration! (More details below and on page 2.)

This year's winner of the drawing for the free session with the Pet-Ographer is Christie Dussault. Over 550 people made donations to SPAY DAY USA 2001 at LVVS and were entered in the drawing for the free session. We thank everyone who contributed and Helen for her donation of the session!

Make sure to mark your calendars now! We look forward to seeing you on the 6th of May! ♦



RABIES REMINDER!

It's spring ...
and wild
animals are out
and about!

Vermont is in the middle of a rabies hot zone at the moment. Cases have been reported in foxes, raccoons, skunks, bats and more.

Rabies is not a curable disease, but it is preventable.

Make sure your pets are properly vaccinated. If you see a wild animal, leave it alone. Report any odd behavior of wild animals to your local game warden. Questions about human exposure can be asked to the state rabies hotline at 800-4-RABIES or your doctor. Please call LVVS at 888-7911 if you have any questions about the health of your own animals! ♦

Meet Our Staff ... Continued

An on-going series to give you a little more information about the people you may only know when they are wearing scrubs.

NICKY TOBIN Receptionist

Nicky is a Newport native who lives in Jeffersonville with her husband Art and sons Riley and Riker. Her grandmother still lives in Newport and Nicky and family are frequent visitors. Initially leery of pet ownership, the family's pet population has recently been growing, a development Nicky is quite enjoying!

Nicky is continuing her education with classes at CCV this spring. When not at school, LVVS or home, Nicky can be found out and about biking, snow-shoeing and learning to cross country ski. She has set herself a goal to bike from Jeffersonville to Newport this summer – we'll let you know if she succeeds!

MIKE FAWCETT Veterinary Technician

Mike is perhaps the most dramatic LVV'Ser – a self-described "theater buff", both backstage and as an actor" and medieval reinactor who has worked with King Richard's Fair in Massachusetts.

Mike is owned by Darcy, a twenty-five pound dynamo of a dog with whom he skijors, and Mystic, a kitten he claims has enough energy to power a small nation. A native of Westminster, Vermont, Mike attended Sterling College and Vermont Technical College for his Veterinary Technician degree.

During the week of May 6-12, veterinarians, veterinary technicians, and others will celebrate "People and Pets, The Perfect Combination." National Pet Week 2001 is sponsored by the American Veterinary Medical Association, American Animal Hospital Association and others. The theme this year recognizes the warmth, joy, love, and companionship that pets bring into our lives and the vital role of the veterinarian in that relationship. Once again, **LVVS will celebrate National Pet Week with an Open House on Sunday, May 6.** Activities planned include:

- ♦ Pet Parade
- ♦ Pet-Ographer Helen A. Cath
- ♦ Kid's Drawing Contest (see details on page 2)
- ♦ And much, much more!

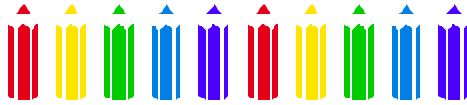
Helen A. Cath is an internationally recognized photographer. Her work has been published in magazines, calendars and more. One dog photographed at last year's session has been chosen to be in a 2002 calendar! Perhaps your pet can become a star too! Examples of Helen's work can be seen at LVVS. To reserve your session with the Pet-Ographer, please call 888-7911. ♦

HEY KIDS!

Enter our National Pet Week drawing contest to win!

Grab your crayons & pens and show us
how *People and Pets are the Perfect
Combination!*

Ask Mom or Dad to mail your entry or
drop it off at LVVS before Wed., May
3, 2001. All entries will be judged by
our panel of experts, including Pet-
Ographer Helen A. Cath, and will be
displayed at the hospital. Winners will
be chosen in 4 age groups: under 6, 6-
10, 10-14 and over 14 years of age.
(Make sure your name, age, address
and phone number are on the back of
your drawing.) Winners will receive a
basket of pet toys and treats!



RUB-A-DUB-DUB

your pet in OUR tub!

Self Service Baths at LVVS

Enjoy the convenience and ease of
bathing your pet in our
raised tub with the patented
HydroSurge™ bathing system.
We'll supply the shampoo,
conditioner, blower and towels
- you supply the pet and the
time!

**RUB - A - DUB -
Saturdays**

& Sundays

2 - 6 p.m.

Tuesdays

& Thursday

7 - 9 p.m.

(additional times by
appointment
- please call)

COST: \$12

Includes: ½ hour of bathing time
(\$3.00 per every quarter hour
past the first half hour)

Shampoo & conditioner

Raised tub with ramp for an easy walk
up for your pet (no lifting a
struggling dog into a tub!)

HydroSurge Therapeutic Bathing System
and Blower

Towels

Brush or comb for after-bath grooming



HYPERTENSION

Systemic hypertension (high blood pressure) has been dubbed the "silent killer" in human medicine. In the last 5-10 years, we have become more aware that hypertension exists in dogs and cats and information on the disease is increasingly becoming more available. Hypertension can occur as a primary disease or associated with other disease processes, just like in people. There is an association between hypertension and hyperthyroidism, kidney disease, hyperadrenocorticism (Cushing's disease), liver disease and diabetes mellitus.

Hypertension can directly damage various organs resulting in such problems as blindness or impaired vision (due to retinal detachments), bleeding in the brain, excessive strain on the heart, and progressive kidney injury. Normalizing blood pressure may reverse or halt the progression of some of these changes. For example, detached retinas may reattach and retinal bleeding may resolve, but return of vision is variable. In addition, high blood pressure medication has been shown to decrease kidney damage. Age and breed influence blood pressure in dogs. Blood pressure is more likely to rise as a dog ages. The sight hound group tends to have higher normal blood pressure values than other breeds. For cats, only age has a significant effect on blood pressure with older cats tending to have higher values.

Symptoms of hypertension may include: sudden blindness, seizures, wobbly gait, disorientation, weakness in limbs, drinking a lot, urinating a lot, weight changes and appetite changes. Sometimes these are symptoms of hypertension, sometimes the hypertension is a symptom of another disease - a bit of the chicken and the egg.

Blood pressure can be measured several ways. At LVVS, we most commonly use a Doppler ultrasonography unit and pressure cuff. Blood pressure must be taken in a manner that minimizes apprehension or movement in a conscious patient. A great deal of anxiety or an animal that is actively struggling will cause false readings. Some animals may need to "learn" how to have their blood pressure measured so sometimes we will measure blood pressure over several visits in 2-3 weeks. Blood pressure is subject to variation with each heartbeat, so measurements are repeated several times in one sitting to obtain valid readings. Also, pronounced arrhythmias or slow heart rates can contribute to highly variable readings.

A routine screening for high blood pressure is recommended for cats over 10 years and for dogs over 7 years of age. For dogs and cats that have high blood pressure, a complete workup should be done to look for other underlying disease processes. This consists of a complete blood count, serum chemistry profile, electrolytes and urinalysis. Some cats should also have their thyroid evaluated. If a heart murmur is present, chest x-rays and an ultrasound of the heart is highly recommended. Depending on the results of the lab work, an abdominal ultrasound may also be indicated. For blind animals, checking the pressure of the eyes is recommended to monitor for glaucoma, which can be a painful complication of hypertension.

The logical approach to managing hypertension is to first treat the preexisting disease. There are multiple medications available to treat hypertension in dogs and cats. Each pet needs to be assessed to determine which medication will work the best. Medications can be given in a tablet or capsule form or as a "flavor tab" treat (semi-moist liver or tuna flavor tab with medications mixed inside). Flavor tabs can be more expensive but the ease of giving the "flavor tab" can outweigh the cost difference. Monitoring is essential. Evaluation of therapy to see how well it is working is done by rechecking blood pressure 1-2 weeks after starting blood pressure medication and also by monitoring some kidney values and electrolytes on blood work. Once a stable condition is achieved, then blood pressure and blood work are monitored every 3 - 6 months. Weight reduction and regular exercise are other things that help management of hypertension. (Dogs that are overweight tend to have higher blood pressures.) Dietary modification by sodium restriction in the diet is of questionable use in pets but it may be recommended because it is unlikely to harm the animal. Certain prescription diets are indicated for treatment of underlying diseases, such as kidney or heart disease.

Detection and treatment of systemic hypertension is important to overall health by preventing or slowing the progression of organ damage.

(The LVVS Doppler Ultrasonography Unit was made possible in part through a generous donation from "Sci" and his owners, Catrina and Susan. Have you ever thought of donating in your pet's name? If you are interested, please contact Amanda at 888-7911.)



A PUPPY IS NOT ...

A puppy is NOT a way to teach children to be responsible. Puppies and children are terrific playmates and companions. Encouraging help in the care of a puppy is a great starting point for children, however, it is unfair to the puppy and the child to have the puppy's entire well-being placed on the shoulders of a youngster that is not responsible for themselves. Even the most devoted youngster develops other interests, forgets occasionally and tires of the daily chores. The puppy becomes the loser in the resulting confrontation between parent and child.

A puppy is NOT cheap. The purchase price of the puppy is just the beginning. There are license fees to the town, food, leashes, toy, crates & bedding and fencing. Depending on the coat, there is the expense of grooming tools or having the dog professionally groomed. Then there are veterinary bills for emergencies and regular checkups and immunizations. Don't forget obedience lessons as an investment to a well-behaved companion.

A puppy is NOT an impulse purchase. The wrong match between puppy and home can be very frustrating. More people are taking the time to learn about the breeds' temperaments, characteristics and propensity for health



problems. More people are taking the time to find reputable breeders to help in the family's decision whether to add a new family member. Sadly, there are still people with puppies too willing to just sell anyone any puppy.

A puppy is NOT a gift. The puppy that appeals to the giver may not be the puppy that the recipient would select.

A puppy is NOT self-cleaning. There will be puddles on the floor, dog hair everywhere, parasites to deal with and chewed up papers, toys and clothing. The reality of the situation is that this chore falls on the housekeeper.

A puppy is NOT self-trained and does not have the mental or physical abilities to behave as an adult dog would. The puppy does not have bladder control, does not instinctively know what is chewable and what is not, cannot distinguish between food and what is a dangerous ingested item. A puppy cries when lonely and needs the time, patience and devotion to teach him the unfamiliar people world rules.

A puppy is NOT a puppy for long. The cute puppy soon grows into an adult. The physical adult characteristics of a purebred dog are fairly predictable but may not be in a mixed breed puppy. The behavioral characteristics of the grown dog depend on what the new owner trains during puppyhood.

A puppy IS a commitment for LIFE

PS The same things hold true for kittens!

(Reprinted with permission from Anita Moran, Behm Training, Ketchikan, Alaska)

Patient Profile: SIMBA

...linear foreign body in a veterinarian's cat

A new series by Dr. Paula Yankauskas



Simba is a one and a half year old neutered male cat that belongs to my eight year old daughter. One Saturday night, recently, I started to pay attention to him differently; I noticed something wasn't right. He was quieter than usual, and on closer inspection, seemed to have lost weight. He appeared uncomfortable. Which is how it happened that at 11 pm I opened his mouth and noted a string anchored around the base of his tongue. I suddenly empathized with all the people who have ever presented their dogs or cats to me in the off hours, it truly is a time when things seem to stand out. Anyway, I called my office, announcing our imminent arrival, and prepared my family for the likelihood that Simba would be having surgery the next day. We hospitalized him on IV fluids, pain control medicine, released the string from the tongue (yes, he swallowed it, being safer than pulling it out) and left him in the care of the overnight person. Diagnosis: linear foreign body.

A linear foreign body is an object that has been swallowed that is long and thin in shape. It is most often string, sewing thread, or ribbon. It may get stuck in the stomach and/or intestinal tract because of its diameter or composition, or that it is longer than a peristaltic wave (about 30 cm, around 12 inches), or it becomes anchored on something (such as one of the teeth, or the base of the tongue, as happened with Simba, or attached to a needle that lodges itself). Signs include going off food, retching, vomiting,

continued on last page...



LVVS Pet Food & Supply Center Eukanuba Foods – Buy 5, Get the 6th Bag FREE!

IAMS ♦ Eukanuba ♦ ProPlan ♦ Science Diet ♦ California Natural ♦ Friskies
& Prescription Diets from Hills, Eukanuba Veterinary Diets, Purina Veterinary Diets
and Innovative Veterinary Diets.

**FOR YOUR CONVIENCE, WE NOW CARRY
Purina Cat Chow, Dog Chow, etc. in LARGE bags (cats – 18 lbs; dogs – 38 lbs)**

... continued from page 3, Patient Profile: SIMBA

lethargy, and fever. It is a serious problem: complications include lacerating the intestinal wall, and it almost always requires surgery to resolve.

Diagnosis generally is based on the symptoms, oral exam findings, and imaging (primarily by using x-rays). We knew Simba had gotten into trouble over a string, but we ended up using imaging to get a better idea of what was going on inside him because the next day, Sunday, he was feeling much better. So we gave him barium, a contrast material (in radiology, it outlines things more clearly than is seen with the x-rays alone; in this case, seeing the inner space of the stomach and intestines). Over the course of several hours, the barium was seen to pass smoothly; the radiologist agreed that it would be appropriate to see if he would pass the string without surgery....

On Tuesday night Simba had a bowel movement, in which we found 2 and 1/2 feet of the string, as well as a clot of thinner string material from the bandage covering over his IV catheter. He has continued to do well since then. On account of his propensity to play with string we have doubled our efforts to keep his environment string free, and are careful to put toys away that have string in their parts (as in fishing pole type of toys) when we are done using them in playing with Simba. ♦

SPAY DAY USA 2001 WRAP UP

The 2001 SPAY DAY USA celebration in the Lamoille County area was a huge success, and we would like to thank everyone who made it possible. Over 50 animals, including over 30 cats and 10 dogs (not forgetting the 7 bunnies!) were spayed or neutered on Sunday, February 25, 2001. (Another 30 animals have qualified to be spayed or neutered at later dates!) More than 40 people volunteered over the 3 days that animals were at Lamoille Valley Veterinary Services in Hyde Park and hundreds of others gave donations ranging from supplies, to food for the volunteers, to monetary donations to offset expenses. Donations are still being accepted to offset expenses – please contact LVVS for more information.

Our deep and appreciative thanks to the following:

- Paula J. Yankauskas VMD –
owner of Lamoille Valley Veterinary Services for her vision of
SPAY DAY in the Lamoille Area
- The *entire* Lamoille Valley Veterinary Services staff – who
opened their hospital to the animals and people involved
- Central Vermont Humane Society – especially Sherry LeMay,
Lyndsey Blakely, Maya Follina, Justa Malone and Sarah Davies
- North Country Animal League – especially Sarah Tucker, Kelly
Bushey and Muriel Phelps
- Frontier Animal Society – especially Deborah Hartt
Stowe Veterinary Clinic and Dr. Gregg Goodson
- Green Mountain Animal Hospital – especially Doctors Liz Alton,
Gene Courtright and Jennifer Elliott
- Dr. Regina Detora
- Onion River Animal Hospital
- Doctors Caroline Ballard and Jerry Smith – for interrupting their
vacation to volunteer
- Sheri Boutin, Erika Larson, Laura Weickert, Linda Cannon-
Huffman, Shawn Umansky, Deb McKenzie, Tom Younkman and
Teresa Fowler for spending time at LVVS over the weekend and
helping to lighten the load
- House of Pizza – Morrisville Dunkin' Donuts – Morrisville
- Melben's – Morrisville Helen A. Cath - PetOgrapher
- Laboratory Equipment Specialists – Norman Rosberg



**A SPAY ODYSSEY
U · S · A**

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QUESTIONS AND MORE!

