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OPEN 7 DAYS

TEAM NEWS FROM McMASTER & HEAP VETS



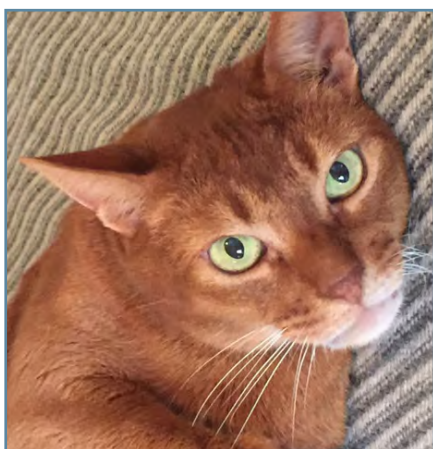
WELCOME all to 2015. A great start to the year with awesome weather and staff refreshed after an enjoyable summer holiday break. I can't believe it but our eldest son is in his final year at school and is now applying to US colleges for an opportunity to play college tennis for 4 years in America. My how time flies. Connor and Steve departed recently to San Francisco to visit Berkeley first up, then Stanford. They will visit 6 colleges in 20 days flying from the West to the East side of the country. An exciting adventure for our eldest and hopefully the start of his tennis career.

Our Practice continues to steadily grow and we are all kept busy caring for your very special friends. The EQC work has just been finished and I'm thrilled with the new look paint work. A definite improvement on the bright yellow.

Steve and I are very pleased to welcome Sonya on board as our dedicated practice receptionist. Sonya has worked in vet practices for 10 years so has a good understanding

and appreciation for the importance of excellent customer service and communication. Lola now has competition in the clinic, as Sonya's dog Dart is often seen making an appearance out front. From a distance they could pass as litter mates, except for Lola's slightly wider girth, according to Steve! Lola and I don't listen to that. Sonya and her partner breed, train and compete with Gun Dogs in NZL and overseas, so Sonya is a great one for giving any sort of canine advice.

I am pleased to say that our Practice has passed it's 2 year Best Practice Accreditation Audit actioned through our Veterinary Association. It can be slightly stressful spending 5 nerve wracking hours with the auditor going through all our Practice policies with a fine tooth comb, but it is worth it. The majority of NZL practices are not accredited so I feel this stands us apart from the others.



As veterinarians continuing education is a very important aspect of our job, and one we all enjoy if and when we get the time. Catherine has spent the past 6 months upskilling in pathology and cytology; Steve and myself are learning more about using dental radiography to help the Practices decision making in regards to what teeth need extracting. I have invested time learning more about neurology and I have also completed a year long Practice Management Workshop. Sara is very keen on working up skin and ear cases and Kate really enjoys tricky feline medical problems. We have a very talented, skilled group of vets on board.

PIPER is quickly getting accustomed to the mad, noisy Heap household. He is so affectionate and cuddly, really enjoying grooming our heads – quite a weird habit. He sleeps a lot but is pleased to see us when we all arrive home. Spartacus can't understand why he won't rough and tumble with him, but they sleep close and feed together.

Recently Connor and Dylan helped the Christ's College Tennis team win the South Island Secondary Schools Championships. The Secondary Schools Nationals was held in Wellington recently and they came away with 3rd place – not bad for a school that doesn't have a Tennis Academy. The boys still wanted to win the title, although Connor won all 6 singles matches easily and Dylan won 5/6 singles matches.

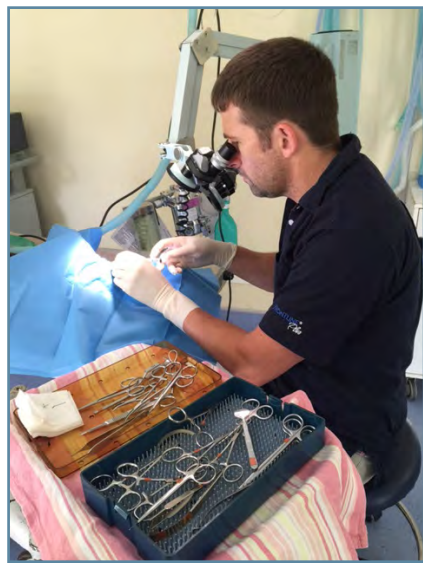
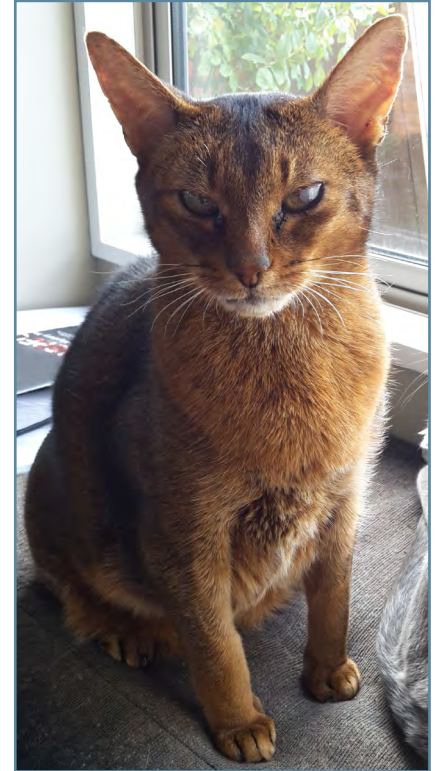
Enjoy the start of a very mild Autumn and remember we are here for advice and help at all times. We love seeing you all and we feel privileged being able to help all of your pets.

HAPPY READING... Michele, Steve, Lola and the team

CORNEAL SEQUESTRUMS IN CATS

Baxter is a much loved, super cool 13year old Abyssinian cat who is extremely loved. Baxter has a storied medical history though but as with all Abyssinian's, they are generally high maintenance but as a pet, definitely worth it.

Baxter was diagnosed in the middle of last year with the equivalent of Type 1 Diabetes. With intensive insulin treatment cats, unlike people, can sometimes be put into remission. Baxter is a diabetic cat in remission, which he achieved in September 2014. He only had insulin treatment injected twice daily for 4-5 months. At this stage he is still in remission, does not require insulin and has been very healthy. He is still fed a dry food diet low in carbohydrates especially for cats that have had diabetes. Luckily Baxter enjoys all food – obviously an Abbysinnian trait.



In February 2015 Baxter presented to Steve Heap (Veterinary Ophthalmologist) with a sore left eye. His eye had been looking a bit unusual to his owner and he had been holding it slightly closed. It had been weeping also.

Ocular examination of Baxter's eye revealed a Corneal Sequestrum. This is when a black crusty lesion appears on the cornea (clear window of the eye). There is usually associated ulceration and inflammation. The eyes are usually uncomfortable, causing the eye to wince, appear inflamed and the cat will attempt to rub at the eye, making the lesion worse.

Corneal sequestrums occur only in cats. They occur because of chronic irritation – their exact cause is usually uncertain. Some breeds of cats are predisposed. Persians and Himalayan cats are the classic cats for this condition. Burmese cats are also predisposed. Abbysinians do get this infrequently – Baxter was unlucky.

Surgery is nearly always the best treatment for a corneal sequestrum. This was definitely the case with Baxter. Baxter's corneal sequestrum was very deep and invaded into the deepest layers of the cornea. To perform as delicate an eye surgery as this, the surgeon has to be experienced in working down an operating microscope and with delicate tissues at hand.

Under general anaesthesia, Steve dissected the corneal sequestrum from the normal cornea and a graft was placed to provide structural support and blood vessels to help healing. The graft was made from conjunctiva (the layer covering the whites of the eye). A "conjunctival pedicle flap" was constructed and placed with small absorbable sutures. This flap will remain in place and begin to be incorporated into the cornea. After 2-3 weeks the eye should be comfortable and start to look more normal.

Baxter was discharged that evening with ocular antibiotic ointment, pain relief and antibiotic tablets. An Elizabethan collar was also placed to prevent him rubbing the eye, disturbing the graft. Baxter's recovery should be uneventful and thankfully Steve has been able to save the eye.



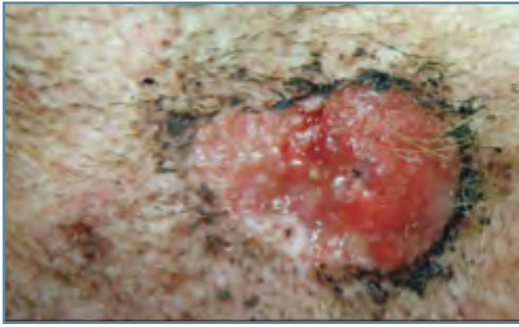
For any questions on eye related issues in your pet, please feel free to call Steve to discuss.

Dr Michele McMaster

SUNSMART WITH OUR PETS

We are all very good at remembering our sunscreen, sunglasses and hats AND the importance of covering up ourselves and our children, but our pets are often overlooked. Cats and dogs are just as susceptible to sun burn and sun damage as well as the same cancers and skin changes we get which occur with exposure to New Zealand's strong ultra-violet rays.

Some types of skin damage caused by the sun include Actinic keratoses and Canine Solar Dermatitis. These are caused by cumulative exposure to ultraviolet light. Clinically we observe thickened crusting skin lesions that can progress to invasive squamous cell carcinomas (skin cancers).



Recently we saw a gorgeous 9 year old Golden Labrador Guide dog called Gemma who presented to us because her owner Suzanne was concerned about some hard crusting areas of skin on her ventral abdomen. Her hair appeared light in colour and sparse in these areas. It appeared non painful and not itchy. These lesions had been present a while and weren't resolving with current treatments. Under a light anesthetic we biopsied Gemma's lesions and couriered the samples to the laboratory.

The results surprisingly came back as most of the lesions being "precancerous" but there was an area diagnosed as being a Squamous Cell Carcinoma – a malignant skin cancer affecting humans, cats and dogs.

Fortunately we were able to cure this by completely surgically removing the affected area of cancerous skin (using wide skin margins) and using a special cream to prevent the precancerous areas developing further into Squamous Cell Carcinomas.

Gemma is doing excellently and the precancerous areas have regressed nicely. It is very important we keep Gemma as healthy and disease free as possible considering she has a very important job to do on a daily basis – being her owner's eyes and a constant loyal companion! We have seen Gemma many times over the past 10 years and she still enjoys seeing us all, pats and hugs and devouring a liver treat once finished.

Dogs and cats with light skin and thin hair coats are predisposed to sun induced skin diseases. Lesions are generally seen in middle aged to older animals but have been found in animals as young as 2 years of age.

Cats commonly get UV light induced dermatitis of the ears, especially the tips of the ears, nose, eyelids and lips of white haired cats. With repeated sun exposure these can progress to cancer. Lesions start as redness with scaling and progress to crusted, ulcerated areas. Any lesions present on these areas in light haired cats that haven't healed within a few weeks are suspicious as being cancerous and need to be checked by your vet. There are many options available to deal with these sorts of cancers –namely cryotherapy whereby the cancers are freeze/thawed for several cycles or surgical excision.

Sun damaged skin is preventable in pets, just as it is with people and all owners of thin haired white animals should know about sun avoidance. Using tools like waterproof sunscreens, sun suits and keeping pets indoors during the high UV time daylight hours are effective.

Treatment of strict sun avoidance is essential to slow down the progression of lesions and very early mild lesions may regress with just sun avoidance, however most lesions will need to be treated early to prevent cancerous transformation.



A FAREWELL TO OUR "AMOS"

A FAREWELL TO OUR "AMOS"

Just prior to Christmas, we tragically lost our beautiful 11 year old Abyssinian cat Amos. We arrived home from an awesome evening out with our staff to find him dead on our driveway. We suspected he had collided with a car, although he never leaves our section, except to keep an eye on our 12 month old cat Spartacus, who is a frequent visitor to the Canterbury University pigeon enclosure. Amos would sit at our letterbox and wait for Spartacus to cross the road safely, then Amos would chase him up our drive, basically telling him off.

On arriving home we found Spartacus stuck up our neighbours cabbage tree and Lola hiding in her kennel. They were both freaked out and very upset.

Nothing can prepare you for the sorrow and grief you feel on the loss of a treasured, valued, loved member of your family. It has been 12 years since I lost my faithful, awesome dog Tobias and 2 years since Eli our cat was put to sleep. Spartacus spent days calling and looking for Amos, lying on everything that had Amos's smell on it. Our two teenage sons still cant talk about Amos and Isaac our 10 year old spent a lot of time very upset questioning why!

Amos was a battler. He successfully kept every cat off our section, despite his disability in having an entire hind paw amputated. We suspected as a tiny kitten he contracted Toxoplasmosis which caused hindleg paralysis, forcing me to amputate his left hind paw. This never slowed him up. Other various injuries included a severely fractured pelvis causing osteoarthritis, numerous cat fight wounds from protecting Spartacus and his territory and a near drowning.

He absolutely loved our family. He followed Steve around everywhere watching him mow lawns, hit balls on the court with the kids, cook in the kitchen and lie on Steve at night getting hours of chin scratches. He would hop onto a chariot designed for him especially and the boys would carry him into their rooms. Isaac spent hours in his basket reading or chatting to him. At night Spartacus and Amos would curl up together, after fastidiously grooming each other. Even



Lola would try to get in on the fun. It would be fair to say he slept a lot....he followed the sun around each room and the only thing that got him running was food!! Amos had a ravenous appetite, never turned food down and every food was his favourite. We loved him for that.

Where ever he is I know he's looking after us all. Three months on, it still hurts to talk about him. We look at heaps of photos and pour heaps of love into Spartacus, who even though we know he loves us, he really needs a feline companion around. Another cat to keep him in line, guard the section (as Spartacus isn't that brave) and a play mate.

Through a stroke of luck we have acquired Amos's ¼ brother, Piper, who looks so similar to our boy. Amos's breeder generously offered Piper to ease our loss and help Spartacus out. He is a large, cinnamon, cuddly fella who loves chin rubs as well as food!! And oddly licking our head. He's gentle and beautiful and not one bit afraid of Lola. He has arrived into our busy household and it seems like he's been here all his life. Spartacus is definitely happier and even though Piper is not an exploring companion, he's a regular on the sofas or beds when Spartacus demands a cuddle or groom. Thank you Georgina, we will be forever grateful.

Dr Michele McMaster

