

SUMMER NEWSLETTER

SAFE Program-Changing Times

Special points of interest:

- “..and the dog flies out the window, you know how that story ends.”
- “help prevent problems with swimming.”
- “Communication is a two way street.”
- “a new medication, Sileo, has been released for the treatment of noise phobias”

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Over the past several months, the clinic has been starting to evolve our rescue roles (S.A.F.E) into some new directions. Last Fall, we quit accepting healthy adult cats into our program. This decision was made for a couple of reasons. At the time, we were so overwhelmed with cats that something had to be done to close the flood gates. In addition, recent studies have shown that adult cats left alone and not admitted to a shelter have a good chance of returning home vs. almost no chance once within a shelter. We have continued to accept any cat or kitten which is sick or injured, and we still accept orphaned litters of kittens. Thus far, this program seems to be going well.



Recently, the decision was made to try and reach out to the underserved population of pets, which, in general, often means those residing in lower income households where even basic care may not be feasible. It is our belief that no one should be denied having a companion pet, but those pets also deserve to benefit from basic care such as vaccinations, spay/neuter, and treatment of parasites. These are things every pet should have for a variety of reasons. Therefore, those of us involved in S.A.F.E. are putting together “bundle” packages for health care for cats and dogs. The intent of the program is to offer these packages at a reduced price which a pet owner will have to provide a small co-pay amount once financial need is demonstrated.

Over the years, through private donations and our various fundraisers, we have been able to raise enough money to initiate this program. We are looking forward to starting the program in hopes that it will be an asset to our community.

Whether this will have a significant impact on animals and people in our care remains to be seen, but we are looking forward to taking the S.A.F.E. program in a new direction to hopefully benefit more animals.

New Faces-Introductions!

WRVC welcomes the recent addition of inventory manager, Casey. From pricing to purchasing, she is organized (our storage room has never looked so good), has a knack for remembering where everything is, and has proven herself invaluable in replenishing the clinic's supply inventory. Casey has won the clinic's award in adopting a new addition to her family in record time –adopting a new puppy after being on the job only eight days. When she's through with work, Casey enjoys spending time with her dogs Vito & Layla....enjoying nature... and loves being with her niece and nephew.

Amber is our recent addition to the receptionist team, here at WRVC! Amber has been a vet assistant since 2002. She is recently new to the New London area, from Neenah. She owns 4 cats and 1 dog. During her free time, she enjoys the outdoors which includes hobbies of fishing, hiking, camping and woodwork. Amber also enjoys traveling when she can!

Beth is one of our newest kennel staff to join us at WRVC! She is going to school for veterinary technology and hopes to gain and learn more in veterinary education here. Included in her home are 2 dogs, 2 fish and a guinea pig. Her hobbies include making jewelry and collecting state quarters.

Mallory is joining us as our newest member as part of the kennel staff! Mallory is currently a senior at the New London High School. She plans to go to college for medical geology or to become a DVM! In school she keeps busy with band, choir, and show choir. She's also a member of the Waupaca county 4-H. Mallory is also the vice president of the New London FFA. During her free time she loves to draw, paint, hike and listen to music! Mallory has a 1 year old black lab and a 15 year old domestic short hair. Mallory looks forward to meeting and caring for our client's pets.

Car rides to Emergency Visits-Jannie

As the summer days are setting in, pet owners must keep in mind of their pet's safety. As a passenger in a vehicle, I've observed so many owners with windows wide open..Then I see their dogs head fully sticking out, ears ripping in the wind with their goofy tongue sticking out. I can't help but shake my head and feel a little frustrated with this. I know as humans, we want to share our enjoyment, especially with our pets, but that can simply turn into a nightmare.

Sure, it's cute, (and it easily displays the enjoyment of your pet having to get their head out the window for some fresh air), but it can get extremely dangerous, and can be easily avoided. Little do people know that your dog can become deaf from the wind catching in their ears..not to mention debris flying into them and causing possible permanent damage. Another reason why letting your dog hang out the window is a bad idea is that debris can damage not just the ears, but the eyes as well. For example, I have seen dogs come in for scratched corneas in result of this habit. Ouch! What owners don't keep in mind is that, the dogs are sticking their heads out the window without any protection. (They actually make goggles for dogs, Doggles!) Would you stick your head out the window, unprotected, driving 30+ mph?



A far more nerve wracking issue with dogs and open windows, is that some dogs tend to think it's a great idea to jump out. Or the owner makes a quick turn and the dog flies out the window, you know how that story ends. As owners, we should always look out for our pets and prevent these accidents, bad habits. After all, we are their protector, and friend that they look up to, to care for them.

Summertime Is Swim Time –Dr.Baetke

Summertime is a great time for dogs to swim. Many of them love to cool off with their owners. If you are going to let your dog swim, there are some things to consider. If you have a pool that is chlorinated you should not let your dog swim in it. The chlorine can irritate your dog's eyes and skin. If your dog does jump in the pool, you should wash it off with clear water to get the chlorinated pool water off. Many people set up a kiddie pool for their dogs in the summer which is fine but make sure you change the water often enough to keep down bacteria levels.

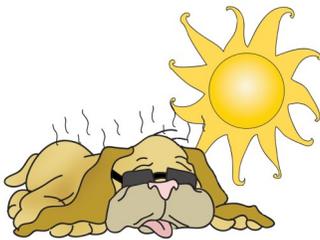


There are also many natural bodies of water (ponds, lakes, streams, etc.) that dogs love to swim in. Just remember these can have a lot of bacteria and other contaminants. Dogs that swim in these waters can develop skin infections, "hot spots", ear infections and even swimmer itch. Drinking water from stagnant ponds or marshes can lead to developing Leptospirosis. Leptospirosis is a bacterial disease that can affect the liver and kidneys. If treated early it can be cured. There is also a vaccine for Leptospirosis which should be considered for dogs exposed to these types of waters.

There are several things you can do to help prevent problems with swimming. Dogs that swim in murky water should be rinsed with clean water after swimming. You should wipe out your dogs ears to prevent infections from too much moisture in the ears. If you are boating on a large lake or a river with a fast current, consider getting a life vest for your dog. If your dog will be in swamps and marshes it should be vaccinated against Leptospirosis.

Have fun swimming with your dog but remember to also be safe!

Heat Stroke-Keep It Cool! - Dr. Ziegler



Every summer we see dogs with heat stroke. The reasons are extremely varied, and sometimes result from what seem to be very benign circumstances.

Most owners can easily recognize the symptoms of heat stroke- excessive panting with open mouthed breathing, salivating, and changes in mentation and neurological status. Environmental conditions that accompany these signs is typically evident. Exact conditions are not always clear. I have jogged with my dogs in 90 degrees heat and never had a problem. One year, we had a client whose three dogs died in their home that did not have air conditioning. There are many different factors that exist.

A recent study showed that the pets that were most likely to survive heat stroke are the ones where the owner intervenes and wets the dog down with cool to luke warm water and provides air flow. Basically, this means wet them down and drive to a veterinary clinic as soon as possible with the windows down. These are surprisingly early steps to maximize the chances that your pet will survive heat stroke.

A few years ago, we had a dog come in with a heat stroke so bad that I thought it would die. I implemented a spur of the moment unique approach to the problem that I am convinced saved the dog's life. (and thanks to one of my very skilled technician's help). Since then, I have never had to implement the same treatment again, but at least I am prepared to do so should such a situation arise again.

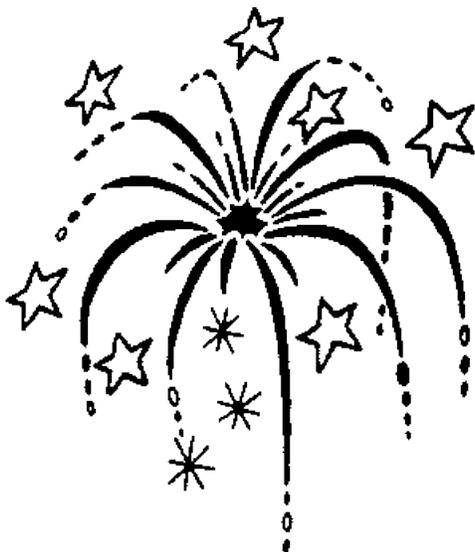
The bottom line is that pet owners play a crucial role in managing heat stroke. First off, prevent it. Should you see symptoms, wet your pet down and get them to a clinic.

Noise Phobias-Dr. Ziegler

Pets, particularly dogs, are scared by loud, strange noises and this is a common problem during this time of the year with thunderstorms and fireworks. Thunderstorms are a given for most of the warmer months. Fireworks, once restricted to the 4th of July, are now prevalent for weeks on either side of the holiday.

This is a very real and potentially serious problem for many dogs. Many dogs suffer tremendously as a result of this disorder, and we receive many requests for tranquilizers, sedatives, and advice to try and help pets through these issues.

Typically, we have either utilized a tranquilizer (Ace Promazine) or Alprazolam (a variety of valium) to help pets. Ace Promazine can sedate a pet, but dogs can easily override the effects of this medication. Those that do not may sleep for hours after the incident is over. Alprozalam (Xanax) has many advantages, but needs to be used carefully. Sadly, it also can have a high abuse potential.



Recently, a new medication, Sileo, has been released for the treatment of noise phobias. It comes as gel and is placed in a dog's cheek area. It is then absorbed and provides relief for the fear produced by excessive noise. Being a new medication, we have no experience with the drug, but the statistics look promising and favorable. Unlike the other medications we used, Sileo is not suppose to leave any sedative effects.

This medication looks promising in providing dogs with relief from noise phobias. With the "noisy" season upon us, the Wolf River Veterinary Clinic will be stocking this medication for our clients' pets.

Please call the clinic if you have questions about this new medication.

Communication Problems-Dr. Ziegler

I feel that I am a fairly good communicator (with my clients- no one else can make sense of me.) I always try to explain things in terms clients can understand, and I always try to explain everything clearly. I always get a good feeling about the job I do. Good for me, being a hero in my own mind!

Statistically, clients remember only about 10% of what they hear from their veterinarian. I have had many “wonderful” consults, only to have a client call back and ask a staff member, “What did he say?”. I have had many long discussions with a client, only to have their spouse call me and tell me that I told them nothing (according to their spouse present at the appointment). My delusions of grandeur typically fade into accusations of poor communication.

How do I deal with all of this? I often play the blame game- the three screaming kids in the exam room, the client who cannot get off of their cell phone when I am talking to them (very common) or the client whose pants fell down and was not wearing underwear (This actually did happen once.). So many distractions!

And yet, most cases are simply miscommunication based on the veterinarian talking, the client not understanding, and there being no middle ground. Clients need to ask questions and they need to understand what is going on. I used to think a silent client nodding their head in agreement meant that they understood me. I now know it means the opposite. What else could happen?



I was at the Mayo clinic once with my mother. We were in an elevator with a nurse and I commented on the revered and respected services of the Mayo Clinic. She was polite, and responded that we still needed to be advocates for ourselves and needed to ask questions to challenge the doctors. In the end, it was good advice. Clients need to be advocates for their pets as well.

My most rewarding appointments are the ones in which a client has many questions they want answered. Or, perhaps they are questioning what is being done or have their own input. My least rewarding appointments are when I can stimulate no interaction with the client. (Clients also get frustrated when they can stimulate no interaction with the veterinarian. This is sadly not uncommon.)

Communication is a two way street. It has to be this way. No one can lose sight of this.

The Evolution of a Career—Dr. Ziegler

A previous newsletter drew attention to the fact that the Wolf river Veterinary Clinic was established in 1996, making 2016 our 20th year in the community. During the eight years prior to that, I practiced mixed animal (large and small animals) in Weyauwega. At that time, New London was an area I seldom saw as we had few clients from the area. I do remember, however, the time when everything north of the Hwy 54 and Shawano St. intersection was nothing but farm country. There was no Wal-Mart, no motels, and no strip mall. The Rainbow Restaurant was about as far north as you need to go in town.

That aside, I look at the changes we have seen as a profession during that time (or at least in the context of how I practiced). During those early years we had an old x-ray machine that was a disservice every time it was used. We performed few blood tests since we had no equipment and everything had to be sent to Marshfield. Initially, we had no gas anesthesia, and all surgeries were performed with injectable anesthetic agents which carried a high risk of complications (anywhere from pets that would not wake up for hours to the occasional death.). Our emergency supplies were limited, and we did the best we could with what we had. There were no resources for stray pets, and almost every stray that came in was euthanized. For client owned pets who had to be euthanized, there was no privacy as we had one exam room to do everything in. I would dare say that our level of compassion in those days left a lot to be desired as well. The list could go on and on with the crudities of how we practiced.

At the same time, we had many successes. I remember treating many cases in ways I would not even consider today, but having things turn out well despite what we did. I give the credit to the resiliency of the animals we cared for. As I look back on the way we treated certain cases. I am shocked considering the standards we have today. It all makes me wonder where we will be in another 5, 10, and 20 years. Will we look back on these current times with as much dismay as I look back on the 90's?

Despite how much we have evolved, I look back on the “old days” with a great deal of fondness. Practice was more laid back and fun (we worked very hard in those days, but the atmosphere was different) , and there was more camaraderie with coworkers and clients. Not having all of the diagnostic tools forced us to learn very good clinical skills, basing many a diagnosis on our knowledge, physical exam skills, and intuition. Performing surgeries with less than ideal equipment taught us a lot about balanced anesthesia, monitoring, and thinking creativity to solve unique problems. Those days set the stage for evolving into what we have become today, and once in awhile, you fall back on those old clinical skills and intuition to help you with a current case.

I am glad that I have had the opportunity to see veterinary medicine evolve the way it has. How it will proceed from here, I do not know, but I have my concerns as the cost of everything continues to rise significantly including state of the art technology, pet foods that are top of the line, well trained staff, an up to date facility etc.. all come with a price tag. There are challenges both pet owners and clinics will continue to encounter. One cannot predict the future, but one thing is certain—things will continue to change.



Can Pets Survive Without Veterinary Care? - Dr. Ziegler

Many years ago, I worked with a farmer who had a mongrel named Arf. Arf never saw a veterinarian. She was unvaccinated, never saw any flea and tick or heartworm control products and ate cheap dog food and also waste food from the house. Arf was a farm dog and lived outside. She died just shy of 17 years of age when she was asleep in the driveway and a tractor ran her over. I always told the owner that Arf made a mockery of the veterinary profession.

Unfortunately, not all dogs are like Arf. Had Arf died at a younger age, the farmer would not have cared, and the next mongrel would have replaced her. Her dodging bullets all of her life was extraordinary. It was certainly was not the norm.

In veterinary medicine, we see pets live and prosper because of what we do. We also see pets not live a long life despite our efforts. In rare occasions we can also see our efforts as a detriment. The goal is obviously to have pets live as long as possible with the best quality of life as possible. From that goal come recommendations that some can accept and other cannot.

For instance- in our area will a dog not on heartworm preventative get a heart worm disease? Will a dog not vaccinated for Lyme disease and treated appropriately with a flea and tick control product acquire Lyme disease? Will a cat with dental disease not live to an old age? The answer to these and many more questions is “no”. Some, if not many pets will survive without recommended and preventative care. Others will not. Some follow the “rules” and still die prematurely.

There are no easy answers. The bottom line is that there is an optimal way to address healthcare and there are numerous lesser ways. There are no guarantees in either situation, but the odds are that better health care will be of benefit and will pay dividends. It is up to each individual pet owner to decide what standards of health care they want for their pet, and also what they can afford or what they are willing to pay. There are many owners who can afford good health care for their pet, but choose not to do so. On the other hand, we have clients who do not have the financial resources, but still find a way to provide optimal care for their pet.

Bottom line- in health care there are no guarantees. You do the best that you can. You either provide the best care that you can or you opt for something else. In the end, everyone hopes for the best outcome possible. It is a simple reality of health care (not just pets, but human health care as well).

Arf never like me. I never once was able to pet her as she always slunk away when I approached her. You would think that, given how much she defied me, we could have at least been friends.



Summer Foods to Enjoy and Avoid For Your Pets –Jannie

Cookouts and bbq's are enjoyed by everyone, including your pets! Though, we do not encourage table scraps for pets, it's a bad habit we all tend to fall into from time to time. Small quantities are encouraged



Here are some summery foods that you *should* not share with your pet:

- Grapes and raisins are ok for cats to have (avoid with dogs), however onions and garlic are NOT good!
- Meat on the grill can cause possible diarrhea, bones that get overlooked may splinter or pierce the intestines. Hotdogs, burgers and steaks are high in calories and fat, and can result in future pancreatitis.
- Corn on the cob isn't always the best idea for dogs because their stomachs often can't digest this, corn on the cob also can be a choking hazard. Instead just give pieces of the corn instead of the whole cob.
- Ice cream isn't the best idea to share, small amounts are safe, plain flavors. Some pets are lactose intolerant, resulting in diarrhea. There are ice cream bars specifically made for dogs however.

Don't forget to politely remind your guests to be mindful of all of this, or don't feed them any scraps at all! That is the safest route for both parties.

Staff Pet Poll!

Curious to know what our staff total owned pets (at the moment..) are?

Rats-2	Gecko-1	Chickens-65	In total:
Cows-3	Cats- 48	Rabbit-1	
Fish– 16	Dogs- 31	Chinchilla-1	176!!
Guinea Pigs-4	Horses-3	Turtle-1	

WRVC wishes all a safe and happy summer!

