

SHAMROCK DIGEST

July/Aug 2009

A NEW FACE

Many of you have already met Christy, our new receptionist. Christy joined our team after Brenda left to pursue a once in a lifetime opportunity to live in Australia for six months.

Christy joins us with five and a half years of experience in a veterinary clinic – three of those years as a receptionist. Christy pets include two dogs, a cat and a horse.

And for those of you wondering, yes Shamrock has a Christy, a Kristina, a Chris and a Cris. Combine that with our two Pams, and things could get a little confusing!

PAWS FOR A CAUSE

The time for this annual fundraiser is drawing near! The walk this year will again take place at Marina Park in Comox.

On September 13th, from 9:30am until 12:30pm, join the festivities, watch demonstrations, participate in the treasure hunt and win door prizes.

The goal of the day is to raise \$20,000 in funds for our local SPCA branch. The 3km walk begins at 10am. The SPCA website has more information at www.sPCA.bc.ca/walk/comox.html



FOOD DONATIONS

The BCSPCA has recently announced that they no longer need donations of dry dog, cat, kitten or puppy food, thanks to Hill's Science Diet pet food company. Hill's canned foods are still required.

Foods still on the wish list include: Hill's senior dog and cat foods, food for small animals, birds and kitten milk replacer (KMR).

LOCAL AND WILD

The Comox Valley is home to two very successful groups helping local wildlife.

The Mountaineer Avian Rescue Society (MARS) cares for injured or abandoned wildlife. As their name suggests, they primarily care for birds, although seal pups and fawns receive care in the late spring and early summer. MARS provides care for many species on site; they also facilitate care and transport of animals that are sent to other specialized facilities.

The Vancouver Island Marmot Recovery Foundation was formed to reintroduce captive bred Vancouver Island marmots to their former ranges. There are many theories proposed why this species is bordering on extinction, but it is thought that clear cutting practices combined with predation has led to such low numbers. In 2001, there were only 25 animals in the wild – in 2008, 59 captive bred marmots were released into the wild! The goal is a wild population of 450 to 600 marmots in three natural ranges.

For links to either of these groups, visit www.shamrockvetclinic.ca.

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DOGS & TABLE SCRAPS

Do you feed your dog table scraps? Just a little bit? Just once in awhile? Ever wonder why it is that we generally don't approve of giving table scraps to your dog?

There are multiple reasons - dogs fed from the table are frequently overweight, they often turn into picky eaters and there is also the possibility that they can develop pancreatitis. This is a painful condition that can lead to euthanasia.

Pancreatitis can be caused by feeding our canine friends fatty treats – meat trimmings, juicy bones and licking the gravy pan. Unfortunately, overweight older dogs that are fed a high fat treat are most at risk for developing pancreatitis.

One of the pancreas' functions is to produce enzymes that aid in digestion. When the pancreas becomes irritated and inflamed, the digestive enzymes overflow and start to digest the pancreas and surrounding organs.

Dogs with pancreatitis often have painful abdomens, diarrhea, and increased temperature. They are vomiting and are not interested in eating or drinking.

Pancreatitis is diagnosed using a combination of the physical exam, history and blood tests. Recently, a blood test has become available that is able to detect pancreatitis in about 85% of canine patients.

Treatment for pancreatitis often involves hospitalization, IV fluids, medication to control pain and no food or water.

Cats can also develop pancreatitis, however most cases of feline pancreatitis are what is called 'idiopathic', which means we don't know what causes them. Only about one third of cats display painful abdomens, however almost all are lethargic and not interested in eating.

COUGAR AVOIDANCE

We live on Vancouver Island, and there is no doubt that the big cats are around – we just don't often see them. Cougars may view our pets and small children as prey, especially when young and establishing their own territories or when stressed by lack of natural prey. Cougar may also follow their natural prey into more populated areas as our cities and towns encroach on forested areas.

To prevent an encounter:

- Walk in groups, rather than alone.
- Make noise while walking to avoid startling the wildlife.
- Carry a sturdy walking stick that could be used to fend off an animal.
- Keep children and pets close.
- Be alert, especially in dense cover and when sitting, crouching or lying down.
- Avoid dead animals that cougar may feed on.

If you do meet a cougar:

- Stop, stand upright and don't run.
- Face the animal and talk to it calmly; slowly back away. Leave the cougar an escape route.
- Try to appear larger. Wave your arms, raise your jacket over your head, and stay higher than the animal.
- Most cougars will retreat. If the cougar becomes aggressive, shout, wave your arms and throw things at the animal.
- Stay on your feet. Don't turn your back or take your eyes off the cougar.
- Convince the animal that you are a danger to it.

In case of an attack, FIGHT! Use your walking stick, fists and feet.

SUMMER CLOSURES

We will be closed on Wednesday, July 1st to celebrate Canada Day.

We will also be closed Saturday, August 1st and Monday August 3rd. Regular office hours resume on Tuesday the 4th.