



# VETERINARY

SURGICAL CENTERS OF THE DELTA

## ***Introduction to VSCD:***

We are Veterinary Surgical Centers of the Delta, a dedicated, professional and compassionate team of veterinary surgeons and paraprofessionals, partnering with pet owners, family veterinarians and other specialists to bring unparalleled advanced surgical services to the pets of the Bay Area.

***We believe in the dignity and value that animals add to our lives***

***We believe in upholding the unique and cherished bond between pet, owner and family veterinarian***

***We believe that both referring veterinarians and pet owners should be able to meet with us, face-to-face, before allowing their pet to have surgery with us***

***We insist upon applying these same values to ourselves, our own pets, and the pets entrusted to our care***

***We honor the opportunity to share our services with you***

VSCD provides on-site and mobile surgical services throughout the San Francisco Bay Area. We help pet owners and referring veterinarians make well-informed decisions by providing thorough diagnostics, education and innovative surgical solutions. As importantly, we provide proactive, timely and accurate communication to the clients we serve.

But what makes us different?

***Customization. Communication.  
Consistency. Commitment.***

We acknowledge that you have choices for obtaining advanced surgical services and we take seriously the trust and faith you place in us when caring for your patients. We know that you have a choice and we are confident that our personalities and services will encourage you to continue utilizing VSCD once you give us a try. Whether providing on-site or mobile services,

we believe we have the experience and background to give you exactly what you need. Should you desire retention of primary patient care and oversight of case management our mobile services should accommodate you. If your preference is to refer advanced surgical cases, you can feel confident that we can manage them thoroughly at one of our on-site facilities. Whenever possible we will personalize our service so that you, your clients and your staff experience the least impact and greatest benefit from our services. Ancillary services such as electronic radiograph consultation, pre-medication and anesthetic protocol recommendations, informational materials and mobile continuing education lectures ensure that you and your staff receive precisely what you want from VSCD.

This customization extends to our communication as well. Our entire staff makes available phone numbers and email contacts so that you can reach us for advice, information and consultation at any time. Our surgeons are available 24/7 through our phone menu to provide emergency advice or surgical services. Mobile surgeries are easily scheduled by this method as well. Our website hosts a number of disease condition brochures and a wealth of other information for your staff and your clientele.

We will always honor our agreements to you by rigorously maintaining superior quality surgical services on an ongoing basis throughout the year. We strive to exceed your expectations by providing exceptional value to you and your staff, to your clients and to your patients. We encourage and embrace regular feedback and survey of our service offerings. From the treatment room to the operating room and back to the park, hiking trail or catnip can, VSCD will be there for you.

***High-tech, high touch: the VSCD promise.***



***January 2009 Newsletter***

## 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

## NOTABLE NEWS

Heartfelt congratulations to Dr. Kimberly Carlson and Dr. Heather Towle for taking and passing surgical boards and becoming official diplomats of the American College of Veterinary Surgeons this last spring! VSCD is confident that they will each continue to bring professionalism, surgical skill, compassion and expertise to our industry and our community.



**Kansas State University  
College of Veterinary Medicine**

Dr. Towle will be accepting a temporary, part-time position as a surgical instructor at Kansas State University. While she will be missed, this is an excellent opportunity for her to challenge herself, to grow professionally, and to contribute to veterinary medicine. We look forward to her continued service through regular visits to the Bay Area throughout the year.

## MEET OUR SURGEONS

*John J. Haburjak • Kimberly Carlson • Heather Towle*



John J. Haburjak graduated from UC Davis Veterinary School in 1993 and enjoyed general practice in Northern California for 5 years before returning to academics to complete a combined surgical residency in San Diego and the University of Illinois. A Diplomate of the American College of Veterinary Surgeons, Dr. Haburjak focuses on orthopedic trauma and disorders of the carpus. Additional surgical interests include surgical oncologic procedures of the face, head and neck, corrective orthopedic procedures and spinal neurosurgery. His hobbies include SCUBA diving, Oakland A's baseball, road cycling and cooking. He shares his life with his wife Aimee (also a veterinarian), daughter Eva, Siamese cross cat, Calvin, and Cavalier King Charles Spaniel, Noelle.



Kimberly Carlson graduated from the University of Illinois in 2001, completed a rotating internship in small animal medicine and surgery at the Animal Medical Center of New York, and a surgical internship at the Dallas Veterinary Surgical Center. Her surgical residency was completed at Tufts University Cummings School of Veterinary Medicine before finding Northern California as her home. Her clinical interests include orthopedic surgeries such as the tibial tuberosity advancement, tibial plateau leveling osteotomy, triple pelvic osteotomy and total hip replacement, as well as neurosurgery and urogenital surgery. Dr. Carlson's personal interests include SCUBA diving, jogging and weight training. She is an avid and knowledgeable collector of antique and vintage movie posters, particularly film noir and science fiction. She has a special love for German Shepherds and lives with one, Rayne, as well as Jax, a pit/lab cross, four cats, Butch, Jaques, Buddy and Mac and, lastly, a new husband, Greg, who is resigned to his status in the pecking order.



Heather Towle graduated from Purdue University in 2003 before joining the University of Illinois for a Small Animal Medicine and Surgery Internship. She returned to Purdue to complete a Small Animal Surgical Residency. Her research interests include congenital orthopedic deformities and joint mobility enhancing diet with surgical interests in thoracic surgery, angular limb deformity correction, soft tissue reconstruction surgery and applications of surgical stenting. Her hobbies include running, walking with her Golden Retriever, Alexis, and reading. She also shares a household with her cat, Bug.

# FEATURED MEDICAL CASE

## JERRY LEARNS TO WALK AGAIN!

In early April 2008 “Jerry,” a 12-year-old male neutered Domestic Short Hair (Figure 1), presented to Veterinary Surgical Centers of the Delta at VetCare for evaluation of inability to walk.

Physical examination of Jerry revealed a normothermic patient with good femoral pulses bilaterally, an easily expressible urinary bladder, and a mild left systolic heart murmur. Neurologic evaluation of reflexes revealed decreased withdrawal reflexes, decreased sciatic and femoral reflexes, decreased tail and anal tone. Jerry had superficial pain sensation with no motor function in either hindlimb. Based upon these findings, neurologic lesion localization was L4-S1 myelopathy. No obvious orthopedic abnormalities were detected. Differential diagnosis at this time included trauma (vertebral fracture), intervertebral disc disease, neoplasia, fibrocartilaginous emboli (FCE), and inflammatory/infectious etiologies. Minimum data base including routine blood work, U/A and radiographs found no evidence of metabolic, orthopedic or traumatic etiologies.

At this time, we elected to perform an MRI, and a type I ventral, right-sided intervertebral disc herniation was discovered at L5-L6 on cross-sectional images. (Figure 2 and 3 –see arrows). Based on Jerry’s neurologic status, he had a very good prognosis with surgery. A right-sided hemilaminectomy was performed. The ruptured intervertebral disc material was removed, and the spinal cord was decompressed. Jerry’s spinal cord did not grossly appear bruised or swollen.

Over the subsequent week, Jerry underwent physical therapy treatments 4-6x/day consisting of standing leg activities, passive range of motion activities, and sling assisted activities. He was able to walk with moderate ataxia, and he regained the ability to urinate appropriately by the end of the first week! At four weeks post-operative, he was able to walk with very mild ataxia.

Jerry is just one of two feline patients that have presented to VetCare Surgical Services since April with this diagnosis. The veterinary literature is sparse with isolated feline case studies. In most case studies, the prognosis for felines with intervertebral disc disease was excellent, and a recurrent theme is that many feline patients (unlike canine patients) do not have spinal hyperpathia (back pain).



figure 1



figure 2

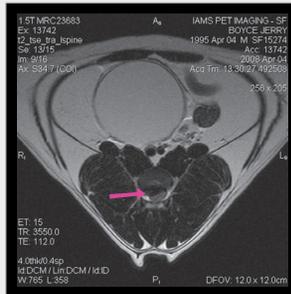


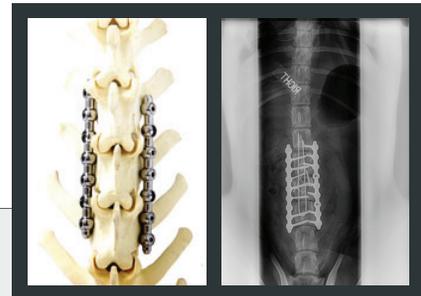
figure 3

## NEWSROOM FEATURES

### SOP IMPLANT SYSTEM:

Now available for use in spinal and long bone fractures...

The SOP plate is a series of metallic “pearls” connected by short segments of circular cross section. Standard bone screws lock into the pearls. This design allows for a consistently stiff plate that can be bent and rotated to accommodate any type of fracture, providing stable fixation of fragments regardless of bone quality.



## NEWSROOM FEATURES

### CONTINUING EDUCATION

To further their professional development, Drs. Carlson and Towle attended the Society of Veterinary Soft Tissue Surgery Conference in Santa Fe. Goals of attending the conference included communication of ideas between practitioners, surgery residents and diplomates interested in soft tissue surgery, communication with diplomates from other specialties, and exposure to research in soft tissue surgery; both attendees felt these goals were admirably met during their attendance at this excellent event.

## BEST OF LUCK TO JERRY AND HIS CONTINUED RECOVERY!

Heather Towle, DVM, MS, DACVS

## NEWSROOM FEATURES

### *DID YOU KNOW THAT VSCD PERFORMS LAPAROSCOPY?*

For prophylactic gastropexy, cystic calculi removal, OVH, tissue biopsy and many other procedures, minimally invasive surgery provides low morbidity procedures, rapid recovery and minimal risk of post-operative complication. Look for our new brochure coming this winter and call us any time to help coordinate patient selection criteria and referral information.



## RESOURCE CORNER



<http://www.splashdogs.com>

Weekend Fun: Splashdogs is a dog enthusiast company that organizes and promotes dock jumping competitions in the Western United States.



<http://www.doggon.com>

Patient Resources: Doggon' Wheels is a small company with over 30 years combined experience in meeting the needs of handicapped pets by crafting custom-fitted carts and wheelchairs.

<http://www.vetstem.com>



Vet-Stem: A growing company with an exciting new stem cell therapy offering hope for pets that experience painful osteoarthritis or who experience poor healing of bone, tendon and ligament injuries. Please see this month's professional interest article for more information.

## FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS

### *Who is VSCD?*

VSCD represents a group of committed veterinary surgeons and a team of highly trained technicians whose passion for healing is unmatched. Utilizing some of the newest, safest, and most-proven techniques available today, our goal is to play an integral role in your pet's journey from examination room, to operating table, and back to the park, hiking trail or catnip can. We believe our expertise and training extend beyond the OR and into the daily living environs of each of our patients. It is an honor and a gift to heal the sick and injured members of your family and we will strive constantly to exceed your expectations. Along with family veterinarians, we are your advocates and a true asset to your pet as he or she once again rehabilitates to any and all pre-injury activities. We are here to serve you. Come. Sit. Stay. Heal.

### *How do I coordinate mobile surgery?*

Easy! Call our phone exchanges at (925) 201-3400 or (510) 595-4600 and describe your patient's signalment and condition to discuss further potential diagnostics, surgical solutions, estimates and scheduling needs.

### *Why can't I get a published price list?*

Although understandable for mobile surgery, it is simply impossible to accurately predict precisely what an individual procedure might cost until after it is completed. Individual patient factors, equipment considerations, and potentially unforeseen circumstances affect the duration, requisite expertise and cost of any one particular surgery. Publication of a price list has the unfortunate consequence of unrealistic expectations and subsequent frustration. However, our on-call surgeons are available by cell phone and email to discuss individual patient needs and estimated cost ranges.

### *What is "C.E. on Wheels"?*

This is a mobile program in which one of our VSCD doctors or technicians brings one of our powerpoint presentations (ask for a current list of topics) to your facility. These approximately one hour lectures are offered, complementary, to you and your staff as an ancillary service to our traditional surgical options.

### *Can you perform mobile TPLO's?*

Absolutely! The TPLO is one of our preferred mobile surgeries, TPLO, in most circumstances, is one of the most predictable surgeries with the most predictable instrumentation needs and most predictable results compared to many fractures repairs contemporarily performed on a mobile basis in the San Francisco Bay Area. Consequently, this is a surgery commonly requested of and performed by Veterinary Surgical Centers of the Delta.

# PROFESSIONAL INTEREST ARTICLE

## NEW STEM CELL TREATMENT FOR PETS AIDS HEALING AFTER SURGERY AND IMPROVES FUNCTION IN ARTHRITIC PETS

There is now available a stem cell treatment that offers new hope for pets that experience painful osteoarthritis or who experience poor healing of bone, tendon, and ligament injuries. Vet-Stem therapy (see website at [www.vetstem.com](http://www.vetstem.com)) can even help pets that, so far, have been unresponsive to other treatment modalities. Veterinary Surgical Centers of the Delta's board-certified surgeons perform this procedure on a referral basis.

This service is rapidly gaining popularity and demand amongst our clientele and has been featured across the country in several recent newscasts, press releases, and national publications. As client-driven industry improvements continue to grow, regenerative cell therapy is a rapidly-evolving and refined treatment option. Through regenerative medicine, we can offer pets improved length and quality of life by restoring, maintaining and enhancing tissue function.

Regenerative medicine seeks to develop functional cell, tissue and organ substitutes to repair, replace or enhance biological function that has been lost due to injury, disease or aging. Major indications for stem cell therapy include current unsatisfactory therapy for degenerative conditions such as osteoarthritis, and diminished recovery of bone, tendon and ligament trauma. Goals include the maximization of strength, range of motion and quality of life with the concurrent reduction

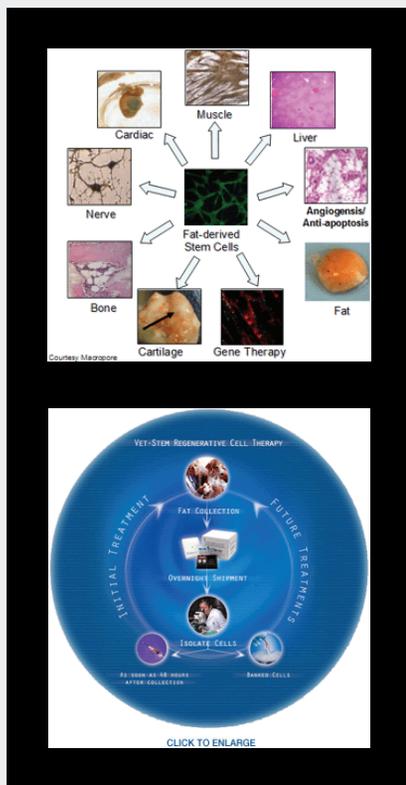
of scarring, pain or future disease development or progression.

Stem cells operate by a variety of mechanisms, producing growth factors and providing anti-inflammatory effects, tissue differentiation properties, migration to injury sites and modulation of the immune system.

Harvested adipose tissue is processed to provide fresh cell treatment with any excess cells being banked for potential future use. On return to the clinic, these cells are injected intravenously and/or locally into a variety of sites including elbow, shoulder, hip and knee joints. Both pet owners and veterinarians report mild to marked improvement in lameness examination scores after treatment with stem cell therapy!

We are primarily utilizing this therapy for the treatment of chronic osteoarthritis; however, it is also gaining increasing popularity as an adjunct to orthopedic surgery to speed healing and improve overall operative results. Stem cell collection is easily incorporated into a standard pre-surgical work-up and its administration is easily and quickly performed post-operatively. We are very excited about the potential this procedure

has to improve the quality and length of life for pets. Please contact us to order a complementary packet of more information about regenerative medicine and how you could use this service within your facility.



### INJURY OF THE CRANIAL CRUCLATE LIGAMENT IN THE DOG

This issue's featured brochure is our most commonly-requested pamphlet, describing the all-too-common cranial cruciate (CCL) injury of the dog and its potential surgical treatment options. These surgeries produce very high success rates, returning the vast majority of patients to good to excellent function after recovery.

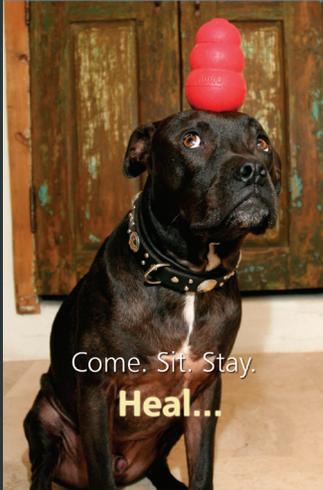
In this pamphlet you will find:

### FEATURED BROCHURE

- ☞ Review of the anatomy and function of the CCL
- ☞ Surgical repair options ("passive" vs. "functional" repairs) highlighting the tibial plateau leveling osteotomy (TPLO) and the tibial tuberosity advancement (TTA)
- ☞ Visual aids (photographs of radiographs and other drawings) to further explain these issues
- ☞ Post-operative expectations and care



**Injury of the  
Cranial Cruciate Ligament  
in the Dog**



*featured brochure continued...*

This is an excellent tool to supplement the information and materials you already provide your clients. Furthermore, many hospitals are using this brochure internally, to help their staff achieve greater understanding of this condition as well as to develop a common language to use with their clientele.

This, and all of our other, brochures can be found at (and downloaded from!) our website at [www.vscdsurgerycenters.com](http://www.vscdsurgerycenters.com)

Simply access the appropriate condition under the "brochures" drop-down menu or click the link under "brochures" on the home page. Enjoy a wealth of additional information at the website as well.

For complementary copies of our brochures email us any time at [deltasurg@yahoo.com](mailto:deltasurg@yahoo.com). Thank you for your continued interest and support!

This newsletter inaugural issue is fondly dedicated to the memory of

**Christian Carlson**



He lived his life with  
joy and dignity.

He will not be forgotten...

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

**Berkeley**  
**Dublin**  
**Walnut Creek**