

Summer Newsletter

2017



INSIDE THIS ISSUE...

"What's Your Excuse?"

"Karen's Goodbye"

"Never Saw That Before"

"Thirty Years"

"Too Old for a Pet"

"Dooley Lost and Dooley Found"

"Importance of Bloodwork"

and more!

What's Your Excuse?

Dr. Mark Baetke

When it comes to dental issues in pets we normally hear three main excuses as to why people don't get their pet's teeth cleaned. 1. They're not that bad. 2. Anesthesia is dangerous. 3. It's expensive. I will try to address each of these.

1. They're not that bad. There are many benefits of early intervention in oral disease (if you can see tartar, your pet has oral disease). Oral disease can lead to bacteria entering the bloodstream. Most of the time the immune system will take care of eliminating these bacteria. However, as oral disease becomes worse the immune system may not be able to keep up. This constant influx of bacteria into the bloodstream can lead to heart valve problems, kidney or liver infections, and a decrease in the overall wellbeing of the pet. Cleaning the teeth gets rid of these bacteria. By early intervention we may also be able to save teeth that would eventually need to be extracted if the disease continues to progress. So even though they may not be "that bad", they will be in the future, so why wait until your pet is losing teeth before intervening.

(Continued on page 2)

What's Your Excuse Continued

2. Anesthesia is dangerous. The fact is while there is some risk involved in any anesthetic procedure, overall it is very safe. Age is usually not a factor in anesthesia. It is the overall health of the pet. At Wolf River Veterinary Clinic, we do everything we can to make anesthesia safe. We will do blood work to look at organ function before anesthesia. We have an intravenous catheter placed to give us access to a vein. The anesthetic agents we use are the same ones they use in people. Pets are on a heated table and monitored with an ECG, pulse oximeter, and blood pressure cuff.

3. It's expensive. Since pets need to undergo anesthesia, it does cost more to have their teeth cleaned. However, having their teeth cleaned earlier in the disease process will save money in the long run. By cleaning their teeth earlier there is less chance of needing to have teeth removed. The teeth of animals can have 2-3 divergent roots or very long roots causing them to be more difficult to remove. If you have a multi-root tooth with one bad root, the entire tooth needs to be extracted. It can be difficult to remove the remaining healthy root. Letting oral disease progress to the point where many teeth need to be removed will increase the cost greatly. Early preventative cleaning saves money, as well as teeth. **One thing we can do to help a little with the cost of a dental cleaning is if you mention this article you will receive 25.00 off your pet's procedure!**

When you look at the facts about dental disease in pets, the excuses for not doing something about it disappear.



Jack (see our Spring newsletter) is now officially registered as a Therapy Dog!

Importance of Blood Work

Ashley Schwartz, CVT

Every year, if not twice a year, we at WRVC recommend doing blood work on any older pet. Not just to monitor a pre-existing disease or health problem...but also to help catch new problems that are just starting. When problems are caught early, there are many more options.

Personally, I have always been a big fan of blood work for all my pets. I have 2 older kitties (17yr and 16yr) whose kidney function I monitor every 6 months, due to the fact that their kidney values have been slowly creeping up for years. With regular monitoring and diet changes they are still going strong! Their issues may not have been caught until it was too late if I hadn't initially checked!

Over this winter I was dealt with a new challenge... Lola, my 7yr. old German Shepard mix, started to gain weight. She had always been a picky eater, so I blamed the winter and lack of our nightly walks to her weight gain (just like mine). She was acting a little slow and lazy, but once again I just associated it with the never-ending feeling of winter. Just before this, I had her bloodwork checked in the fall and everything was perfectly normal.

When she was due for her yearly heartworm test, we found she was 12 lbs. over her usual weight, so I figured I'd do the blood work again for a piece of mind. I WAS AMAZED! It wasn't even 5 months and my dog was hypothyroid! It amazed me to see how her values could change in such a short time!

Long story short, we got her on appropriate medications and since March she was already dropped 10 lbs.! (Unlike me 😊) Her energy is back and she is feeling great!

I learned my lesson that some symptoms can be so subtle you don't even realize they are symptoms at all! I had just been made up excuses for Lola's. If any owner asks why they should do bloodwork even though their pet seems fine, I bring up how 3 of my 4 pets have issues that would have never been caught without blood checks, and now they are thriving!!

It's our duty as pet owners to check and make sure they're healthy. Sometimes by the time you see symptoms, it sadly can already be too late.

QUOTES

"I've seen a look in a dog's eyes...I am convinced that basically dogs think we humans are nuts."

--John Steinbeck

"To really enjoy a dog, one doesn't merely try to train him to be semi-human. The point of it is to open one's self to the possibility of becoming partly a dog."

--Edward Hoagland

"The greatest pleasure of a dog is that you may make a fool of yourself with him and not only will he not scold you, but he will make a fool of himself, too."

--Samuel Butler

Too Old for a Pet

Dr. Ziegler



Recently, I have had many elderly clients who expressed a desire to get a new pet. They quickly dismissed the idea by saying, “I am too old to get a new pet”.

This idea of being too old took me back to my mother, who at age 74 wanted a black lab puppy. I got her one (Sage—one of the most wonderful dogs ever) knowing full well that Sage would likely finish her life with a family member. Someone other than my mom. That is exactly what happened. Never in the process did I ever plan on denying my mother the companionship of a pet. Sage became a family pet, living with many different family members as needed during my mom’s health decline.



This is what I tell clients—do not deny yourself the companionship of a pet, but make provisions for the ‘what if’s’. Some people do this, and others do not. We have seen endless scenarios over the years. An owner dies and the pet is taken care of by a friend or family member or there is no plan and survivors want nothing to do with the pet and it gets surrendered to a humane society. On one bizarre occasion, the pet ended up on a street in Chicago (long story). With proper planning, the outcome can be great. Without it, it can be a disaster.

I know many elderly clients who center their world around their pet. The friendship and companionship of an animal means everything to them. It is a win-win for everyone involved. I cannot imagine anyone being denied a pet due to their age. I, for one, have every intention of having a pet for as long as I possibly can. Life would be awfully hollow without one.



There is also the other side of things when an elderly person does not want a pet of their own anymore, but still wants to be around animals, or they simply cannot take care of a pet due to their circumstances. In this situation, pet visitation is a wonderful thing. I know some people who visit nursing homes with their pets to expose people who wish to have that exposure. Many family members will also take their pets to visit loved ones as well. I have also heard of a few nursing homes that have residential pets. All of this is great, and a true gift. The power of our relationship with animals is amazing.

In the end, all of us who love animals never want to give up our experiences with them. We should not have to do so. There are so many possibilities to keep from being without a pet. It is all just a matter of planning.



I did have one situation with an elderly client who loved cats. I always told her that if anything ever happened to her, I would make sure her cats were cared for. One day she died, and I inherited nineteen cats. It was not exactly what I had planned. It was quite a stressor in my life for some time. As they say, no good deed goes unpunished.

Dooley Lost and Dooley Found

Dr. Ziegler

In our last newsletter, I wrote an article about my dog, Dooley, titled, 'Young Dooley, Old Dooley'. In it I described the transition of a terrorist young dog to an older, somewhat quiet, arthritic dog. I also described her propensity to roam as she got older. I referred to her roaming as her "walk abouts".



As it would be, shortly after the newsletter was printed, Dooley unknowingly walked out of the house one night while we were unloading groceries. By the time we realized that she was gone, she was nowhere to be found. A sleepless night searching the woods with flashlights was fruitless. To make a long story short, after three and a half days of searching and pretty much giving up hope of ever seeing her alive again, Dooley was found on a cold, rainy morning at 5:00am. She was exhausted, but okay. When I found her I literally felt like I was dreaming. The relief I felt after days of feeling sick with grief was indescribable.

While I was the one to ultimately find her, I could not have done so without the amazing help of so many people. Family, friends, and staff members covered endless miles searching for her. Fliers were printed and distributed widely. While I am not a Facebook user, the power of this tool was demonstrated as more than 30,000 people learned of her situation with all the messages posted about her. Without all this support, I do not know what would have happened. People do care, and it was a wonderful feeling to see this in action.

The entire experience also made me put pet loss in perspective. While she was gone, I was so worried that she was in pain, was scared, was cold, and perhaps met an unpleasant death. The thought of her suffering bothered me to no end. As a veterinarian, I want no animal to experience these things. I commented numerous times that I would rather euthanize her and know what happened to her versus not knowing.

Euthanasia is a service veterinarians provide every day. Many view it as a burden and an evil thing. However, in many situations, it is a blessing and a gift. Never without sadness, but not without a positive side—the ability to relieve suffering, and to know.

Many people lose a pet never to recover them or know what happened to them. My heart goes out to them. I was lucky—I got my dog back. I am grateful for this.

Dooley is doing okay right now. She is very arthritic and has some doggy dementia. She has no more freedom, and will spend the rest of her life on a leash or monitored every second. I do not know how many days she has left. At some point, I will have to give her the gift of letting her go. I will be sad, but appreciative of the fact that I will have the ability to do so. I will always be eternally thankful to all of those who allowed me to do so.



New Faces

If you have come to visit us at the clinic you may have noticed a few new faces.

Here is a short introduction...

Megan Creen-Receptionist

Jill Lemke-Receptionist

Brooke Weissahn-Kennel

Philip Brown-Kennel Manager

Karen Mohler-CVT

and

Dr. Kyle Ruedinger

If you would like to learn more about our staff visit our website for individual bios!



Karen's Goodbye

It is with mixed emotions that I'm announcing my retirement as a Veterinary Technician from the Wolf River Veterinary Clinic. I began my career 37 years ago after graduating from the Veterinary Technician program at Waseca, MN. I was hired at Dairyland Animal Health in Weyauwega, WI and worked for there for 12 years. One of the veterinarians from that practice started an embryo transfer service and I worked with SEGGA E.T. for 2 years.

Then, 21 years ago Wolf River Veterinary Clinic opened. Dr. Zeigler hired me and I have been with his clinic since the beginning.

I have made many friends and enjoyed interacting with many of my clients and patients throughout the years.

Those who know me the best know that I grew up on a dairy farm, and working with cattle has always held a special interest for me. So even though I am 'retiring', I will not truly be retired. I'm just slowing down my pace a little. I am returning to my "roots" and have accepted a job at a dairy farm managing dairy calves!

To my clients, friends, and co-workers I thank you for many memories in the years I have worked with you!

Sincerely,

Karen Rodencal

Thirty Years

Dr. Ziegler

It seems like the other day I was writing a newsletter article about being a veterinarian for 20 years. Now, a few years later, I am at 30 years post-graduation. The other day, I watched my son graduate from medical school. By the time he is done with his surgical residency, I will be near the end of my career.

It is all quite mind boggling. Just the other day, I was a new graduate ready to take on the challenges of the profession. In the photographs that we took at my son's graduation, I see an old man wishing his son well, who has the same ambition. It is all quite humbling. How did life happen so quickly?

It would be easy to go on about the changes I have seen and the evolution of my profession, but no one really cares about those things. All of that is personal for my own contemplation. Now, what does seem important is how I am going to finish my career and deciding what the next phase of life may hold. At this point, I have two hurdles to clear that are problematic. One, I enjoy working and two, I have no game plan for what happens when I retire. If I were to add a third factor, it would be my fear that I will be chased out of my profession by technology before I am willing to be done (I am the definition of dinosaur when it comes to technology).

The realization that I still have something going for me however, came in a point made by the speaker at my son's graduation. It was pointed out that no matter what the technology is, nothing can replace concern and compassion for your patient (and in a veterinarian's case, the client as well). Technology will continue to advance at a logarithmic pace, but true compassion will never be replaced. I am not on Facebook and I do not text, but do an okay job of feeling my client's and my patient's pain. If nothing else, that is what 30 years has taught me.

The other lesson that I have learned is that the next generation will take over. It is of no use complaining about the "youngsters" and the millennials. The world is going to become theirs. Somethings may be lost, but there is be much to be gained. Change is essential, and it will happen. I do not have all the answers, but the next generation might. It is a risk well worth taking.

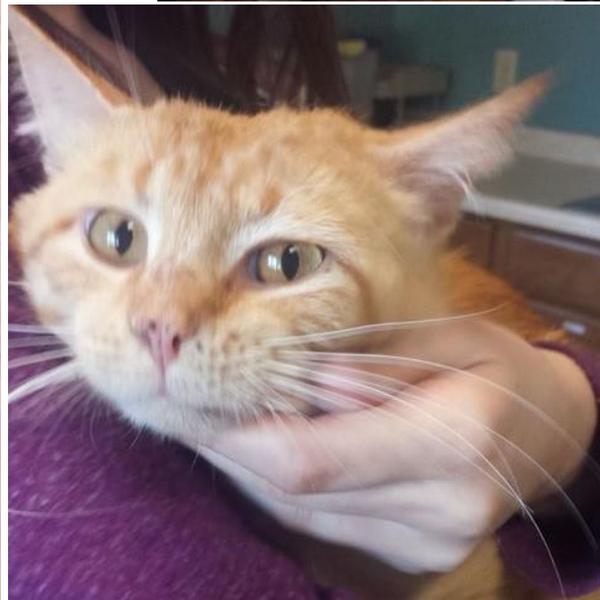
So where will I be in another 10 years? Very likely, not here. At the same time, I will be living life to its fullest in some capacity. I will never turn my back on the world of animals, but I also know that there is more out there—just need to discover what it will be.

A long career is a wonderful thing—a blessing and a gift. I hope that the next generation will have the insights to realize that nothing happens quickly. However, in hindsight, it truly does!

S.A.F.E. NEWS

Adorable Overload! Kittens, kittens, and more kittens!

Come look at some of the cats available for adoption at the clinic!



Never Saw That Before

Dr. Ziegler

I am very guilty of repeating myself. I have stories that I repeat a lot, only to have people roll their eyes and politely tolerate my blathering. I cannot help it. I do have some great stories and comments, but any one individual can only hear them so many times. One comment that I frequently make is, "I have never seen that before!" For some reason, no one gets tired of hearing that one.

I would think that after as many years that I have practiced, I would likely have seen almost everything. Yet, new things always occur, and I admit that, "I never saw that before." I always wonder what our clients think when an older, seasoned D.V.M. seems dumbfounded and comes up with the conclusion of "I don't know." It happens a lot, surprisingly.

Recently, I had a case of Blastomycosis (a very serious fungal infection indigenous to our area) in a cat. In the end, we figured that the case represented a more than one in a million occurrence. In New London? Really? But this is not uncommon-not at all. Our jobs as animal caregivers varies from the routine to the bizarre, often within the matter of minutes. As I say about my job, "The only thing predictable is that it is not predictable".

But that is also what I love about my job. Boredom is not a factor. It never will be. If I ever get bored, it will be my own fault for not being engaged in what I do. Some people like predictability and stability. I do not. Life is too short to thrive on predictability.

The great thing about unusual cases is that they challenge us to think. We must use our knowledge, experience, and skills to come up with a solution. It is a rush-kind of a natural high.

I remember one case of a hermaphrodite pug. It was both male and female. He/she has a mix of male and female body parts. In analyzing the situation, I formulated a game plan. I created surgical plan to convert a dog with all sorts of male and female parts to a fully functional spayed female dog. The owner got a bit huffy with me and asked, "How many of these have you done before?" I looked the client in the eye and said, "After today... one." Surgery went great! The dog did great! Now I am an expert. The problem is that I have never seen a similar situation since then. Probably never will.

Life is not meant to be spent without challenges. If we live life to its full potential, we should always accept the challenge of being taken outside of our comfort zone. Not knowing it all is great, because once we feel that we know it all, we have given up.

Here is to not having all of the answers! I will never get tired of that story.

Peanut Butter and Banana Frozen Dog Treats

Ingredients

- 2 over ripe bananas
- 1 cup Greek Yogurt
- ½ cup peanut butter

Instructions

1. In a bowl, mash bananas until completely smooth. Mix in remaining ingredients, and stir until well incorporated.
2. Pour mixture into ice cube molds, and freeze overnight. Store in an air tight container, in freezer.



216 W. Wolf River Ave
New London, WI 54961

Phone: (920) 982-2733
Fax: (920) 982-3112

411 S. Bridge St
Manawa, WI 54961
Phone: (920) 596-3311

<http://www.wrvet.com>

Visit us on Facebook!