



Hilton Veterinary Hospital

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Inside this issue:

One is deeply moved when someone dies as a result of an act of kindness. This can be the case when a child or adult attempts to help a stray dog. An animal in distress appeals to our humanity. We stop and help and sometimes in doing so, put ourselves in great danger. I am not talking about needing to stop half off the road, hazard lights on, in which case, your biggest danger is the impatient motorist behind you. I am talking about rabies. Rabies can be invisible to us with a stray dog showing minimal signs. So what is one to do? The only institution publicly funded to take care of stray animals is the SPCA. Their resources however are spread very thin. The other issue is the fact that the SPCA is not available after hours when most of the strays are found, again limited resources. So what is one to do? Do you join some others and turn a blind eye to a distressed animal? Well no, it would not be humane to do so. Mahatma Gandhi said "the greatness of a nation and its moral progress can be judged by the way its animals are treated". Our experience is that most pet parents would want to stop and do stop help an animal in distress. Many a time a stray animal has been brought to us at HVH for safe keeping over night. You are unlikely to be in danger from a stray or lost animal that is friendly and approaches you when beckoned to do so. Some animals will become fearful if you try to restrain them and may try to bite, especially if they have been run over by a car, or they are in pain from other injuries. So what do you do?

- If you are in a habit of helping strays and lost animals, get yourself vaccinated against rabies. If you have been vaccinated you can you can even donate hyper immune serum to help save other

humans. The vaccine is very low risk and is protective

- Keep a soft lead and blanket in your vehicle. Learn how to use them as a slip lead and a stretcher by practicing on your own dog. Anyone at Hilton Vet will be happy to show you how.
- Please do help lost animals. Sometimes you will be the last friendly thing they see, however, please be careful and observe their behaviour for a few seconds before approaching them. A calm "you come to me" type of approach is usually best. Scarred, uninjured dogs will just run away if you boldly approach them anyway.
- If you do get bitten or contact saliva you must get treatment in the form of immediate immunisation unless that dog can be proven to have been immunised against rabies. The treatments are virtually 100% effective if done immediately.
- Get as many dogs as possible micro-chipped and vaccinated. As one of the custodians of animal health the South African Veterinary Association is launching a rabies control/ eradication drive together with existing control bodies to clamp down on this disease. We also offer free rabies vaccinations at Hilton Vet Hospital week days from 3-5 pm.
- If you need somewhere to safely place the animal, Hilton Vet Hospital has someone inside the wards all night looking after the patients and they are instructed to help strays with shelter, food and water. This is a free service that we offer Hilton.

I would like to take this opportunity to thank all of you who have stopped to help an animal in distress.

Regards Martin de Scally.

Dedicated to the health of your pets.

Opening Letter 1

Nurse's Clinic: 2

Animal Behaviour 3

Animal Behaviour continued 4

Competition 5

Staff Profile 6

To make you smile 6

New Dog Par- 6
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After Hours
Emergencies:

Please phone
(033) 343 4602

Contact Details:

If your contact details
have changed then
please inform us .

This month's
theme:

Animal Behaviour

The Nurse's Clinic: Picking your Pet



Maybe it's the warm memories of your childhood kitten, the images of Marley romping across the movie screen or your child's daily pleas to add a furry friend to the family. Whatever your reason for considering pet adoption, the decision should be carefully weighed before bringing Fluffy home to call your own.

Taking on a pet is a long term, daily, commitment. It is not just a Christmas or birthday present, or just for weekends! The average life span of a dog is 12 years and some cats can get to 18 or 20 years old. So with taking on a pet comes the great responsibility of being the one who looks out for and after this animal. They will look to you for companionship, food, shelter and help when in pain or sick.

Before journeying out to choose your new fluffy friend there are a few things you ought to think about which will aid you in your selection and ensure you make the best choice for your home, family and the animal you are about to adopt. Selecting a pet that is most likely to be a good fit for your family is also the first step in preventing behavior problems in the pets' future.

"Behaviour problems are still one of the most common causes of death and abandonment of companion dogs in industrialized countries and it seems that pets under the age of 1 year are at the highest risk" (Quoted from a BVSAVA manual on behavioural medicine.)

We all know the saying "prevention is better than cure". Well it is just as true here. To be able to choose an animal best suited to your family, hence

possibly preventing a myriad of behavioral problems in that animal, could save its life and make it a much happier pet, as well as making yours and your family's lives happier and easier.

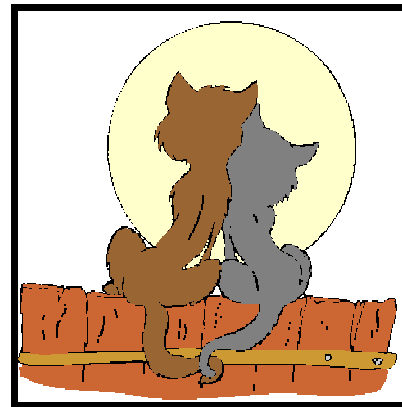
We had a truly lovely quote on our notice board last month which read: "Until one has loved an animal, a part of one's soul remains unawakened."

(Anatole France)

Animals can be an amazing part of our lives, they add something special to our day to day life and they love us in their own unique way like no other. (Well most of them anyway right.)

There are so many precious animals out there needing and waiting for love. Find the one that suits your home and family, your lifestyle and budget; be it a Budgie, Border Collie, or pavement special, and love them all you can.

If you would like further advice on choosing the right pet for you, we do have questionnaires available designed to help answer that question and our staff are always willing to speak with you and offer advice.



Oops!

Oops, there were 2 "Gremlins" that crept in to our last newsletter. We meant to say that our new large dog ward will be cooled in Summer and heated in Winter. (we said the opposite) Sorry also to Lana and her boys. Some of the text went missing. Her twin boys Garth and Luke enjoy swimming, playing soccer and cycling. It took a very observant newsletter reader in Dubai to point out our little 'faux pas' (Sorry).

Animal Behaviour by Dr Trish Mills

We all may have certain habits that annoy other people and the same goes for our pets. The trouble comes in trying to decide if that annoying habit your pet has is actually a *problem* and whether it needs to be treated as such.

First we need to understand what normal behaviour for our pets is. An *ethogram* is what describes behaviours that are typical for a given species. The animal's behaviours are categorized into systems such as ingestion behaviour (eating habits), relaxation behaviour (playing), self-care behaviour (self-grooming), agonistic behaviour (aggression) and so on.

Once we know the behaviour we can *expect* to see from our pets we then need to further classify any "problem" behaviour as:

Normal behaviour: the expected behaviour of a species.

Abnormal behaviour: behaviour that is inconsistent with the ethogram for the species.

Unacceptable behaviour: when an animal performs a behaviour that is normal for the species but undesirable, even offensive, to the owner (for example a cat scratching on furniture or a dog eating faeces).

Inappropriate behaviour: when normal behaviour is expressed in an incorrect context (for example a dog mounting its owner)

In reality, most unwanted behaviours occur in our pets because they have been unintentionally rewarded and/or because no alternative behaviour has been taught or consistently reinforced. Unruly dogs are mostly that way because no-one taught them basic obedience – just like children who are not taught good manners. So what do we do with our pets if they develop an annoying or problem behaviour? Treatment can vary considerably depending on many factors: the type of behaviour; the intensity, frequency, duration and progression of the behaviour and many others. It may entail something as simple as attending an obedience training class or it may involve drug therapy together with more complex training.

Treatment options for behaviour problems include:

- Behaviour modification (for example using noise CD's to desensitise an animal to storms).
- Environmental modification (for example making a safe, sound-proofed area for an animal to hide in when there is a storm).
- Social intervention (using structured interaction and resource management).
- Drug therapy (for severe cases).
- Surgery (such as castration and spaying).
- Re-homing (this is sometimes the best solution in many cases).
- Euthanasia – this is a LAST RESORT option, but may have to be considered if the quality of life of the animal may be reduced or if people are in danger.

Some hints to help prevent or reduce problem behaviours:

- AVOID THE PROBLEM SITUATION OR TRIGGER until such time as the animal has been desensitised and/or a different behaviour has been taught. For example – a boisterous puppy that jumps all over visitors – do not let him greet people while excited. Rather have him in a separate area and when he and the guests have calmed down then he may be allowed to greet them. You can also teach him a way of greeting that makes it hard for him to jump up – for example sitting and giving paw as a way of saying hello.
- STOP PUNISHMENT – punishment can cause mistrust and fear of people, we also often get the timing and context wrong. For example – don't punish a puppy for messing inside the house while you were out as this may teach him that when you get home he gets shouted at or smacked, or that when he is inside he gets punished. Remember that all animals (like young children) learn by the immediate – not delayed – consequences of their behaviour and behaviours that are rewarded will happen more often.

Animal Behaviour (cont)

- STOP REWARDING THE PROBLEM BEHAVIOUR – *any reaction* be it positive or negative attention can inadvertently reward a behaviour. For example – don't shout at a barking dog, he may just think you're joining in or you may be giving him the attention that he was looking for even if it's negative attention. Also remember to withhold valued resources when there is undesirable behaviour – it's like teaching a toddler that a soft "please" gets her a sweet but shouting "gimme" gets her nothing.
- Remember to REWARD GOOD BEHAVIOUR. We tend to focus on stopping the bad behaviour/s and forget to reinforce the good behaviours. Make sure you always have something available as a reward for good behaviour – a toy, treats, or even just your praise and attention.
- Provide STRUCTURED HIGH QUALITY INTERACTION.
- BE CONSISTENT in letting your pet know what it is and isn't allowed to do, as well as how you react to it's behaviour. Also be consistent in how you control valuable resources – these include attention, food, toys, access to valuable areas, sleeping places.
- Provide APPROPRIATE STIMULATION. Animals need a variety of things to see, do and experience on a daily basis.
- Learn to SET YOUR PET UP FOR SUCCESS and prevent mistakes. For example - if your dog chews shoes don't leave shoes lying around and rather introduce something safe and appropriate to chew like a Kong toy.

What you can do:

- Alternatives to punishment include: giving your pet a *time-out* or rather using something to *distract/interrupt* the animal from doing the unwanted behaviour and then directing him/her to a more appropriate behaviour.
- *Ignoring* rather than reacting with negative attention:
Look away, keep quiet, fold your arms, turn your back.

- High quality interaction takes place on your terms and not when your pet is demanding it (i.e. you start and end the interaction). It must be structured, predictable, consistent and it must not be constant (separate interaction with times of no attention). Some examples include playing a game, going for a walk, grooming or training sessions. It is a good idea to do at least one physical and one mental work-out with your pet in a day.
- Managing resources:
 - Use valued items like food, toys and attention as rewards for good behaviour. Don't give them away for free.
 - Attention – give attention on your terms.
 - Food – feed at least 2 meals a day and make sure the food is "earned" e.g. must sit or give paw first.
 - Toys – keep toys in an area not accessible to pets and rotate the toys so they have access to only a few toys at a time.
 - Areas of high value – for example your bedroom – you control access; you can use barriers such as baby gates or close doors to limit access.
 - Sleeping places – don't wake up a sleeping animal. Make sure you get a puppy used to being handled in its bed.
- Attend a positive, reward-based training class (with no force) for dogs. A pet that knows how to behave is always a pleasure to be around.



Competition Winners

"KISKA" (our wonderful Golden Retriever)

By Brooklyn (11 yrs old) and Callum Taylor (10 yrs old)

We were so lucky to find
A dog so beautifully, gentle and kind.
It is true as it has been told,
Her fur is spun of real gold.
Not only is she extremely pretty,
But she is also rather witty.
Although she is clever and smart,
She is just such a sweetheart.
She loves for us to huddle,
For a fun tickle and a cuddle
And when we let out a giggle,
She is sure to respond with a wiggle and a jiggle.
Because she has been so very sweet
She often deserves an enormous treat.
So out we bring her leash and collar,
Which we bought for under a dollar.
When walking out in the street,
She thinks it is pretty neat.
And just like a model,
She begins to waddle.
She raises her tail,
As if it were a sail.
And gives a big wag,
As if to others she does brag.
Oh...we give a sigh,
As we look her in the eye.



MY PET, MY FRIEND

By Rebecca Farquharson (13 yrs old)

5:30 is tea time.
She finishes watching her mouse pantomime.
She hops onto my bed, stares at me,
Then curls her tail, contentedly.

I give her some milk and food on clean white saucers
(And let me tell you, the foods not for a pauper).
She sticks her pink tongue out and begins to lap,
Then purrs happily and starts to nap.

Crescent moons are her eyes
And her tail is long and groomed.
Tabby, ginger, combined with white,
She pads about the room.

Beebo (from the book) is her name,
Accompanied with a second name, or two.
Every day she waits for me, diligently,
And when I see her I can't help but coo!

She is my pet,
She is my friend.
And I will stick by her,
To the end.

Well done to all the entries we received. We certainly have talent in our community. It was really hard to make a decision. We know that some children spent a long time on their poetry works. We are so proud of you!

Me Too Mattresses

Me Too mattresses are used throughout Hilton Vet Hospital in the animal's domicile. So they have been tried and tested for over two years with fantastic results. They are foam mattresses sealed in vinyl plastic and come with summer and winter material covers. We carry standard stock but they can be ordered to your specification. Please speak to Lana, Jackson or Candace for your requirements.

Staff Profile

Jackson Makuwere

Jackson joined the practice in April 2010. Jackson started out as a kennel hand but has now joined the reception team. He always greets clients with his friendly smile.

Jackson's family live in Zimbabwe and he goes to visit them when he can.

Jackson enjoys meeting different people and their animals. Jackson is interested in watching the Ultra Sound scans to further his knowledge. Jackson is busy completing an on-line sales and marketing course.

In his spare time Jackson enjoys watching movies, listening to music and playing soccer.



**Boehringer
Ingelheim**

To Make you Smile

The Dog's Diary

8:00 am - Dog food! My favourite thing!

9:30 am - A car ride! My favourite thing!

9:40 am - A walk in the park! My favourite thing!

10:30 am - Got rubbed and petted! My favourite thing!

12:00 pm - Milk bones! My favourite thing!

1:00 pm - Played in the yard! My favourite thing!

3:00 pm - Wagged my tail! My favourite thing!

5:00 pm - Dinner! My favourite thing!

7:00 pm - Got to play ball! My favourite thing!

8:00 pm - Wow! Watched TV with the people! My favourite thing!

11:00 pm - Sleeping on the bed! My favourite thing!



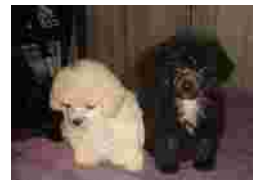
HILTON VETERINARY

PARLOUR

OPENING SOON!!!

Heather Walters will soon be joining us to run a parlour at our clinic. We have decided to go ahead with this addition due to the demand for a personalised service in the area. Your precious pets will be handled by Heather personally in a caring compassionate manner. We cater to all types and sizes, whether it is a simple wash and a dip or a complicated clip.

Bookings can be made by contacting Heather on 076 2798589.



If you have a story about your pet that you would like to share with us, then please e-mail it to lauren@hiltonvethospital.co.za