



## Things we learn – or should learn – from our Pets Part I

This past weekend, my wife Aimee and I took our three little ones up to the snow. Although our family is admittedly more 'ocean' than 'mountain' we've always enjoyed our trips to Tahoe.

This most recent trip did, however, carry with it some extra challenges. First, getting over Donner Pass without four-wheel drive and in a mini van, in the middle of 6 inches of falling snow was not going to happen. Chains to the rescue (!), all the while my three year old wondering why our tires – with the chains – were 'in-jail'...were they 'bad'? Doesn't it seem to take forever to drive 10miles with chains on?

Second, was the fact that our pet sitter cancelled on us at the very last moment, and we had to traipse up the summit with a new puppy "Poppy" and our Japanese chin "Addison" in tow. If not for a friend who bailed us out, my wife shared that we would have had to make room for the rabbit as well! Well, you'd think these dogs would love the snow? Not so much. Our Cavalier puppy seemed to get it figured out in a day or two, but the Japanese chin wasn't so adept. Our family counted only two 'pees' and one 'poo-poo' the whole 3 ½ days we were there! Addison enjoyed the walks, the cold didn't seem to bother her, but the absence of grass, and the concept of snow was simple geometry her mind could not reconcile. I guess this gives 'travelers constipation' an entirely new meaning!

One memory I have of the trip that seemed to trigger something in me, was of a Golden retriever that accompanied his owner to a cross country trail. We had taken our family to the Tahoe City Golf Course and Club, which converts the grounds into a sledding hill and groomed trails on the snow covered greens for cross country skiing. Aimee took our oldest around to ski, while I pulled a double-wide sled with our two youngest around the footpath – I watched as this Golden ran,

charged, played, and chased a fetching dummy around following his owner on the ski trail. Watching a full-coated, feathered retriever – actually retrieve and work, is truly a beautiful sight – one that I do not ever tire of witnessing. Working dogs, agility dogs, and service dogs are simply amazing to me.

The idea that seemed to settle in to me as I chugged around the footpath – with calls to go faster – was actually beyond the magnificence of a retriever actually retrieving in the snow. What came up is the notion that I was watching pure joy, and I think you would agree that this dog was pure joy . He was joy, he was gratitude, he did not seem to care what car the owner drove, what kind of skis he used, what gear he wore, or what lodge they were in. He really didn't even care that he was not at Squaw Valley, but rather a local municipal golf course. What myself, Ian and Emery seemed to be witnessing was a living being enjoying absolutely everything about the moment in which he was in. No cares, no worries and gratitude for being brought along – rather than left behind – and without commentary on the location. I wonder? When was the last time I felt like that?

It was here, with hat, gloves, and sled that I decided that I would dedicate the 2013 newsletter to "Things we learn – or should learn – from our Pets"

We hope you enjoy these next installments and find something in these ideas that resonate with you as well.

Sincerely,

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## CONTINUE TO EXPECT...

Direct contact with a VSC surgeon 7 days a week for consultation, case support and for scheduling referral and mobile surgery.

(925-201-3400 or 510-595-4600)

Electronic case and radiographic case consultation 7 days a week.

info@vscdsurgerycenters.com

24 hour/day surgery by a completely trained veterinary surgeon. Residents will not be performing surgery on your referrals.

Mobile veterinary surgical services by a skilled and experienced surgeon with 'low-impact' on your daily staff and procedural operations.

Most surgeries (including TPLO) are performed in less than 2 hours.

## THE SURGEONS OF VSC



John J. Haburjak

Andrew M. Grange

Erin R. Paster

## FEATURED MEDICAL CASE

### CANINE HIP DYSPLASIA AND TOTAL HIP REPLACEMENT

Hip arthritis, just like in humans, can be a condition that develops slowly throughout life and is often attributed to old age. Unlike humans though, an abnormality in the development of the hip joint in dogs (hip dysplasia) is an extremely prevalent condition that can cause crippling pain and lameness in very young dogs. Some dogs can be so severely affected by this condition that they suffer from severe joint laxity and secondary arthritis at a very young age necessitating early intervention and treatment. There is a broad range in the severity of hip dysplasia that can be seen. In severe cases the condition can be easily diagnosed with a simple pelvic radiograph. For mild to moderately affected dogs this may not be a sensitive enough. For these dogs we combine the standard pelvic radiographic view with compression and distraction views (PennHip) to determine the risk for future arthritis in the individual patient. This can be performed and determined as young as 16 weeks of age. This is important if an owner is considering breeding from the animal, or if the animal is a good candidate for a JPS procedure (see later) that must be performed before the dog reaches 20 weeks of age, or TPO.

"Molly," a 3 year old female spayed Labrador Retriever presented to us because her owners were concerned that she had always had a strange hind limb gait and had "slowed down" recently. On examination Molly exhibited a significant bilateral hind limb lameness with severe pain on extension of both hips. X-rays were taken (figure 1) and showed that Molly was suffering from severe bilateral hip dysplasia. There are multiple different treatment options for dogs with hip dysplasia but the outcome with each of these options is very much dependent on the severity and stage of the disease process. Young dogs (12-20 weeks old) can be treated with a JPS (Juvenile Pubic Symphysiodesis). This is a procedure that is designed to change and improve the conformation of the hip joint (as the patient continues to grow) to provide more support to the

## SUMMARY OF SERVICE OFFERINGS

### WHAT CAN VSCD OFFER YOUR FACILITY?

Board-certified surgical expertise

Receiving referrals for advanced consultation, diagnostic and surgical services

Providing surgical services at your facility with minimal impact on your daily operations and resources

Offering telephone or electronic (email) consultations

Giving on-site continuing education lectures personalized to the needs of your staff

Providing complimentary informational brochures and pamphlets for use internally and for clients

## NEWSROOM FEATURES

### VSC 2012 Holiday PAAAAAR-TAY!!!

We'd like to thank everyone who joined us this last fall in celebration of the 2012 holiday season. We sincerely enjoyed having you all there. To end 2012 with a bang, our staff, as well as friends and family came together to celebrate the holidays at Piatti Ristorante Bar & Grill. Everyone had a blast, with excellent food, drink, and service. We reminisced on the fond memories of the past year, shared stories, laughter, and Santa even made sure to drop off some prezies for all the good boys and girls of VSC. Check out pics of the festivities on our facebook page, [facebook.com/veterinarsurgicalcenters](http://facebook.com/veterinarsurgicalcenters).



**VETERINARY**  
SURGICAL CENTERS

Holiday Party

@

Piatti's

(November 17, 2012)



### ...Featured Medical Case continued

femoral head. If the patient is older than 20 weeks and has no signs of radiographic or arthroscopic hip arthritis they can be considered for a Triple or Double Pelvic Osteotomy (TPO/DPO). This procedure provides support to the hip joint by rotating the acetabulum outward to increase its capture of the femoral head and decrease laxity of the joint.

Due to the severity of Molly's hip disease and the secondary arthritic changes present, Molly was not a candidate for either of these two procedures. For dogs with this degree of pathology there are two options: Femoral Head and Neck Excision (also referred to as Femoral Head Ostectomy) or Total Hip Replacement (THR). Just like in humans total hip replacement has been developed over many years and refined especially for dogs. In recent years a vast amount of development and research has been performed to develop a THR system for all sizes of dogs and instrumentation/implants now exist even for very small dogs and even cats. With increased training and certification of specialist surgeons THR has now become a commonly offered treatment for these pets. Molly's owners were keen to give her the best possible chance of a full recovery and so opted to pursue a THR for her. There are three types of THR, one where the implants are cemented into the bone (cemented), one where the implants are press fit into the bone (cementless), and one where a mixture of components are used (Hybrid THR). Molly was a good candidate for a cementless THR and the surgery was performed (Figure 2). Molly recovered well from the procedure and was up and weight bearing on the leg within a few days of surgery. Molly has continued to make great progress since her surgery. We rechecked with her at 6 weeks post-surgery and she continues to use the leg well and is thoroughly enjoying her new lease on life.

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Figure 1



Figure 2



Figure 3

## NOTABLE NEWS

### WELCOME TO THE ACVS!

We'd like to extend a heartfelt congratulations to our staff surgeon from the U.K. Dr. Andrew Grange, and to a good friend of the VSC family, Dr. Tracy Frey of VCA North Cost Animal Hospital in the San Diego area. Both Andrew and Tracy passed their surgical boards and each officially became a Diplomat of the American College of Veterinary Surgeons this winter! VSCD is confident that they will continue to bring professionalism, surgical skill, compassion, and expertise to our industry and communities.



### WELCOME TO VSCD!

VSCD excitedly welcomes its newest team members Tracy, Lindsey, and Erica (aka Cricket), to the family! Cricket comes to us with over 20 years of experience in the veterinary field. Lindsey is a Registered Veterinary Technician, and Tracy is Licensed Veterinary Technician from Nevada, and both bring over 5 years of industry experience.

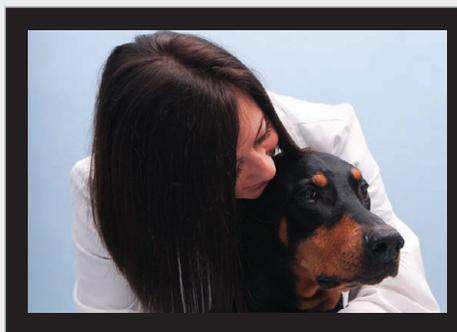


patient recover more quickly after intense hospitalization), hospice/end of life care, and in-home euthanasia. Bridge is equally a service to you, the referring veterinarian, and is meant to be an extension of your practice and the care that you are able to offer your clients and patients. Bridge is not intended to be a replacement or substitute for your patient's general care; this service is structured on a referral only basis with the ultimate goal of providing ways to improve the quality of life for your patients and their owners.

A transitional care or hospice intake entails a two hour in-home consultation. During this time, medical records are reviewed, client goals are thoroughly explored and discussed, baseline Quality of Life and Pain Scales are established identifying areas of increased need, there is extensive

## PROFESSIONAL INTEREST ARTICLE

### BRIDGE VETERINARY SERVICES: An in-home hospice service for pets offered by Dr. Shea Cox through PETS Referral Center



Dr. Cox graduated from Michigan State University in 2001 and her 12-year veterinary career has been spent solely in an emergency and critical care setting. Life prior to veterinary medicine involved a career as a Registered Nurse, where she

was first exposed to the concepts of hospice care in the human medical field. She has worked in areas of home health care, transitional care, and hospice environments, giving her a unique understanding of this service and its importance to the entire family unit. Dr. Cox holds an executive committee position on the board of directors for the American Association of Human Animal Bond Veterinarians. She is also an active member with the International Association of Animal Hospice and Palliative Care as well as the Nikki Hospice Foundation for Pets, and is currently obtaining her Veterinary Pain Practitioner certification. One of Dr. Cox's personal missions is the advancement of these areas of care in the field of veterinary medicine.

Bridge was officially launched in September 2012, and since this time, has helped nearly 100 clients with their pet's end of life needs. The service encompasses 3 areas of in-home care: transitional care (short term care designed to help your

**PETS REFERRAL CENTER**  
Your connection from hospital to home

**Bridge Veterinary Services**

**Transitional Care**  
In-home assessment during recovery  
Pain management  
Nutrition counseling  
Wound management  
Feeding and chest tube care  
Indwelling urinary catheter care  
Physical therapy and active rehabilitation  
Environmental assessment  
Continued collaborative care with your primary veterinarian

**Hospice**  
Gain maximum quality of life at home until a natural death ensues  
Ongoing pain management  
Nutrition counseling  
Nursing care education  
Environmental assessment  
Grief counseling and support  
Human-animal bond advocate  
Continued collaborative care with your primary veterinarian

**End of Life**  
Consultation- *Is the time right?*  
Facilitating end of life decisions  
Pre-euthanasia sedation offered  
Compassionate in-home euthanasia  
Transportation for burial or cremation, if elected  
Notification of your family veterinarian

Bridge Veterinary Services  
Transitional Care | Hospice | End of Life

## NEWSOOM FEATURE

...Professional Interest Article continued

discussion and education of the disease process and expected clinical course, home care is demonstrated and reinforced (such as proper skin care or SQF administration), and the pet's environment is assessed inside and out for any challenges. A medical record is then faxed detailing the hospice plan. Dr. Cox is available at all times to speak with you regarding your patient's plan of care, and ensures that care is a collaborative effort between the owner, herself, and you, the primary care veterinarian.

For in-home euthanasia, the owner and pet has a dedicated three hour appointment to allow as much time as needed saying goodbye and continue the grieving process. Multimodal anesthesia is used prior to euthanasia, allowing for a completely peaceful experience. You will also be notified by a faxed medical record following a pet's passing.

Dr. Cox is available Monday-Friday at all times, and on weekends by appointment. You can visit the Bridge website for more information regarding her experience, contact information, services offered, and costs at [www.bridgevs.com](http://www.bridgevs.com).



### CONGRATULATIONS TO VSC'S NEWEST MOTHER AND MOTHER TO BE!!!

Nora Elise Alejo was born to Renee, our most senior technician, and her husband Rudy on 3/3/13 at 1:22am, weighing 6 lbs 9 oz, and measuring 19 inches long. Mom and baby are happy and healthy, and the Alejo family was quoted as saying "What an amazing little being; we are so in love."



Serena, our Tech Manager, and her husband Prasad are expecting their newest member of the family in June. Although we will sincerely miss Renee and Serena, who will certainly want to take some time off for maternity leave, we couldn't be more excited for both of them!

## RESOURCE CORNER

[oakland.athletics.mlb.com/oak/ticketing/dogday.jsp](http://oakland.athletics.mlb.com/oak/ticketing/dogday.jsp)

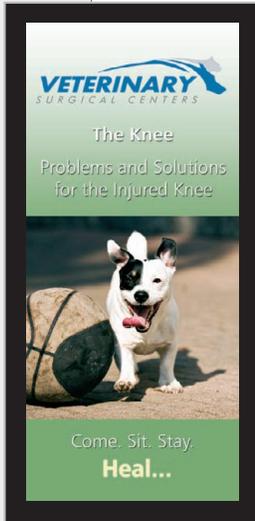
The A's will host their 8th Annual Dog Day at the Park, presented by Bio Spot, AvoDerm & Nylabone on Friday, June 28 when the A's take on the St. Louis Cardinals. Dogs and their owners can enjoy the pregame "Pup Rally" in the parking lot where they will receive samples from Bio Spot, AvoDerm & Nylabone. After the "Pup Rally," Dog Day participants will march around the warning track to the field in the "Pup Parade" before taking their seats for the game. **Remember, all participants need a special event ticket which will be available on the webpage listed above in the coming weeks. Regular game tickets do not permit admission of dogs.** For the 2013 event, \$5 from each dog ticket purchased will be donated to Dogs 4 Diabetics & The Animal Rescue Foundation (ARF).



[www.fiberopticvet.com](http://www.fiberopticvet.com)

Come visit our minimally invasive veterinary surgery companion site, and while you're there check out the "Resources - For Pet Owners" page where pet owners can take advantage of a limited time web promotion. This promotion makes it easier than ever for pet owners to discover the minimally invasive surgical techniques we can offer them as alternatives to traditional "open approaches."

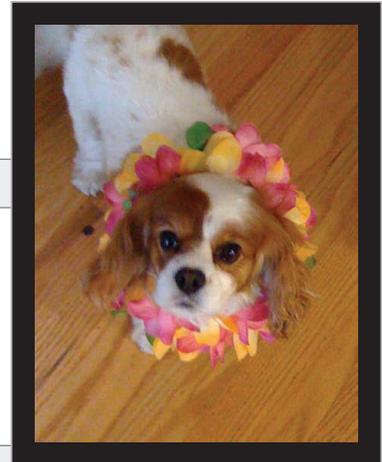
FEATURED BROCHURE



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 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 other brochures can be found at and downloaded from our website at [www.fiberopticvet.com](http://www.fiberopticvet.com) or [www.vscdsurgerycenters.com](http://www.vscdsurgerycenters.com).



This newsletter is dedicated to "Noelle" Haburjak. Noelle, the Cavalier King Charles Spaniel was a beloved family member of the Haburjak family. Noelle passed on at ten years of age. She became part of the family ten years ago as a Christmas gift for Dr. Haburjak's wife Aimee, and spent her full life bringing cherished memories to her family who will always have a fond place for her in their hearts.

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