

I'M FREE!!
PLEASE TAKE ME



**YOUR
VET**



SUMMER 2012

TIME TO ENJOY THE SUNNY SEASON

SOUTHERN HIGHLANDS VETERINARY CENTRE

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OUR VETS:

Dr Bill Beresford

BVSc (Qld)
Special interests: Large animal practice especially cattle

Dr Charlie Carter

BVSc (Hons) (Syd)
Special interests: Cattle and small animal surgery

Dr Alex Johnston

BVSc (Syd)
Special interests: Small animal medicine especially feline medicine

Dr Chris Watson

BVSc (Univ. Pretoria)
Special interests: soft tissue and orthopedic surgery

OUR SUPPORT STAFF:

Barb, Catherine, Jade, Aimee and Aimee

Are eager to help you with your appointments, food supplies and any other questions you may have about the care and welfare of your pet.

Our clinic has a full range of Royal Canin and Hills pet foods. We also stock Weatherbeeta dog rugs, Fuzzyard dog beds and shampoos and Rogz collars and leads.

CLINIC HOURS:

The clinic can be contacted between 8.30am and 6.00pm weekdays, and between 8.30am and 12.00noon on Saturdays.

Consultations are by appointment

AFTER HOURS:

After hours emergencies - at night, on weekends and Public Holidays - will be attended by the rostered Vet from this practice. Call our number and this will be diverted through to the duty vet on call. If we are attending another call we may not answer but please leave a message and we will ring you back as soon as possible.

RELIEVE THE BOREDOM FOR YOUR PET

Cats and dogs can both get bored if not stimulated enough. This can be through being at home alone while the human members of the family are away. Destructive behaviour such as digging, barking and tearing things apart by dogs and scratching and other erratic behaviour by cats. You can break their boredom by enriching their environment.



enjoyment out of chasing the ball around the water with their paw. Just make sure it is a safe depth of water for your cat and in an area they can easily climb out if it they did happen to fall in.

FOOD HUNT:

This is great for both. Separate batches of food and hide them around the house for your pet to find, if you are able to be present for this activity it's a good idea to toss them the odd treat to encourage them to keep hunting. Obviously if you have both a cat and dog, this game should be carried out in separate areas (you wouldn't want one stealing the others food).

GAMES:

A game of tug or fetch in the back yard is good fun for your dog. It gives them good exercise and time with you. While it is good to take your dog for a walk out of your property, it is also very important to make your home a source of fun and exercise for your dog so that they are content there and have less of an urge to try and leave the property out of boredom.

BALL BOBBING:

You could leave a ping pong ball in a basin full of water for your cat. They can get great



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- MAKE THOSE FLIES BUZZ OFF
- INTRODUCING A NEW CAT

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DOGS WITH JOBS PART 2 – GUIDE DOGS

Guide dogs have a hugely positive impact on the lives of a blind person. They enable a person to have more independence, mobility and confidence as well as being great companions.

Dogs being used to guide the blind dates back to 1819 when Johann Wilhelm Klein started an institute for the blind in Vienna, Austria. Almost 100 (1916) years later his philosophies were put into practice to train dogs for German soldiers who had been left blind during the First World War. By the 1920's and 30's schools and training were being established in the USA, Italy and England. Australia's first Guide Dog school was set up in Perth in 1951 and the first Australian Guide Dog was Dreena.

Generally Labradors make good guide dogs as they have a gentle temperament, are keen to learn and love to please. However, there are many different types of dogs that can be used as long as they fit the requirements needed.

Puppies that have been selected as having great potential as guides are put into training. Generally a volunteer will take a puppy for its early stages of life. Here they will go through initial training like social



skills and obedience. After around 18 months they will be introduced to a vast range of environments to experience different sights, sounds and smells. These include places such as shopping malls, buses, trains, city centres, cafes and medical centres. Their training is made up of a lot of positive reinforcement for correct decisions and behaviours.

The dogs must learn things like walking without sniffing, stopping at kerbs, avoiding head height obstacles and narrow spaces for their owner, laying quietly for extended periods of time and to refuse commands that may lead a person into danger.

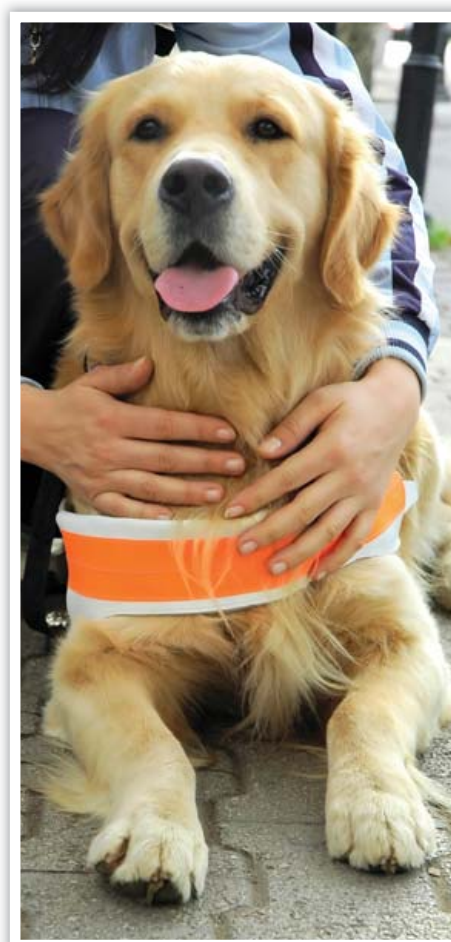
DO'S AND DON'TS TO CONSIDER WHEN YOU ENCOUNTER A GUIDE DOG.

Do not feed or distract a Seeing Eye dog.

Don't be afraid to offer assistance to a blind person.

Consider the person with a guide dog, talk to them instead of or as well as their dog.

Think about volunteering for puppy training and if that is not possible think about contributing where you can with time or money. It is a great service to have guide dogs and this service is mostly run on generous donations.



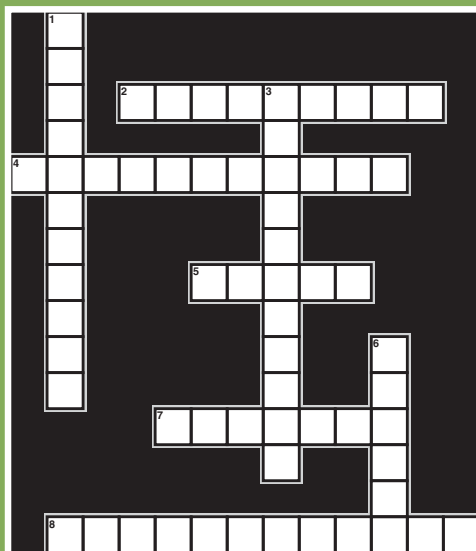
Clever CROSSWORD

Across:

- Which type of dogs make good guide dogs because of their gentle temperament?
- behaviour can start when animals are bored.
- Hopefully cats will ----- each other when first introduced.
- What is the second training method mentioned for Guinea Pigs?
- Guide dogs enable a person to have -----, mobility and confidence.

Down:

- are great pets for children.
- Your vet may prescribe ----- for infected fly bites.
- Which soldiers first benefited from the use of guide dogs?



EACH OF THE WORDS CAN BE FOUND IN THIS ISSUE OF "YOUR VET". ANSWERS ARE SHOWN ON BOTTOM OF INNER LEFT PAGE.

MAKE THOSE FLIES BUZZ OFF

As many dog owners know, the trauma caused by fly bites can be a frustrating problem. Flies seem particularly fond of ear margins, especially the ear tip. They will occasionally settle for tip of the tail.

The bitten area gets damaged and may ooze blood, attracting more flies looking for a desirable snack. Hair loss occurs and the areas often become infected.

Treating fly bite dermatitis requires a two-pronged attack. First is the need to protect the damaged, at risk areas. This can be done by selecting from the vast armoury of creams, sprays and spotons available on the market. Ask your vet about which products he or she finds most successful in your particular area, and be sure to use it frequently. Your vet may also need to prescribe antibiotics if the ears or other bitten areas have become infected.

The second part of the attack is aimed at reducing the number of flies in the dog's environment. Remove old bones and uneaten food. Regularly pick up any faeces in the garden. Sticky fly strips can be hung above kennels and around your dog's favourite resting areas. Finally, arm the kids with fly swats and tell them it's for a good cause!

INTRODUCING A NEW CAT IN YOUR HOME

Cats can be quite a challenge when introducing a new cat to a household with an existing cat (we won't use the word "old" cat, as I'm sure most established cats would take exception to that term). It is hard to predict if two cats are going to get along as they can be a lot more sensitive than other animals to these kinds of changes and their territorial nature.

There are however ways that you can make the introduction less stressful to everyone involved. Mostly based around a gently, gently approach. Both cats need to feel secure to allow them to move onto introductions.

Age and other factors are good things to consider first. It may not work that well introducing a kitten with bundles of energy to an older cat that already has the lay of the land. Think about putting similar aged cats together. Also, a kitten that has just left its mother is more likely to adapt and bond as it will enjoy the companionship of another animal.

HERE ARE SOME TIPS TO GET THE INTRODUCTION STARTED;

Give each cat their own area to start with, where they are separated with their own food, litter tray and toys for several days.

Slowly move things like food closer to each other, so that they start to hear and smell the other cat, but still feel safe having their own area.

Spend time with each of them playing, talking to them and petting them to reinforce bonds with your resident cat and welcome your new cat.



Swap items with the cats scent on around. This is another step that helps familiarise one with the other.

Once you are ready to introduce them, just make sure you stay present and continue to make both cats feel secure. Hopefully they will sniff at each other, even groom each other and even if they sit and stare at each other this is good.

If there is aggression, there is nothing wrong with separating them again and starting the process over. Time is always a good tool to help the process. If your cats go beyond posturing, hissing etc. and start fighting make sure you do not get in the middle of it, you will only get hurt. The best way to break up a fight is to do something like make a loud noise or stamp your feet.

GUINEA PIG TRICKS

Guinea Pigs are great pets for children. They are cute, furry and a small and manageable size for children to look after. Training a Guinea Pig to perform a few basic tricks is a good way to enhance the experience between child and pet and it keeps the Guinea Pig mentally stimulated, active and healthy while being fun and rewarding for your child.

To get started there are two basic methods used while training a Guinea Pig. There is the Lure-Reward training and the Clicker training. Both are effective and your child can use one or the other or a mixture of both. These ways are also positive and there is no punishment involved in training.

Lure-Reward appeals to the Guinea Pigs love of treats. It is a simple method of giving the animal a verbal command, luring it through the action with the food and then rewarding it with the food when the task is complete. Healthy treats, such as carrots, lettuce, parsley and berries are good to use as you don't want to end up with an overweight pet in the process.

Clicker training is similar to Lure-Reward, but a clicker is added when the treat is given. This gives the animal a noise to



recognise and associate with having done well. Eventually the food can be taken away and the Guinea Pig will recognise the clicker as reward.

Now that you have a start, here are a couple of fun tricks to try:

STAND UP

Firstly, hold a treat in front of the Guinea Pigs nose and let them get a sniff of it, then once you have their attention, introduce the voice command of "Stand" or use a hand signal as direction. While you are doing this start raising the treat slowly. When the Guinea Pig starts to stretch its head up, let it have a few nibbles on the treat, then move the lure higher until it is standing. Repeat the steps until the Guinea Pig learns to recognise the command to "Stand".

ROLLING A BALL

First of all find a small ball that is a good size for the Guinea Pig to work with. First of all put the Guinea Pig in a play area with the ball and watch to see if they show curiosity or nudge the ball. Rubbing the ball with some food might help to peak their interest. When they do nudge it reward them with a treat and or click. If it doesn't show immediate interest, then reward them for paying attention to the ball, such as moving towards it or looking at it. The trick here is to develop the behaviour and keep rewarding them until they get to the point of moving the ball around.

These are both a couple of fun ways to start off and as your child progress it can be fun for both of you to look into more tricks to try.

ON BEHALF OF ALL OF US, WE EXTEND OUR VERY BEST WISHES TO YOU, YOUR FAMILY AND FRIENDS, FOR A SAFE, HAPPY AND HEALTHY FESTIVE SEASON.

ALTERNATIVE SMALL PETS TO CONSIDER

HAMSTERS:

- Hamsters come in a wide range of coat types and colours.
- They are ideal to keep on their own.
- Great to handle.
- Keep in mind they are nocturnal by nature, so sleep a lot during the day.



LIZARDS:

- There is a great variety of size, colour and types of lizards. Do a little research on what would be best suited.
- Bearded dragons are very popular as they have a friendly nature.
- Lizards bond with their owners, so it is a really good idea to get them from when they are a hatchling.



TORTOISES AND TURTLES:

- They often win a popularity contest in many peoples' eyes when it comes to comparing them to other reptiles.
- They can be tamed quite easily
- Both come in a wide range of interesting sizes, shapes and colours
- They are best kept inside in warmer areas and should have both wet and dry areas to live in.



RATS AND MICE:

- These are highly intelligent animals, so are good to train and teach tricks
- Great companions when handled a lot
- Do not keep rats and mice together, as rats will attack mice



FLEAS

Fleas are an extremely common parasite. With the onset of warmer weather, many pets become infested with fleas. There are around 80 species of fleas in Australia. The most common species in Australia is the cat flea (*Ctenocephalides felis*). The cat flea infests both dogs and cats. Fleas are small, wingless insects that have an exceptional jumping ability. A flea can jump up to 1000 times its own height, and is extremely well adapted to living on your dog or cat.

Fleas feed on the blood of the host animal every 30 minutes. Whilst feeding, flea saliva comes into contact with your pet's skin. This saliva contains allergens and also a histamine-like substance which can cause an allergic reaction. This explains why your pet can become extremely itchy if it has fleas.

LIFECYCLE OF FLEAS

Adult fleas can lay up to 50 eggs a day. These eggs fall off your pet and then hatch into larvae in the environment. Over a few days to weeks, each larva makes a cocoon, and whilst in this cocoon develops into an adult flea. Now here is where fleas are really cunning: The adult fleas within cocoons can sense when environmental conditions are optimal, and also if your dog and cat are nearby. They can sense vibration, feel the warmth of your dog or cat and also detect the carbon dioxide in their breath. If this is the case then they emerge from the cocoons very quickly.

However if conditions are not favourable, they remain in their cocoons. They can survive for up to 6 months in these cocoons. This means that there is always a new wave of fleas ready to hatch when conditions are favourable.

PREVENTING FLEAS

Many pet owners believe that fleas are only found in households that are unhygienic. The truth is that fleas are incredibly well adapted to surviving in your house. If you have pets, fleas are usually a fact of life.

There are several ways to prevent fleas:

1. Topically applied products containing adulticides:
These are applied to the back of your pet's neck once a month. Such products include Advantage®, Advocate®, Revolution® and Frontline®. Some of these products will also control worms, heartworm, ticks and other external parasites.
2. You should treat every pet in your house, and apply every month. If you have a severe flea problem, it may take several treatments to control flea numbers. It is important to note that some topically applied products from the supermarket contain permethrin (a member of the pyrethroid family). These are extremely toxic and potentially lethal to CATS if accidentally applied and should only be used on dogs. Unfortunately the warning labels on these products are often not particularly clear. You should seek advice from your vet if you have any questions regarding the flea product you are using.
3. Oral adulticides: such as Comfortis® controls fleas via a monthly oral tablet. Capstar® tablets can be given every 24 hours to control fleas and used in conjunction with topically applied products if flea numbers are high.
4. Insect growth regulators such as Sentinel®. This product prevents flea eggs hatching and larvae developing, thus breaking the lifecycle. This product does not kill adult fleas.

The other main control measures involve decontaminating the environment by washing all bedding thoroughly and vacuuming areas that your pet frequents regularly. You can consider using flea bombs or pest controllers if you have persistent flea problems.

Down: 1. Guinea Figs; 3. Antibiotics; 6. German.
7. Clicker; 8. Independence.
Across: 2. Labrador; 4. Destructive; 5. Sniff;

ANSWERS TO CROSSWORD