

Our Membership Grows

NCRAOA had a great month expanding our membership base with the addition of five clubs. We appreciate the support of these new clubs and their members.

Working together we can improve animal welfare by educating owners and supporting reasonable laws. United we can ensure that animal welfare remains the true goal, not the philosophical no-animal-use agenda of animal rights activists masquerading as concern for animal well-being.

Tell others about us! The new NCRAOA trifold brochure is available for download from our website: <http://www.ncraoa.com/download.html>

World Rabies Day

Saturday September 8th 2007 is the inaugural World Rabies Day. The goal of this day is to raise global and local awareness about rabies and foster and promote prevention efforts. World Rabies Day was conceived by the Alliance for Rabies Control, a registered charity in the UK. Partnering with the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention and Kansas State University the Alliance has the stated goal of preventing and controlling rabies, a fatal zoonosis, responsible for ~55,000 fatalities each year, mostly in areas with uncontrolled canine rabies such as China, India and the Philippines.

NC Division of Public Health advises:

- ✓ seek veterinary advice if your pet is exposed to rabies; have your pet receive a booster dose of rabies vaccine within 72 hours of exposure (if the pet was currently vaccinated against rabies).
- ✓ leave wildlife and stray dogs and cats alone. Rabies vector species (raccoons, skunks, foxes, and bats) should not be kept as pets, handled, or rehabilitated.
- ✓ do not leave pet food or garbage outside, as it may attract wild or stray animals.
- ✓ keep cats and dogs from roaming; numerous potential rabies exposures occur as a result of a stray or "neighborhood" cat or dog bite. These can be prevented.



Protect Your Pet
Protect Yourself

Per North Carolina law: "The owner of every dog and cat over four months of age shall have the animal vaccinated against rabies."

Anti-Breeding Laws

A local activist writes: *“Demand that laws be passed to stop the killing. \$35 million dollars could be put to better use by demanding mandatory spay/neuter laws!”*

Another activist writes: *“put the financial burden back on the people who are creating the problem. If they want ‘em, let them pay the unaltered pet fee”*

This war cry is carried not only from county to county but to state legislators. The demand is to end breeding or penalize those who do; the premise is to reduce the animal supply, thereby reducing the numbers that are unwanted and at same time reduce costs of animal control.

Legislation is often thought of as a quick solution to high rates of shelter killing. The laws aimed at reducing these numbers typically contain a combination of provisions mandating spay/neuter, restricting breeding, and imposing license fees for unaltered animals. However, the logic of such laws is based on several false assumptions. One: that excessive breeding is the sole source of shelter intake. Two: the \$35 million dollars (or whatever) spent on animal control will be reduced. Shelter intake figures are complex; therefore blaming breeders is false and overly simplistic. Also false is assuming costs will be reduced as budgets represent mainly fixed costs of buildings, vehicles, personnel and animal control provides many services that must be maintained regardless of the number of surrendered pets handled.

How did the idea for mandatory spay/neuter law get started and who supports it?

A “model” version of a mandatory spay/neuter law was developed and is available from the Institute for Animal Rights Law (IARL) - a program of International Society for Animal Rights (ISAR). The breeding prohibition of the model law reads: **“it shall be unlawful to harbor in this jurisdiction any unspayed cat or dog over four months of age or any unneutered cat or dog over four months of age.”**

Even a quick review of ISAR’s website reveals several areas of legal maneuvering in the name of animal rights. In addition to the model spay/neuter law there is an essay on anti-breeding laws; also a pitch for malpractice suits against veterinarians -- *“achieving the lawsuits’ primary goal: imposing a financial penalty on the veterinarian so he’ll be more careful next time. In other words, behavior modification through pain—specifically financial.”*

However, ISAR’s introduction to their organization tells it all:

ISAR, the first organization in the world to use the term Animal Rights in a corporate name, was founded in 1959 to expose and end the injustice of the exploitation of animals and the suffering inflicted on them. There's a commitment in ISAR's name: to bring about rights for animals, the right not to be made victims because they are weak and defenseless.

ISAR believes that because of their sentient nature, animals have rights that are denied them in law and daily life. Animals share more than the planet with humans. Like us, they are capable of knowing pain, fear and other suffering.

We are candid about our goals, and we are tenacious in their pursuit. Often called "ahead of its time" and "the conscience of the movement," ISAR seeks to end, rather than to regulate, uses of animals that deny them their rights and cause them suffering.

The Humane Society of the United States (HSUS), the Progressive Animal Welfare Society, PETA, and other animal rights groups have worked to enact costly dog licensing fees and mandatory pet sterilization laws in dozens of localities. In early 1993, HSUS called on local, county, and state legislators to enact voluntary or mandatory moratorium on dog and cat breeding, mandatory sterilization laws, and other animal control measures. At that time, HSUS president Paul Irwin said “HSUS is not attempting to eliminate companion animals with these measures,” yet the mandatory breeding ban contained these stipulations:

- “A two year moratorium would be imposed on all breeding” and would be lifted when a government-appointed task force “*so recommends*”.
- “During the moratorium, retail pet establishments would be prohibited from selling dogs and cats under the age of six months”
- “Penalties: for each puppy or kitten born in violation of the moratorium, the owner or person possessing the animal shall pay a penalty of \$100 ..”
- “All cat and dog owners [would be required] to purchase a license/mandatory ID tag. For those owners who want to keep their animal [fecund], a \$100 per year surcharge would be required.”
- “If an individual wanted to breed an animal, a breeder permit could be obtained” for an additional \$100. “If a person breeds without a permit” the fine would be \$250 per litter plus \$10 for each animal.

Daniel Oliver writes in “Animal Rights: the inhumane crusade” – “How successful animal rights groups will be in their campaigns to “liberate” pets will largely depend on whether the public understands that the goal of the animal rights movement is not to improve the treatment of pets but to end their breeding and ownership altogether.”

In Their Own Words: *From leaders in the animal rights movement*

"In a perfect world, all other than human animals would be free of human interference, dogs and cats would part of the ecological scheme." *PETA's Statement on Companion Animals*

The problem begins with the Book of Genesis (1:24-28): “And God said: 'Let us make our image, after our likeness; and let them have dominion over the fish of the sea, and over the fowl of the air, and over the cattle, and over all the earth, and over every creeping thing that creepeth upon the earth.’” “In short, the view expressed in the scriptures was that animals were put on earth by God to be used by man.” “...for another two centuries the lot of animals did not improve noticeably even in the civilized world because the attitudes of most people remained rooted in the ideas of Genesis, Aristotle, and Descartes. Before change could come, these ideas had to be discarded. *Institute for Animal Rights website-Some Thoughts on The Rights Of Animals*

No one in this movement is challenging the love that we have for our companion animals. But this love has created a huge, inexcusable problem. We love these animals TO DEATH! And I say TO DEATH for a reason. We love them so much, we breed them, and we breed more of them, and we keep breeding them, and then we breed even more of them, and then we breed even more of them until we end up murdering 10 to 18 million UNLOVED, UNWANTED, HOMELESS dogs and cats ANNUALLY in dog and cat slaughterhouses that we euphemistically refer to as shelters or humane societies. Therefore, breeding animals should be a CRIME until all cages are empty. A moratorium should be mandated immediately until all homeless animals, languishing in city slaughterhouses, have a home. (In fact, human breeding should be illegal as well until all the UNLOVED, UNWANTED, HOMELESS children have been adopted into loving homes.) *Gary Yourofsky-classroom lecturer and founder of ADAPTT*

Diagnosis: Conjunctivitis

September 2007 By Tom Ewing

Most cats will experience this inflammatory eye condition at some point in their lives. Here are the signs to look for.

Your cat's eyes, like yours, are delicate structures made up of various components —the cornea, pupil, iris, lens, retina and so forth — each of which plays a role in enabling the animal's keen vision. While the feline eye is generally sturdy and resistant to injuries and disease, a wide variety of disorders, such as glaucoma and cataracts, can impair a cat's vision and even, in some cases, [IMGCAP(1)]lead to blindness.

According to Thomas Kern, DVM, an associate professor of ophthalmology at Cornell University's College of Veterinary Medicine, the most common of all feline eye disorders is conjunctivitis, an inflammation of the thin mucous membrane (conjunctiva) that lines the inner surface of the eyelids and coats the outer surface of the eyeball. "Among primary-care veterinarians at a typical cat clinic," he says, "conjunctivitis is probably the most frequently seen eye disorder in cats of all ages, and it is certainly the most common among younger cats. In any case, most cats will experience at least a mild episode of conjunctivitis at some point in their lives."

A Vulnerable Tissue

The conjunctiva serves several purposes, explains Dr. Kern. Most importantly, this slippery membrane provides the eyeball with lubrication by functioning as a conduit for tears that fall onto the surface of the eye and are distributed by "the blinking phenomenon," as he calls it. Furthermore, the conjunctiva harbors certain antibodies that may help an animal ward off some eye infections. But several microorganisms that cats commonly carry can trigger an inflammatory immune response that is responsible for the great majority of feline conjunctivitis cases.

The clinical signs of the condition can be evident in either one or both eyes and will typically be observed as well in the third eyelid — the membrane positioned in the inner corner of a cat's eye, between the lower eyelid and the eyeball. The signs include squinting, frequent blinking and the presence of a discharge that can, depending on the cause of the conjunctivitis, be either colorless and watery or thick and dark-colored. The condition also tends to cause the conjunctiva and third eyelid to become swollen and red.

Common Causes

Environmental irritants, such as dust or airborne chemical substances, can cause conjunctivitis, as can exposure to certain outdoor plants — a condition called allergic conjunctivitis. "But these potential causes," says Dr. Kern, "are not much of an issue. The most common cause by far is infection with either herpesvirus or calicivirus or with one of two bacteria — chlamydia or mycoplasma." Conjunctivitis, he adds, is also relatively common in cats whose immune systems have been compromised by infection with feline immunodeficiency virus (FIV) or feline leukemia virus (FeLV).

All cats, regardless of breed or gender, are susceptible to conjunctivitis.



The condition is not heritable, but age is clearly a determining factor. "Although conjunctivitis can occur in older cats, this is an infection that occurs primarily in young animals — not kittens, but very young and young adult cats," says Dr. Kern, "and it is most prevalent in catteries and other multiple-cat environments. In the course of their development, young cats may pick up a virus or a bacterium from an older cat. And, like kids, they

play together and pass it back and forth. Sooner or later, they all get it, and it resolves either with or without treatment. At that point, they will typically develop an immunity and they may never get it again."

An exception, he notes, is infection with herpesvirus. "These cats," says Dr. Kern, "will have a mild case of conjunctivitis and will get over it, but they will harbor the virus in their tissues for their whole lifetimes, and the condition will recur periodically, the way that cold sores appear from time to time in humans who carry herpesvirus." Infection with this virus can also cause inflammation and severe ulceration of the cornea (keratitis), a condition that can lead to blindness. Keratitis is most likely to occur in very young kittens before or shortly after their eyelids separate.

Treating the Condition

Cats that have conjunctivitis usually get over the disorder without any serious consequences. Says Dr. Kern: "Most veterinarians will see a cat once or twice and prescribe the use of antibiotic eyedrops or an ointment three or four times a day for two to three weeks, by which time the discharge and other signs should disappear. If the cornea is involved, we'll probably assume that we're dealing with herpesvirus, so we'll use topical antiviral drugs along with antibiotics. We won't be able to cure it, but we will try to eliminate the infection from the surface of the eye and let it heal." In most cases, he points out, conjunctivitis will self-resolve with no medication at all. However, he advises owners to seek veterinary care if a cat's apparent eye discomfort and discharge persist for longer than a week or so. At that point, prompt evaluation is highly recommended, he says.

<http://www.catwatchnewsletter.com/>

Leadership vs. Dominance:

Who Leads Your Human-Canine Pack?

By Myrna Milani, BS, DVM

(Originally written for *DogWatch*, a newsletter for the general public from the Cornell University College of Veterinary Medicine)



More and more behaviorists and trainers seem to be talking about owners developing leadership skills, but I'm not exactly sure what that means, let alone how to do it. Can you tell me more?

Back in the early days of animal behavior, the idea that dominant animals ruled the pack with an iron paw (and teeth!) became firmly entrenched. However, the idea that the winner of the fight was the leader probably represents a human belief firmly entrenched in sports and politics which we imposed on animals rather than vice versa. Aside from the fact that the heavy-pawed approach didn't hold true once scientists began studying animals for longer periods of time, few owners who considered their dogs more like family members felt comfortable appropriating these force-based techniques for their own use.

To test your knowledge about dominance and leadership, take the following quiz:

Two dogs, Salt and Pepper, meet each other for the first time. They sniff each other out and, because dogs need a stable pack structure in order to feel comfortable, Salt decides he should be leader of their pack of two. He puts his front paws on Pepper's shoulders, but Pepper refuses to go down and a fight ensues. Finally, Salt pins Pepper to the ground. Which dog is the leader?

Although we can say that Salt is the more dominant dog, we can't say anything about his leadership skills until the two dogs meet again. If when they do, Salt only needs to look at Pepper and Pepper immediately displays subordinate body language, then Salt can claim the leadership title. However, if Pepper doesn't back down and two dogs fight again, and even if Salt wins that and every other fight, Salt hasn't proven his leadership.

Thus the mark of a true leader is the ability to control without force. And, in fact, wild animals who rely on brute force to maintain their status typically get eliminated from the gene pool because this approach requires so much energy.

Within the human-canine pack, our dogs look to us to provide leadership. If we don't, they'll fill the void here, too. When pets lacking confidence find themselves in this position, we can appreciate why they become intolerant of visitors or other changes in the household, or become frantic when their human subordinates go off and leave them, or thunder assaults them from above.

How do you know if your dog recognizes you as leader? Think about the different ways you interact with your pet: Leaders initiate, followers react. How much time do you spend reacting to your dog? For example, every time Salt barks, his owner jumps up and takes him out. He then bolts through the door in front of her. When she comes home from work, he leaps up and carries on until she pays attention to him. He leans against her, licks, nudges, and paws her when she reads or watches television, and won't stop until she pets him or tells him to stop.

But if she tells him to stop these canine leadership displays and he does, doesn't that mean she's the leader? Not if the behavior persists. If Salt repeats the negative behavior, her commands simply become part of the process that reaffirms his leadership status, not hers.

What can owners do to put themselves back in charge? First, ignore pushy behaviors. Second, don't do anything for the dog until he does something for you first; if Salt wants attention, he must sit or hold a down for five minutes first. That display earns him a pat and a simple, "Good dog," not a gushing, treat-punctuated outpouring that most dogs equate with human subordination rather than leadership. Three, set the dog up to choose to do the right thing rather than become involved in power struggles after the pushy behavior occurs. Four, only give a command once; repeating it merely teaches the dog not to obey.

Practically all dogs will cede the leadership position and all the negative fear-based behaviors that go with it if their owners consistently relate to them as leaders long enough for the animals to internalize this change in the pack structure. After all, dogs weren't designed to police up a pack of humans who live in complex environments and come and go as they please. However, assuming this role often requires that humans change beliefs about their relationships with their dogs. Owners who choose to believe that force works or that pushy canine behaviors communicate love can never function as true leaders in their human-canine packs. Under those circumstances, we can only hope that the dog lives in an environment where this doesn't lead to avoidable canine behavioral and medical problems.

Want your dog to recognize you as leader? Then act like a true leader first.

<http://www.mmilani.com/leadership-vs-dominance.html> *Reprinted by NCRAOA with permission*

I read it on the Web:

A pet owner's guide to finding good pet health information online

[By Christie Keith, Special to SF Gate](#)

Tuesday, August 21, 2007

Since I'm a pet writer and basically obsessed with animals, I belong to dozens of pet-related e-mail lists, many of them about health issues. And not a day goes by that I don't see at least one person spreading information that's completely wrong. I don't mean expressing an opinion with which I disagree; I mean someone solemnly informing the group that the sky is orange and the moon is made of green cheese. Even worse, having worked with veterinarians for more than a decade now, I've discovered that an awful lot of those people then go into their vet's office and share these gems of misinformation with their pet's health care provider, introduced with that phrase guaranteed to make the vet's blood pressure rise: "I read on the Web that ..."

And that's a shame, because in addition to being a terrible place to find pet health information, the Web can also be a wonderful place to do research and connect with other pet owners facing similar issues for support, networking, and education. The trick is in figuring out how to evaluate the animal health information you find, how to locate the reliable stuff when you need it, and how to discuss it with your pet's veterinarian in a way that won't make him or her tune you out before you even get started.

It's the source, not the medium

Some online advice is no more reliable than what a fellow dog owner will say to you at the dog park, while other information might be the online version of a peer-reviewed veterinary medical journal. So the fact that you read it online is irrelevant. The source of the information, and its reliability is what you need to evaluate.

When you read information on the Web, look for citations to veterinary literature and specific references to studies and clinical research. It's true that just because something is cited in a medical journal doesn't mean it's correct, nor that it proves the point it's being used to support, but it's more likely to be reliable than a completely unsubstantiated statement. For example, if someone makes a statement of fact ("Twenty-seven percent of all cats have dry skin"), that statement is much more meaningful if the source of the information is given.

And here's a hint: When you ask your vet about something you read online, don't preface your question with, "I read on the Web that ..." Instead, read the Web site carefully and determine where the writer got his information. Then you can mention that a source that your vet is familiar with, such as Kirk's Current Veterinary Therapy or the Journal of the American Veterinary Medical Association, has published something you'd like to ask her about. This not only increases the chances your veterinarian will be receptive to what you want to discuss, but also helps get you in the habit of looking for the source of information you read.

Think critically

We don't always have the luxury of waiting for double-blind studies in peer-reviewed journals to be published. The [pet food recall](#) last March was one such example; Pet owners had to make decisions based on very little information, coming at them from a wide variety of sources.

In situations like that, pet owners have to use other criteria to decide if a source is credible or not. For example, has this been a reliable source of information in the past on other, similar issues? Do the people involved with the Web site or blog have any financial or professional affiliations that might make them less than objective about the issue? Do they have passionate agendas about health, nutrition, or other issues that might also compromise their objectivity? Is the reporting sensationalistic or a regurgitation of stock responses?

Watch out for all-or-nothing statements praising or condemning a specific drug, procedure, therapy, or approach to health. A treatment that's right for one animal may be wrong for another. Get your information from sources that look at issues on their merits and recognize the shades of gray inherent in genuine scientific inquiry.

It's probably not a bad idea to keep these guidelines in mind even when looking at scientific research and studies in peer-reviewed journals. [A 2005 article](#) in the Journal of the American Medical Association found that "almost one-third of the top papers that appeared in top journals over a 13-year period from 1990 to 2003, had been either contradicted or found to have potentially exaggerated results."

Where does that leave the average pet owner looking for information online? Walking a fine line, but not an impossible one. Just try to have both an open mind and a functioning b.s. detector, and try to use a variety of sources instead of relying on only one.

Pretty is as pretty does

There is a lot of information on the Internet, and a lot of it is well-organized, searchable, well-written, and totally wrong. So just because it's pretty doesn't mean it's reliable. However, usually if information on a site is badly spelled and punctuated, not easily searched, not well-organized, and hard to navigate, it's less likely to be reliable. Although there are exceptions, some of which I note below, as a general rule, if someone is dedicated to providing well-substantiated information, they'll probably be highly motivated to make sure it's well-presented, too.

Follow the money

I mentioned looking for hidden financial conflicts of interest already, but I'm frequently amazed at how blindly people put their faith in information given to them by sources with a completely open financial conflict. Press releases and point-of-sale "articles" are never a good place to get health information for your pets. Whether it's a multi-billion dollar drug company or a tiny little Web site selling dog food or herbs, get your information from someone who isn't going to make -- or lose -- money as a result of your buying decisions.

One other tip: Testimonials are not evidence, proof, or documentation. They are advertising. Ignore them.

Who to believe

So, where do you start in the search for reliable pet health information online? Start with a careful Google search. Begin by typing in the name of the condition or disease (and spell it correctly!), and then add the species of your pet. This is a good search: "Struvite stones dogs." This is a bad search: "Stones."

Go through the returns using the guidelines in this article to decide if the information is reliable or not: Does it give citations to the veterinary literature? Is the site well-organized, correctly spelled, and does it look professional? Do they sell anything? Are they making claims that are very different from those you're seeing on other sites?

The following sites will probably come up frequently in your searches, and while you should investigate and evaluate the information you find on them, they're among the most reliable sources for pet health information for pet owners on the Web:

VeterinaryPartner.com is the pet owner Web site operated by the Veterinary Information Network, the oldest online veterinary database and community in the world. The information here is medically solid and, due to its relationship with VIN, a bit more on the cutting edge than many other mainstream pet health sites. It also has information on more exotic pets, such as iguanas, ferrets, and "pocket pets."

AltVetMed: There's probably no single veterinary health topic on which you'll find more bad information than alternative medicine. It's a jungle out there, and while it may be free of pesticides and toxic waste, it's unfortunately full of gullible pet owners and people selling them snake oil. One place where you won't get into trouble is AltVetMed, a site founded in 1996 -- prehistory in terms of the Web -- by holistic veterinarians Jan Agar Bergeron, VMD, and Susan Gayle Wynn, DVM. It hosts a wide assortment of articles on complementary and alternative veterinary medicine, and some good information on conventional medicine as well.

[Vet Techs](#): A blog run by licensed veterinary technician Nancy Campbell, this site has information on lots of health care basics, including how to understand your pet's blood work results and advice on how to communicate with your veterinarian. Cited as one of the 10 best pet health Web sites by Fox News. Disclaimer: I have contributed articles on veterinary drugs to this blog.

[Cornell Feline Health Center](#): Established by the late Dr. James Richards, Cornell University's feline health Web site, like the center in New York that operates it, is an unparalleled resource for cat owners, and the information you'll find there is eminently trustworthy and frequently cutting edge.

[DogAware.com](#): Site owner Mary Straus is a researcher and writer for the Whole Dog Journal, and she has exhaustively assembled information on canine nutrition as well as a variety of health issues including arthritis and kidney disease. Her approach is very much based in science, but she's more open to alternative and complementary approaches than many sites. Although the site layout and design are not slick, the quality of the information is first rate.

[Veterinary Anesthesia Support Group](#): This is the perfect example of the old adage, "You can't judge a book by its cover." This site is badly designed and hard to navigate, and yet contains the most reliable, important, and up-to-date information on veterinary anesthesia and analgesia (pain management) anywhere. Run by the anesthesia/analgesia consultant veterinarians of the Veterinary Information Network.

[Martindale's Virtual Veterinary Center - Veterinary Journals](#): A useful listing of the Web sites of all major and most minor veterinary journals.

[PubMed](#): This is a U.S. government database containing over 17 million citations from virtually every major human and veterinary medical journal in the country, dating back to the 1950s. It can be overwhelming, but it's also an unequalled resource. There is an [excellent guide](#) to using PubMed, written by one of its indexers, on CancerGuide.org.

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<http://sfgate.com/cgi-bin/article.cgi?f=/g/a/2007/08/21/petscol.DTL>

Protecting your right to responsibly own and breed animals.

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For more information on animal health, training, reports on pet issues, animal sheltering, or to learn the difference between animal welfare and animal rights – visit our website at www.ncraoa.com

North Carolina Responsible Animal Owners Alliance, Inc. (NCRAOA) is a statewide organization of animal owners and professionals dedicated to animal welfare, responsible animal ownership, and maintaining the rights of responsible citizens to breed and own animals. NCRAOA, a 501(c)3 organization, provides education and information to the public and supports reasonable and humane animal welfare laws.

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