



Things we learn – or should learn – from our Pets Part III

Here we are with a beautiful Autumn Season to enjoy. This time of year always fills me with nostalgia, and as we close our series on things we learn – or should learn – from our pets I can't help but remember memories from my own pet experiences.

In veterinary school I was on 'treatment crew' which was really a gloried – but paid! – scrub position of grunt work around the teaching hospital during student vacations. During one of my tours of duty, I took care of a dog 'Scooter' a flat-coated retriever with a fractured spine. After meeting Scooter, I decided that if I were in a position to get a dog – it would be a flat-coated retriever.

Well, that next year, I saw on a bulletin board on campus a 2y old flat-coated retriever being offered to a good home. One thing built on another and "Rickie" became a member of the family! As many veterinary students may attest – veterinary school is really a full immersion program. Many hours are spent – studying, refining, learning and not to be left out – hours spent socializing with other veterinary students. While a student, it seems that all of us, born of the same mould, would bring our dogs everywhere with us! To class, to study centers and without a doubt to every vet school BBQ, party or gathering, no matter how formal! You might imagine what this kind of scene would look like. Frisbees, balls and BBQ with a pack of dogs co-mingling definitely provided for endless entertainment. It was the fall of my junior year that Rickie became a member of this pack – and started a pattern of companionship and camaraderie between a dog and pet owner.

Rickie was one of those 'special' pets that was so heavily imprinted upon me, that I could hardly move from one position to another, without her wondering if we were on the go again. She went everywhere with me during school, and once I

graduated – to the job, on vacation, and with me to my relatives homes. Rickie was also one of those dogs that people would go out of their way to comment on, "If my dog were that good, I'd take her with me too," or "she is always welcome here, she's such an easy keeper." Rickie was a fairly constant companion of mine throughout my early career as a veterinarian, and so inexplicably tied to me, that when I bump into co-workers from that time of my life, they invariably will start a sentence like so, "...remember that one time when Rickie..." Simply typing these thoughts conjure so many fond memories.

The one trait she had, that I think is singular in her ability to have made such an impression, is that she was so 'identified' with me. She was truly a dog who found comfort in her companionship. It made no never mind if it were cold, inclement, holiday or not, full fed, or craving of a snack –100% fulfilled if she was by my side. Her 'love language' was not performance based, it was not connected to status or gifts, nor was her loyalty attached to anything man-made or fiscally generated. In fact, her language was so simple: quality time with a loved one. There was nothing better for Rickie. There was no better lesson then this that she taught me.

I wonder, as we head into the holidays, if we will have moments of quality time with our own loved ones, in community and in their company, that might build the memories of a lifetime? Many blessings this holiday season. We'll join you again in 2014.

Sincerely,

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THE SURGEONS OF VSC



FEATURED MEDICAL CASE

VACUUM ASSISTED WOUND CLOSURE

Coco is a 2 year old female spayed Chesapeake Bay Retriever that presented to Veterinary Surgical Centers (VSC) for assessment of a large wound on the left thigh extending from the hip to the knee. 3-4 days prior to presentation Coco had fallen off of a wall and sustained a large laceration to the left thigh. The laceration was repaired the same day at an emergency veterinary hospital and Coco was discharged into her owner's care. 3 days after the laceration repair her owners noticed that the skin was turning black (Figure 1), areas of the incision were opening up, and large volumes of fluid were draining from the leg. Coco was rechecked at the emergency hospital and referred to VSC for evaluation. On presentation extensive skin necrosis/death was noted involving a significant portion of the lateral and cranial thigh and active drainage of large volumes pink/bloody fluid was noted. Subsequently, Coco underwent extensive surgical debridement of the wound (figure 2), packing of the wound with a special open cell foam (400-600µm pores) and application of a Vacuum Assisted Closure dressing (VAC) (figure 3). The VAC is a new type of dressing that is connected to a pump that provides continuous or intermittent suction to maintain negative pressure in the wound. Multiple pressure settings are possible but -125mmHg of continuous suction is currently considered the clinical standard. The VAC has multiple effects/benefits; the wound is completely covered, a sterile environment is maintained, the negative pressure provides continuous suction of fluid from the wound, and this negative pressure is proposed to increase wound contraction and vascularization, while decreasing edema and bacterial colonization.

A major benefit of the VAC dressing is its enhancement and speeding of granulation tissue formation. Multiple studies have documented and proven this effect and it is this speeding of granulation tissue formation that allows an earlier successful closure of the wound compared to other types of wound

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NOTABLE NEWS

WELCOME TO THE TEAM!

We'd like to extend a heartfelt welcome to Kathrina and Mary, the most recent additions to the VSCB team.

Kathrina graduated from UC Berkeley in the spring of 2013 with her Bachelor of Science in Molecular Environmental Biology. She also earned a minor in Global Poverty and Practice. She is on the pre-veterinary track, planning to apply to vet school in the summer of 2014.

Kathrina has loved animals from the beginning and has always wanted them to be a major part of her life. She recently adopted two adorable cats, a brother-sister pair, and loves having animals at home again. Her dog Oreo currently lives with her parents in London and is adjusting to life across the pond. Kathrina has been horseback riding for twelve years and spends a few days a week with Fletcher, the horse she has been riding and jumping for 4 years. In addition to her work at VSCB, Kathrina spends a few hours each week working with jumping spiders in the Rosenblum Lab at UC Berkeley. In her spare time, Kathrina also enjoys hiking, camping, reading, and swimming.

Oakland native Mary was extremely fortunate to find the career path of being an RVT. As a life-long animal lover, she finds professional and personal fulfillment in having the opportunity to help improve the lives of animal and their loving families. After attending Western Career College and passing the state board license exam, Mary spent seven years in general practice, during which time she developed a great interest in advanced surgery and anesthesia. She spent many years in a surgery practice, then tried her hand at internal medicine for year and a half, and happily returned to her true passion, surgery.

When she has a free moment or two, Mary can be found digging in the garden, bird watching, or just enjoying the company of her wonderful husband, kitty, and parrots.



DEDICATION TO IMPORTANT STAFF

There are times that seem to come up now and then – that seem to remind us that our relationships – at home and outside the home – help to shape who we are, help to share the aches and hardships of life and help to exalt in our achievements, all of them, small or large.

The Autumn season, the time of harvest, of gratitude and as a time of internal reflection, always seems to bring the what's important into focus, people – family, those with us, and those gone on, as well as colleagues who've touched our lives. This year, Veterinary Surgical Centers has had to sadly bid farewell to three special and exceptional individuals, Frank, Renee, and Christine, who have all been part of the VSCB team since its inception.

Frank Oliaro, who was one of our surgery technicians grew up in Santa Fe, New Mexico and earned his B.S. in Biology from University of New Mexico in 2006. He began working in the veterinary field as a necropsy technician for the New Mexico Department of Agriculture-Veterinary Diagnostic Services. Frank has always been interested in studying marine life and especially marine mammals, so in 2007 he moved to Monterey, CA to pursue graduate school. There he worked as a veterinary

assistant at a small animal clinic for several years before moving to San Francisco in 2009.

Frank has recently achieved his Masters degree in Biology at San Francisco State, and has since landed a research position at the Shed Aquarium in Chicago. Although we'll miss him, we're so happy to see Frank achieving his dreams.



...Featured Medical Case continued

dressings. Study of fluid removed from wounds undergoing negative pressure therapy have shown significantly higher concentrations of IL-8 and VEGF which attract neutrophils, stimulate angiogenesis (blood vessel growth) and promote wound healing.

Coco remained in the hospital for 3 days with the VAC dressing in place. The dressing does not need to be changed during that time (avoiding multiple sedations for bandage changes), but it must be constantly monitored to ensure that it is maintaining negative pressure. On the 4th day Coco was anesthetized and the VAC dressing removed. A healthy and dry granulation tissue bed was noted and no further skin necrosis was observed. Using a flank-fold skin flap the wound was closed surgically (figure 4) and a closed suction drain placed to eliminate any further fluid production from under the skin flap. Coco recovered well from her procedures and was discharged from the hospital the next day. Fluid production from the drain was minimal over the next few days following surgery and the drain was removed. Coco continued to heal well and the skin sutures were removed at 14 days post-op.

Coco is just one of many cases that have benefited greatly from the use of a vacuum assisted closure dressing. The VAC dressing has been implicated for use in multiple situations including highly suppurative/effusive wounds, to speed formation of granulation tissue within the wound and allow earlier wound closure/skin grafting, immobilization of skin grafts following free skin grafting, and to provide continued abdominal fluid drainage in cases of severe septic peritonitis.

VSC surgeons have extensive experience with the use of vacuum assisted closure dressings so please do not hesitate to contact us should you have any questions regarding this treatment modality.

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NEWSROOM FEATURES

CONGRATULATIONS ARE IN ORDER...

For the bright futures of Jessica Barrera, one of our senior technicians, and Adam Barron, who became Mr. and Mrs. Barron on August 17th, 2013. Jessie and Adam have been together for five years since the day they first met at a smoothie shop in Alameda, and had a beautiful wedding in the back yard of Jessie's family home in Vallejo. They love going to the movies and standup comedy shows together, and share their lives with their newest member of the family, a kitten they rescued named Marshmellow. All of us at VSC extend our heartfelt

congratulations to the young couple, and wish them the very best together.

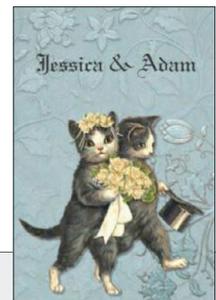


Figure 1



Figure 2



Figure 3



Figure 4

...Dedication continued

Renee Leo went to technician school in Fresno, graduating in 2007, and worked at a large and small animal practice in Fresno before moving to Berkeley. She is a licensed California RVT, has her Associates degree, and received the ACVMA's (Alameda County Veterinary Medical Association) "Outstanding Registered Veterinary Technician" award for 2011, and lives by the motto "My career is my passion."

Renee and her husband have recently expanded their family, adding their first child. Renee has left to take care of their family, and to learn the ropes of legal assisting to help support and grow her husband's law career. We're happy to see Renee step boldly into her next phase of life, and know she'll knock it out of the park!



Christine Hilliard, who had returned to us to be our Managing Systems Coordinator during the middle of last year after returning home to North Carolina for a brief period, couldn't deny her draw to return to her roots as a North Carolina equestrian, and to be around for her family.

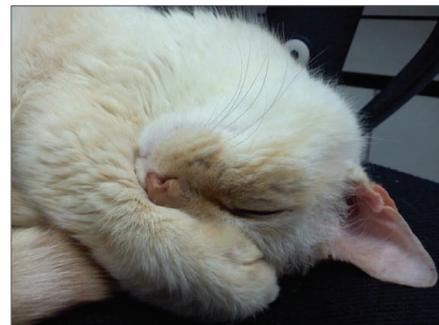
With a BA in Humanities from Warren Wilson College, she began her career in the veterinary field as a "good horse hand with a strong work ethic." She was generously trained by surgeons from the University of Georgia who founded Tryon Equine Hospital, a private referral surgical clinic deep in the horse country of Western North Carolina. Christine took advantage of the many learning opportunities present at a referral hospital: experienced and dedicated senior

technicians, diverse case load, emergent, critical and elective cases and exceptional clinicians. Hired as a "truck tech" she worked her way to hospital technician, then surgery and anesthetic nurse-ultimately reaching the level of nursing care manager, bringing so much to the table, both in technical skills, and as a leader, teacher, and motivator of people. Christine will be missed, but we know the country girls life is truly where she belongs, and will make her the happiest.

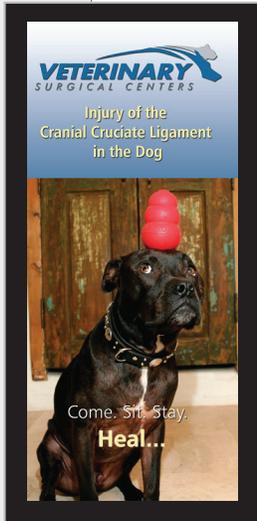


IN LOVING MEMORY OF...

"Calvin" Haburjak, our beloved six toed Siamese office cat at our Berkeley location was euthanized on Friday, August 26, 2013 after a battle with cancer. If Calvin were here today, he'd certainly thank Dr. Doering and the staff of BD&C for their help with his skin, which made his last days some of his most pain free. He was truly loved by all staff of VSC and PETS Referral center, who cared for him like family. Calvin will be remembered for his distinctive meow which could be recognized by anyone who had met the sweet boy (and from a long way away too!). Calvin's age wasn't known for certain, as he was a rescue, but as legend has it in some parts, he may have been nearly twenty five years old!



FEATURED BROCHURE

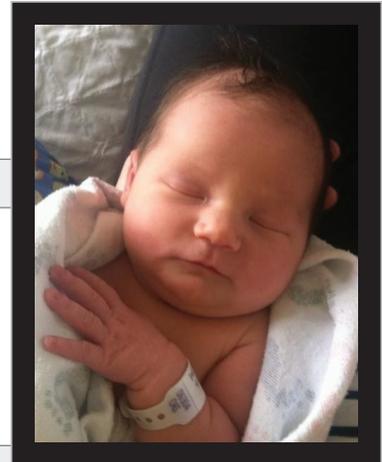


NEW! - INJURY OF THE CRANIAL CRUCIATE LIGAMENT IN THE DOG

This month's highlighted pamphlet is one of three brochures which we revamped in July this year, along with "The Knee," and "Minimally Invasive Veterinary Surgery." If you've never seen it, or haven't seen it since the changes, we are excited to have you take a look.

This brochure discusses the anatomy and injury of the CCL, as well as the traditional and minimally invasive repair options, and the post operative recovery.

This is an excellent tool to supplement the information you already provide your clients. The brochure is also a useful tool for your staff to achieve greater familiarity with these procedures as well as cultivating a common language to use with one another as well as with your clientele. This and all our brochures can be found and downloaded from our websites at www.fiberopticvet.com or www.vscdsurgerycenters.com. We are also happy to send you hard copies of this or any of our brochures.



This newsletter is dedicated to Lita Blaze Wettstein, who was born to Erin, our technician manager, and her husband Tobi on 9/12/13 at 2:53pm, weighing in at 8 lbs 3 oz, and measuring 21 inches long. Mom and baby are happy and healthy. Lita is the couple's first child. Veterinary Surgical Centers wishes Lita and her parents a long life full of happiness, health, and service to those causes they find worthy.

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