

## Animals as Performance Athletes—Part 3 of 3



### Letter from the Chief

By John J. Haburjak, DVM, Diplomate ACVS

This past week I was enjoying some didactic time sharing surgical concepts about canine osteosarcoma with our intern. It is interesting to me how in-depth, detailed and emotional discussions in the exam room can be regarding canine osteosarcoma. Indeed, canine osteosarcoma is the single consultation that can take an hour or more to negotiate all the intricacies with a pet owner(s). In some respects, and more than peculiar to me, is that well over 80% of exam room discussions with pet owners are non-medical, non-surgical and in most respects non-clinical. It is true, most of the time is spent on the emotional concerns, questions and ethical aspects of the treatment of canine osteosarcoma. For me, explaining the clinical part is pretty straightforward. In fact, the disease is so stereotypical, and sadly common, the clinical facts can tumble out in something close to eight minutes.

The fork in the road, and the ethical, emotional stumbling block for nearly every owner, is that once the word “amputation” is uttered, the conversation almost always takes on a different tone. Tears are common, denial also and nearly always a firm resolve to avoid amputation at any price, including the undeniable acute and chronic pain of the patient. These comments are in no way meant to be trivializing of the emotional avalanche the word “amputation” generally conjures, but rather a full-fledged empathic compassion. Having had to both consider, and perform an amputation on a beloved pet of my own, singularly it represents one of the most difficult decisions I’ve ever needed to make as a pet owner.

This personal struggle of my own, is where I try to build the case advocating for amputation. Somehow I need to break down the barriers that most people build around the idea amputation,

by showing that amputation is palliative, restorative, and in my experience, pets do not seem to have the same emotional attachment to their body parts as people do. Indeed, during one of my many consultations, I had an owner ask “how do you know they don’t have an emotional attachment to their body parts?” I answered by saying that the pet seemed to still love him after having been neutered – which, I pointed out, was an amputation with presumably more emotional significance than his front leg! The pet owner scheduled the amputation on the spot!

So, how does this all relate to animal athleticism? To this day I remember a particular pet owner coming in to pick up Phoenix, a large Rottweiler, post-operatively and just collapsing in emotional anguish when she saw her beloved pet hopping, ambulating on three legs. Honestly, it made nearly everyone involved well up with emotion right beside her. This was a tough day.

About a month later, this same pet owner came back by the hospital to see me. She was in the exam room alone, no Phoenix, and when I entered, she asked if I would go with her out to the parking lot. In the parking lot her husband and Phoenix were waiting for us and Phoenix’s mom said “I’d like you to see something.” Then she expertly flipped a Frisbee across the lot, and let Phoenix loose to run, jump and catch the Frisbee in mid-air. It was a sight that took my breath away. As a clinician, there is simply nothing more rewarding. Apparently, this was Phoenix’s favorite pastime, and she had been unable to perform at this level prior to having her leg removed. Phoenix, was truly an athlete!

Please enjoy these remaining days of 2016, and our hope for you, like many of our pets, is to be able to view the glass as always nearly full!

[jhaburjak@vscdsurgerycenters.com](mailto:jhaburjak@vscdsurgerycenters.com)  
925.215.8460

## NOTABLE NEWS

### VSC celebrates ten years with new branding

Although it seems like just yesterday, Dr. Haburjak started Veterinary Surgical Centers in 2006, and after a ten year journey we’ve decided it’s time to give our logo a fresh new look.



The new logo celebrates the journey thus far, casts us off into the next ten years, presents our “VSC” acronym in an easily identifiable way, represents the Greater Bay Area that we serve, and of course, we think it looks pretty sharp!

You will begin to see the new logo rolled out in early 2017, and although the logo has changed, we are still the same company you’ve come to know, and you can continue to expect the highest level of patient care and client service.

Lastly, in the spirit of conservation, you will continue to see some materials with our legacy logo, until that stock is depleted.

## WHAT CAN VSC OFFER YOUR FACILITY?

- Mobile veterinary surgical services performed at your facility by skilled and experienced surgeons with little impact on your daily operations or your staff. Most surgeries (including TPLO) are completed in less than two hours.
- Surgical services are available 24 hours a day by fully trained and experienced veterinary surgeons. Residents will not be performing surgery on your referrals.
- Our Board-certified VSC surgeons are available 7 days a week for direct contact consultation, electronic case and radiographic case consultation, other case support and for scheduling referral and mobile surgery.
- In addition to surgical services, we also offer advanced consultation and diagnostic services.
- VSC can provide on-site continuing education lectures personalized to the needs of your staff.
- We're happy to provide complimentary informational brochures for your internal use and for distribution to clients.

925-201-3400

510-595-4600

[info@vscdsurgerycenters.com](mailto:info@vscdsurgerycenters.com)

## THE SURGEONS OF VSC



John J.  
Haburjak



Andrew M.  
Grange



Tracy N.  
Frey

## Featured Medical Case

# Minimally invasive fracture fixation

By Andrew Grange BSc BVetMed Diplomate ACVS



Veterinary Surgical Centers is now pleased to be able to offer minimally invasive fracture fixation with the Biomedtrix Interlocking Nail (ILN).

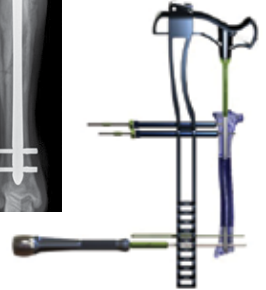
The interlocking nail features an hourglass shaped intramedullary nail that is locked to the bone using 2-4 custom cut bolts. The ILN can be placed minimally invasively requiring only small incisions for nail and bolt insertion, significantly reducing peri-operative morbidity,

and improving patient comfort and time to weight bearing. Biomechanically the ILN is also a significantly stronger fixation method than bone plates/screws and external skeletal fixation since the implant is placed along the neutral axis of the bone. This leads to faster healing times and a lower complication rate. The ILN system is currently only commercially available for medium-large breed dogs.

Veterinary Surgical Centers in conjunction with Michigan State University (MSU) are working together to develop and trial a mini-ILN system for use with cats and small dogs. Veterinary Surgical Centers is the only surgical specialist outside of MSU with this new mini-ILN system, and we are currently looking for cases to be part of this study.



Fractured tibia repaired with Interlocking Nail.



The ILN is suitable for most diaphyseal and metaphyseal fractures of the humerus, femur, or tibia. VSC/MSU are seeking feline patients with diaphyseal or metaphyseal fractures of the femur or tibia for inclusion in this study. If suitable for study inclusion, patients will receive a generous contribution toward the cost of treatment from VSC and will become part of a study due to be published in 2017.

If you have a fracture patient that you think may be suitable (canine or feline) please contact one of our surgeons by phone at 510-548-6684 or via email (Dr Andrew Grange [agrange@vscdsurgerycenters.com](mailto:agrange@vscdsurgerycenters.com)) or Dr John Haburjak ([jhaburjak@vscdsurgerycenters.com](mailto:jhaburjak@vscdsurgerycenters.com)).

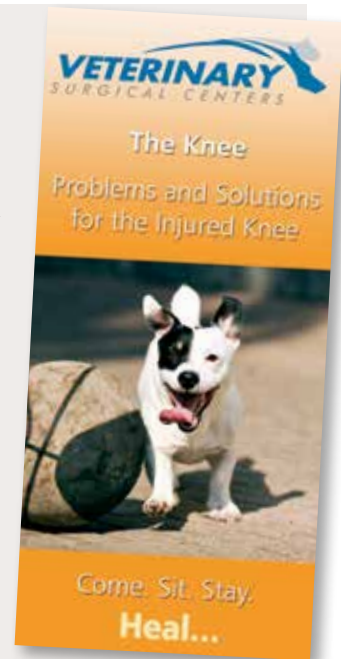
[agrange@vscdsurgerycenters.com](mailto:agrange@vscdsurgerycenters.com)

## FEATURED BROCHURE

### The Knee

This month's highlighted pamphlet features surgical conditions of the knee. The information is broadly split between cranial cruciate ligament injury and patella luxation. CCL rupture is summarized with a review of passive and functional repairs (see our brochure dedicated solely to CCL injury for more details). The remainder of the content describes symptoms, grading and diagnosis of luxating patellae as well as common surgical options for repair. Finally, it concludes with discussion of multiple conditions (CCL tears and luxating patella) and anticipated surgical recovery.

This is an excellent tool to supplement the information you already provide your clients. The brochure can also help your staff achieve greater familiarity with these procedures as well as cultivate a common language to use with one another and your clients. This and other brochures can be found and downloaded from our website at [www.fiberopticvet.com](http://www.fiberopticvet.com) or [www.vscdsurgerycenters.com](http://www.vscdsurgerycenters.com). Simply access the appropriate pamphlet under "disease conditions" on the home page. For complimentary copies of any of our brochures or business cards email us at [contact@vscdsurgerycenters.com](mailto:contact@vscdsurgerycenters.com).



# The Season for Gratitude

VSC believes in the importance of giving back to the community and helping those in need, so each year we make donations to several 501(c)(3) non-profit organizations. We'd also like to give special thanks to our staff for their individual contributions included with our company donations.

We encourage you to learn more about this year's recipients and help contribute to those causes you find worthy.



## ACVS Foundation

[acvs.org/Foundation](http://acvs.org/Foundation)

Devoted to the advancement of surgical care of all animals through funding of educational and research opportunities for veterinary surgical residents and board certified veterinary surgeons.



## American Diabetes Association (Tour de Cure)

[tour.diabetes.org](http://tour.diabetes.org)

Raising awareness. Raising Funds. To prevent and cure diabetes.



## Food Bank of Contra Costa & Solano

[foodbankccs.org](http://foodbankccs.org)

Distributes food directly to low-income people at community sites and makes food available for other nonprofit organizations serving the ill, needy and children.



## Kars 4 Kids

[kars4kids.org](http://kars4kids.org)

A national organization dedicated to addressing the educational, material, emotional and spiritual needs of Jewish children and their families.



## Lacuna Loft

[lacunaloft.org](http://lacunaloft.org)

Encourages, empowers, and connects young adult cancer survivors and caregivers around the world, 24/7.



PET AND WILDLIFE FUND

## Montclair Pet and Wildlife Fund

[petandwildlifefund.org](http://petandwildlifefund.org)

Provides medical care to animals in need.



## NorCal Aids Cycle

[norcalaidscycle.org](http://norcalaidscycle.org)

Supports organizations throughout Northern California, with an emphasis on the Greater Sacramento Valley, that are working to end the HIV/AIDS pandemic and care for those living with and affected by HIV/AIDS in our region.



## Shepherd's Gate

[shepherdsgate.org](http://shepherdsgate.org)

A Christian nonprofit on a mission to free women and children from the destructive cycles of homelessness, addiction and abuse.



## Veterinary Care Foundation

[vetcarefoundation.org](http://vetcarefoundation.org)

Helps veterinary practices fund their discounted and no-charge cases.

VSCD Business Office  
25-A Crescent Dr. #255  
Pleasant Hill, CA 94523



This newsletter is dedicated to Isaac Thomas Haburjak, the newest addition to the family of VSC's founder/CEO Dr. John Haburjak and his wife Aimee. Isaac is the couples' fourth child, and second son. Isaac was born at 11:24pm on August 29, weighing 7lbs 12oz, and measuring 21.25" long. All of us at Veterinary Surgical Centers couldn't be happier for their growing family and wish Isaac and his parents a long life full of happiness, health, and service to those causes they find worthy.

## Medical boarding available locally at IronHorse VetCare

Short- and long-term boarding options for patients needing nursing care or procedural care while pet owners are out of town or temporarily unable to administer medications or perform the requirements necessary for post-operative care is available at IronHorse VetCare. Service include:

- Daily medications, special diets, special monitoring parameters
- Diabetics: insulin care, curve assessment
- Recumbency, bladder care, passive rom: arthritis, post-op ivdd, poly-trauma
- Complex wound care: VAC, dressing changes, transportation for Hyperbaric o2
- Post-operative: orthopedic restriction, sedatives, leashed and chaperoned during exercise restriction, cage-less confinement available
- Seizure watch: medication administration
- 24/7/365 environment with trained professionals and para-professional staff available at all times
- Pick-up and drop-off 24 hours a day
- Tier-level pricing – based on care necessary
- Pricing advantages for patients under our direct medical/surgical care
- Separate area available for medical boarding from hospitalized patients

To schedule an evaluation and to discuss costs, please call 925-556-1234



IRONHORSE  
VETCARE