



WOLF RIVER VETERINARY CLINIC NEWSLETTER FALL 2018

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Doolie at 15

Dr James Ziegler



Doolie, my old dog, will turn fifteen years old this Fall. Most people remember her as my dog who wandered off for a four day “walk about” in March 2017. To this day, we still feel extremely blessed that we were able to find her and have all this extra time with her.

Of all my dogs, current and past, Doolie is the one who has challenged me the most. She was always an independent spirit who would pretty much only do things her way. She liked who she liked and made it obvious when she did not like someone. Her independent behavior got me into a lot of trouble over the years. Still, she and I formed a bond that was unique. ‘Dools’ has always been one of my favorites. This does not mean that she has not frustrated, angered, and challenged me repeatedly over the years. Perhaps it is the effort I have had to

put into her that has bonded me so closely with her.

Now at almost 15 years of age, she is very arthritic and slow going. She sleeps much of the time. She has dementia that I have been treating medically for over a year. She sometimes urinates and defecates in the house (and always in the clinic). She is largely deaf, and her liver is starting to fail. Yet, at times, she will show flashes of her old self. She can be alert and funny, or she can look at you with vacant eyes. She might go for a walk or just decide that it’s not a good day (the summer heat and humidity have been rough on her). There is no doubt that her decline will continue and will undoubtedly accelerate quickly. I must be prepared for this.

Still, I am as committed to her as ever. I enjoy her presence immensely. I hope to have her around for months to come, but I must be a realist at the same



time. I do have to admit that it is hard to look at her now and remember what she was like as a pup. But that goes for all of us. You get older and you can spend time crying about your lost youth, or you move forward and celebrate getting older.

Doolie has been a one of a kind dog. She has about as much of a unique life as I can imagine. She has been a blessing to me, teaching me much needed patience and tolerance (everyone will tell you that I have a long way to go though).

Doolie came to me as a random act of life. When I first saw her, I commented that she was the type of dog I would never adopt. I cannot believe how wrong I was.



Anesthesia Free Dentistry

Dr Mark Baetke

I had a client come in recently who I told should have her dogs' teeth cleaned. She said the groomer cleaned them just a few months ago. I would have guessed the dog had not had its teeth cleaned in years, if ever. I had to explain that groomers may scale teeth, but they do not clean them. In fact, many times hand scaling increases the speed at which dental disease occurs. I will explain why hand scaling by a groomer is not beneficial and more likely harmful.

When you hand scale teeth you get the tartar off and the teeth look clean and are certainly whiter than before you started. Although the teeth look clean they have micro scratches in the surface. This rough surface allows bacteria and plaque to build up very fast. Within a few days while you may not have the tartar back, you have more plaque and are allowing periodontal disease to get a better hold. Tartar doesn't cause loose teeth, periodontal disease does. Since scraping the teeth does not clean under the gum line, it does nothing for periodontal disease. Also, have you ever been to your dentist and not had them polish your teeth when they were done. The polishing is done to remove the micro scratches caused by scaling.

When a pet has their teeth cleaned under anesthesia, we can clean above and below the gum line and polish the teeth. We can probe the teeth for pockets and do X-rays if needed.



I have looked on line and saw one ad for scaling teeth by a groomer. The pictures were great the teeth certainly looked a lot better. On a closer look though, the before and after picture of a canine tooth were interesting in that the before showed a lot of tartar and receding gum line. In the after picture a thumb was placed so you could not see what the gum line looked like after the scaling. In another of the after pictures there was a tooth with enough gum recession that an x-ray would have been done if the dog was under anesthesia or at least a complete periodontal probing of the area.

As you can see anesthesia free hand scaling of a pet's teeth does nothing for the pet and can give you a false sense that the teeth are clean while allowing periodontal disease to ruin your pets' mouth and health.

Cost is another factor. People say that it is much cheaper without anesthesia. If you had your pets' teeth scaled every month for a year, which still won't be often enough and doesn't stop periodontal disease, it would cost at least \$480. I based this on \$40 a month; I have seen prices from \$40 to \$65 per scaling. For the same amount (even less than that) you could have your pet's teeth cleaned the right way under anesthesia once a year which is the recommendation for most pets.



Children and Animals

Shaunna Ferge



I truly believe that every child should get the opportunity to grow up with animals, but today's world is not what it used to be when I was growing up. People act different, live different, and even treat their animals different. Cats and dogs have become much more part of the family, and most people treat them as such. As an advocate for animals, this couldn't make me happier! But I also see things that scare me. Not only as a pet owner, but as a mother as well.

Let's face it, there isn't much these days that doesn't go viral and somehow end up on the internet. Whether it be Facebook, Snapchat or YouTube, I'm constantly seeing videos and pictures of children and animals (usually dogs) that make me think, "What on earth are those parents

thinking!" Videos of kids straddling or laying on dogs, or pictures of kids pulling on dogs and cats ears, faces and tails. Just the other day I saw a picture of a newborn baby sleeping on the belly of a dog that was laying on its back. I didn't even have words, I just had to shake my head in disbelief.

Although this may look cute and make for a seemingly adorable picture, this is very disrespectful and often frightening to the animal. Working at a veterinary clinic, I constantly see cats and dogs (again usually dogs) admitted for rabies bite quarantines due to situations that could've been completely avoided and often involving children. Surprisingly, most of the rabies quarantine patients are quite friendly and social. They were just put in situations that startled them or made them uncomfortable, causing them to bite or scratch.

I have 3 dogs and a 9-month-old daughter. As of now, she seems to gravitate mainly toward my Basset Hound Stanlee. He is a very submissive and docile dog and to this day, I've never even heard him growl. There's no doubt in my mind that my daughter could crawl all over him, pull his ears and have her way with him and he'd just lay there and take it. Even so, I would never allow her to do so (and trust me she tries!) When she pulls at his ears/skin she is immediately corrected and shown how to be gentle with him. Children need to learn the correct way to handle animals and it needs to start at a young age. To my daughter, Stanlee is just another stuffed animal toy that she can throw



around and have her way with. It is my responsibility to teach her how to act and respond to the animals. Even though she is under a year old, she is already learning what is ok and what is not ok to do with the dogs and cats.

We need to be teaching our children how to respect animals. And that goes for domesticated and wild animals. Yes, most of the time we know our pets would never bite or get aggressive but that's not the point. Kids need to learn that animals can be unpredictable and it's our job as parents to teach them how they should be handled. In my opinion it goes way beyond just being respectful to the animals. This will help kids learn valuable lessons in life.



The Unpredictable

Dr James Ziegler

An old saying about veterinary medicine is that the only thing that is predictable is that it is unpredictable. I am sure that this pertains to many areas of healthcare. While not always true, it certainly can be so at times.



This is a difficult thing for a client to comprehend. We do things on a regular basis with an expected outcome. Give a vaccine and all is okay. Spay a pet, and all is okay. Put a pet on a medication, and all is okay. Until it isn't. Give a vaccine and a pet has a reaction. Spay a pet and an incision becomes infected. Prescribe a medication and a pet has an adverse reaction to it. It all happens, and more. Of course, when it does happen the owner is understandably upset. No one wants their pet to suffer in any way, especially following a routine "benign" procedure.

So, how do things become unpredictable? Simply put, it is biology. I have always said that every living thing is its own unique biological system. It can react to anything in anyway it wants. We

can certainly predict how most pets will respond to a medication or procedure, but we cannot predict how all pets will respond. Common things happen commonly. Uncommon things are going to happen as well, no matter how uncommon they are. That is something we can never change. We can only deal with these situations the best we can.

We are fortunate that most of the things that go unexpectedly wrong are easy to deal with. They are minor inconveniences that can be resolved with no detriment to the pet. This is not to say that bad things cannot happen, because they do. They will. Serious things do happen. We cannot deny that fact.

It is always difficult when clients ask, "Is it safe?" The honest answer is yes, if your pet is not the one in ten thousand who will have an issue. The answer is no if it is the one. But we never know going into it who the one will be.

The bottom line is that you cannot be afraid of health care recommendations. As I say, "you have to boldly go forward." The fact is that most health care recommendations that are declined are based on cost rather than a concern for a negative outcome. And, of course, there is the fact that all of life is unpredictable. It is not just veterinary medicine. Every day we wake up expecting what the day will bring. For the most part, we get what we expected, but sometimes we don't.

That is just life, and we must deal with it. I would have to say that veterinary medicine is much more predictable than life in general is. That is a good thing.

Bottom line? Everything is predictable to a point. That is as specific as I can be.

How was your visit?



Life Without Dogs

Chandell Dain, CVT

Ever since I can remember I have had a dog in my life. It is my normal. Sometimes I forget that not everyone has a pet. I am often reminded of this by my mom. Growing up, she never had any pets. My grandparents never wanted any pets in the house. My mom and her sisters never had the experience growing up with a canine or feline partner in crime. That is just the way they preferred. To each their own.

When my mom and dad got together she had a bit of a culture shock. My dad is someone who has always had dogs. He had coon dogs, bear dogs, retrievers, herding dogs, and even a Pomeranian named Tanya. He would probably kill me for writing this in here, but Tanya was his favorite. She was also the dog he had when he first met my mom. She had to adjust to sharing space with Tanya. It took her a while, but she warmed up to her immensely. My mom learned to love that dog. She even had a hard time when Tanya passed away. That was all a new experience for her.



Fast forward a few years when I was three years old. My mom would have been perfectly content with never having a dog again after Tanya, but my dad had other plans. He wanted me to grow up with a puppy. I picked my very first puppy out of a box of free mutts our cousin had. That teeny tiny ball of fluff became my best friend. She was the runt. She was the only puppy that had her coloring in the box. She was unique. She was mine. She was my Taffy girl.

My mom fell in love with Taffy so fast. Granted, she would become super angry having to clean up after her (and my) messes, the constant chewing, and tripping over her walking from room to room. Taffy was with us for 15 years. If you ask my mom today, she would tell you Taffy was her favorite. She was the best dog. I was 18 years old and away from home for my freshman year of college in Stevens Point when Taffy left my life. I was in Geology when I felt my pocket vibrate and I saw 'Home' on the cell phone screen. After class I checked my voicemail and listened to my dad's voice tell me Taffy had passed on. I ran back to my dorm crying all the way. I couldn't believe it. I had to see her. I rushed to my car and drove straight home that night. I had experienced loss in my life, but this was the first time I felt the pain and emptiness it is to lose a pet. A best friend. A partner in crime. I didn't know life without her, and now I had to.

It was a year before we adopted Taylor, a border collie who had enough energy to power Lambeau Field on his own. He ran away after only a few months of having him. To this day we still do not know what happened to him and that is hard.

Another year passed, and against my parents' wishes I brought home Cubby. Cubby was a lab mix that turned into a behemoth of a dog. He topped out at 160lbs. He was my dad's best friend. My mom affectionately tolerated him. He passed away after only six short (too short) years. My dad was devastated. I was devastated. My mom won't admit it, but she was hurting too. After Cubby, my parents both agreed to no longer own dogs. I did not share that thought.



Long story short—we now have Mossy. My mom complains daily about Mossy's hair being all over the house, her constant licking, her leaning on us, and repeatedly tripping on Mossy's overabundance of toys and chews. However, I catch my mom talking to Mossy, telling her she loves her, and giving her pats. She loves how excited Mossy gets when she gets home. She appreciates it. We all do.



To me, a life without a dog isn't a full life. My mom still claims that she would have been fine without ever knowing what it was like to have a pet and to never own another dog. I think she is lying to herself. But, like I said to each their own. If you never know what it's like to love an animal with your whole heart you can't know what you are missing out on.

Old Cats and Dogs

Dr James Ziegler

Puppies and kittens need a certain level of care to get them started in life. The first year of vaccines, spay/neuter, etc. makes the first year or so not the most inexpensive. The middle years tend to plateau out. A pet's health is generally stable, and care becomes more of a maintenance issue. Then, the older years come. While many pets age well, it is a rare one who will not develop a problem (or problems) due to getting older. The list of things that can happen is extensive—



hormonal diseases, arthritis, cognitive changes, tumors, vision problems, heart disease, and dental disease to name a few. Pets are no different than people—aging brings changes, most of which are unwanted, but should be dealt with. Some people discard pets when they start having aging “issues”. Others have a soft spot and an affinity for the “geriatrics”. Personally, I hate it when pet owners make decisions based on age. I cannot tell you how often we

hear it— “Well, he is old, so I don’t want to do anything.” Age discrimination, pure and simple. I did not abandon my mom when she got old and had special needs. While I realize that the comparison is not the same, the concept is. Older pets are higher maintenance and need special care. Providing them the care that they need can prolong their life, give them a better quality of life, and enhance the human-animal bond. Seems to be a win-win for everyone.

Still, it comes with a price tag. Care is costly. Diagnostics are costly. Prescription diets and medications are costly. Even as a veterinarian, people would be a bit surprised if they knew how much I spend on my population of aging dogs. I am very aware of it, but I accept it as not only my responsibility to them, but a bit of a price tag on my enjoyment of them. It is worth it. Without my pets, life would take on a different meaning.

Because of circumstances, I have largely adopted young, high energy, herding breed dogs. I could always run them to a point of fatigue that managed their behavior. As I say, I tired dog is a good dog. However, getting older, the only tired one is me. One day my staff was teasing me and suggested that my next dog should be an old, fat, lazy Bichon. Maybe it will be. We play whatever role in life that we need to.

Old pets are special. Old people are special. Give them all the care and courtesy that they deserve.

See pages 13 & 14 for your pet’s age chart



The Value of the Physical Exam

Dr James Ziegler



Many clients do not appreciate the value of a physical exam. A physical exam entails, quite simply, examining the pet nose to tail. The goal is to detect any problems that an owner may be unaware of.

It is not uncommon to be doing an exam and not even have the owner realize it. We might be chatting away, discussing whatever while we are looking at the pet's teeth, eyes, and ears. Listening to the heart. Palpating the abdomen, feeling the lymph nodes, moving the joints, etc. I have often completed a physical exam only to have a client ask, "aren't you

going to examine him?" Because of this, I now often narrate my exam findings and subsequently document them on a report card. The obvious goal is to have a pet owner appreciate that we are doing something relevant.

We oddly get requests from clients to not do a physical exam. They might say, "I only want the rabies vaccine. I do not want an exam." Sorry. Every pet gets an exam. It is a standard of care that should not be compromised. Unless, of course, an angry cat or dog wants to maim and kill the next person who touches it. In that instance, we do an "abbreviated" exam.

REPORT CARD

If a category has not been checked-no examination or evaluation has been made.

Age: _____ Sex: _____ Weight: _____ BCS: _____ <input type="checkbox"/> Thin <input type="checkbox"/> Overweight _____ lbs Heart Rate: _____ (beats/min) Temperature: _____ (Normal 101.0 to 102.5) BP: _____	Canine Annual Exam _____ DHPP Vacc _____ Lyme Vacc _____ Bordetella Vacc _____ Rabies Vacc _____ Lepto Vacc _____ Fecal Exam _____ Heartworm/ADX Test _____ Dental Prophyl _____ Annual Wellness _____ Testing _____ Other: _____	Performed/Decline _____ _____ _____ _____ _____ _____ _____ _____ _____ _____	Feline Annual Exam _____ RCP Vacc _____ Rabies Vacc _____ FeLV Vacc _____ Fecal Exam _____ Dental Prophyl _____ Annual Wellness _____ Testing _____ FeLV/FIV Testing _____ Other: _____	Performed/Decline _____ _____ _____ _____ _____ _____ _____ _____ _____ _____
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1. Coat & Skin Dermatitis
 Normal Oily Itchy
 Parasites Scaly/Dry Matted
 Hair Loss Tumors Crust/Bumps
 Notes: _____

2. Eyes
 Appear Normal Cataract: L _____ R _____
 Discharge Nuclear Sclerosis
 Eye Lids Abnormal
 Infection/Conjunctivitis
 Notes: _____

3. Ears
 Appear Normal Excessive Hair
 Infected Excessive Wax
 Mites Clean/Pluck/Flush
 Inflamed
 Notes: _____

4. Nose & Throat
 Appear Normal Sneezing
 Nasal Discharge Inflamed Throat/Tonsils
 Notes: _____

5. Mouth, Teeth, Gums
 Appear Normal Tumors
 Broke/Loose Teeth Tartar Buildup
 Periodontal/Gum Disease
 Grade I, II, III, IV
 Notes: _____

6. Muscles/Skeletal
 Appear Normal Joint Problems
 Lameness Nail Problems
 Notes: _____

7. Heart
 Normal Abnormal Rhythm/Rate
 Murmur
 Notes: _____

8. Lungs
 Normal Coughing
 Abnormal Sound Congestion
 Wheezing
 Notes: _____

9. Nervous System
 Appears Normal Seizures
 Pain/Weakness Attitude/Alertness
 Notes: _____

10. Digestive System
 Appears Normal Palpation Normal
 Vomiting/Diarrhea Abnormal Mass
 Tense/Painful
 Notes: _____

11. Urogenital System
 Appears Normal Mammary Tumors
 Abnormal Urination Abnormal Testicles
 Genital Discharge Prostate Abnormal
 Notes: _____

12. Anal Sacs & Anal Area
 Appear Normal Abscessed
 Excessively Full Infected
 Expressed
 Notes: _____

13. Lymph Glands, Nodes
 Normal Abnormal/Enlarged
 Notes: _____

Evaluation & Recommendations:

Veterinarian Signature: _____ Client Signature: _____

So, what is the value of a physical exam? Our hope is that we find nothing wrong with the pet. It is a rare pet that we cannot find something wrong with—dental disease, an ear infection, some sort of lump or bump, a heart issue, a skin issue, and so on. What we find may or may not already be realized by the owner. What we find might be of minor importance or a major health issue. When a problem is identified, a determination then must be made as to what will happen next. Can the problem be monitored or are there next steps recommended to investigate further or manage or resolve the issue?

Out of our exam findings, recommendations can be made. Based on our recommendations, it is then up to the client to decide if they want to comply with those recommendations or not. It can go either way. The important thing is to make clients aware.

I had a case last year which illustrates all of this. A cat came in for a routine annual exam. Outwardly, the cat was fine. Palpation of the abdomen revealed a large spleen. A subsequent work up identified a malignancy of the spleen. The spleen was surgically removed, and today the cat is fine. If surgery had not been done, the pet would be dead. But it all happened because of the routine physical exam.

The physical exam seems like an easy, routine, almost mundane sort of thing. However, its importance cannot be emphasized enough. Without it, many pets would not be given the opportunity to have a problem addressed before it is too late to do anything to help.



Dr Don

Dr James Ziegler

Upon graduation from MTU in Houghton, I applied to graduate school in Madison. My credentials were weak, and I had no reason to be accepted into any graduate program. I wrote a letter to Dr Don, asking him to accept me into his research lab. I drove to Madison and met with him. He saw something in me the other than what my resume showed, and he accepted me into his research group.

I spent three years in his lab. In the end, I failed and disappointed him. In the end, I went to veterinary school. Since then, Dr Don has died of old age. If he could talk today, I would guess that he would conclude that I was one of his weakest students ever. I have always felt bad that I let him down.

But there are always lessons to be learned. Dr Don loved his students, but he also pushed them and disciplined them, as he did me. The work hours were long, the criticisms tough, and many nights I ended up talking to my parents in tears. They always supported me, as well as Dr Don, and encouraged me to hang in there.

Ultimately, I dropped out of graduate school and went to veterinary school. I can honestly say that all I learned in Dr Don's lab made veterinary school much easier. Had I not trained under him, veterinary school would have been more challenging. And as life progressed as a veterinarian, with all its hurdles, it was in a large part due to Dr Don that I overcame endless obstacles and challenges. He taught me how to be tough and how to overcome and, in the end, triumph.

People these days do not want to be pushed. In general, any adversity makes people crumble. Very few these days are willing to get knocked down, only to get up again to survive and succeed, all of their own free will. They do not respond to the challenge of their supervisor or mentor. I see it all the time. I cannot change the times that are. No one wants to hear about my experience and how I survived.

However, those that survive and rise above are also those who succeed. The rest just continue moving on in life at an unknown pace.

More, now than ever, I am glad for how Dr Don pushed and challenged me. I wish that I could thank him, but I cannot. Of course, you must have the mindset to respond to challenge, which only a select few have. I think that in some way, he knows that I did this.

We are all a product of our upbringing. We are all shaped by both the good and the bad influences in our lives. Sometimes, a bit of both are essential to becoming who we are today, and we need to be thankful for all of it.

thankful
→ & ←
grateful

How old is your cat in people years?

age	weight (1-20 lb)	
1	7	
2	13	adult
3	20	
4	26	
5	33	
6	40	
7	44	
8	48	
9	52	
10	56	
11	60	senior
12	64	
13	68	
14	72	
15	76	
16	80	
17	84	
18	88	
19	92	geriatric
20	96	
21	100	
22	104	
23	108	
24	112	
25	116	



Chart courtesy of Friedl, Metzger, DVM, DABVP



How old is your dog in people years?

age	weight				
	1-20	20-50	50-90	>90	
1	7	7	8	9	
2	13	14	16	18	
3	20	21	24	26	
4	26	27	31	34	adult
5	33	34	38	41	
6	40	42	45	49	
7	44	47	50	56	
8	48	51	55	64	senior
9	52	56	61	71	
10	56	60	66	78	
11	60	68	72	86	
12	64	69	77	93	
13	68	74	82	101	
14	72	78	88	108	
15	76	83	93	115	geriatric
16	80	87	99	123	
17	84	92	104	131	
18	88	96	109	139	
19	92	101	115		
20	96	105	120		
21	100	109	126		
22	104	113	130		
23	108	117			
24	112	120			
25	116	124			

Chart courtesy of Fred L. Metzger, DVM, DAIBVP





CALLING ALL DOGS
AND THEIR PEOPLE!

IT'S THAT TIME OF
YEAR AGAIN...

S.A.F.E.'S DOGTOBER WALK IN THE PARK!

OCTOBER 6TH, 2018 @ 10AM LOCATED AT
HATTEN PARK IN NEW LONDON, WI

PLEASE COME DOWN AND ENJOY A WALK AROUND THE
PARK WITH YOUR FURRY FRIENDS, ENTER RAFFLES, AND
EAT, ALL TO SUPPORT THE S.A.F.E. PROGRAM!



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