



## Welcome to our new staff members

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*Back row left to right: Jan James, groomer; Lisa and Tammy, receptionists; Doris, practice manager; Nikki, AHT. Front row left to right: Dr. Kristina Ringness; Jessie and Colleen, assistants.*

Crescent Falls is rapidly growing, thanks to all of our loyal clients and the referrals you give us. To continue to offer you the top quality service we'd like to think is our hall-

mark, we've hired a few more staff members.

Lisa, one of two new receptionists is a seasoned veteran up front. Always there with a smile, and able to answer all of your questions,

Lisa has worked as a veterinary receptionist for 10 years, and loves her job.

Tammy is newer to the reception position but keen to learn and is fitting in very well. She

has worked in vet clinics for 7 years and welcomes the challenge of front end work.

Lisa and Tammy are currently job-sharing the reception position as they both have little ones at home; we're happy to be able to provide the opportunity for working Mom's to enjoy their children and a career.

Jessie has joined us as a Saturday morning assistant to see if animal health technology is a career she would like to train for. Her love of animals and ability to learn quickly have made her a joy to have around.

### Does your pet need a dental cleaning?

- Bad breath is often the first sign you will notice
- Drooling and unwillingness to allow you to look in his or her mouth
- Genetics plays a significant role in dental disease
- Small breed dogs are the highest risk

## Heartworm Season Just Around the Corner

Heartworm is a parasite that can live in the blood stream of our dogs and cats. Our pets acquire this infection by being bitten by an infected mosquito. This mosquito must take a blood meal from a heartworm positive dog; the larva lives in the mosquito for 2-4 weeks,

during which time we must have warm summer temperatures (above 21 degrees Celsius) and then this mosquito must bite your dog or cat, and inject the larva. Over a period of several years, this larva grows and multiplies, eventually resulting in Heartworm

disease where we have large worms living in the pulmonary vessels and heart chambers, causing severe heart failure.

There are only a few positive dogs in the North Okanagan, none of which have become *(continued on page 3)*



*Oscar, our garbage can kitty*

## *Our Kitty Oscar*

Oscar is the newest member of the clinic cat family. He came to us one summer morning, found behind the clinic in the dumpster. As staff members arrived, we heard meowing coming from the dumpster and quickly realized a small orange tabby kitten was crouching, terrified in the bottom. Nikki and Dr. Ringness did some dumpster diving to rescue this rather wild snarling kitten. Other than a few scratches on his nose, he appeared unhurt,

and the gradual process of socializing him to human contact began. Iva, a friend and fellow Animal Health Technologist suggested the name Oscar (as Sesame Street's Oscar the Grouch lives in the garbage can), and it was decided he could join the clinic staff.

Today, he is a feisty young cat, who likes to give Vanna, Maria and Mango (the other clinic cats) a run for their money. He

is comfortable with the clinic staff, but is still quite shy around visitors, so it may be a few more months before you see him greeting you as you come through the front doors.

*By Tammy*

*Tammy will be writing a series of articles for the newsletter designed to keep you up to date on our short and long term resident cats and dogs.*

### Grooming Your New Puppy

Congratulations! You have just welcomed a new member to your family. There are many things you will be teaching your new puppy; learning to enjoy the grooming process is one of them.

Whether your dog will require the services of a professional groomer or not, all dogs need regular grooming throughout their lives. With your puppy on your lap or non-slip raised surface, gently brush him all over. Praise him when he stays still and reward frequently with treats. If he struggles or mouths the brush or your hand, calmly tell him "NO" and continue on. Make sure to handle his feet, massaging his toes as well as his ears. Clean under the eyes with a warm wet cloth if the eyes are prone to discharge.

By twelve weeks of age, if appropriate, your puppy should pay his first visit to the groomer. This will be a "get to know you" session. It should include a bath and blow dry, comb out, and nail trim, all with cuddles and cookies. A regular schedule can be discussed with your groomer at that time, and any grooming questions will be cheerfully answered.

## *The Romy Fund*

We are honoured to announce that due to the generosity of some of our clients, we have been able to set up a fund to help animals who need help but perhaps do not have an owner who can afford the surgical or medical treatment necessary to save their lives. Named in honour of the loved Standard Poodle of Hildi

Steuart, the first client to make a generous donation, we thank Hildi for her thoughtfulness.

Wilma Secord is our second donator. After finding a stray cat in very bad shape outside her door, and bringing it in after hours, only to find out the next day that the injuries sustained were too serious, and

we could not save her, Wilma wanted to make sure there was monetary help for the next animal who came in like this.

We are so thrilled that we have clients who wish to help these less fortunate animals, and will keep you updated on donations and cases for which the funds are used.

## *On a Personal Note*

Nikki is our Animal Health Technologist. She graduated from the AHT program at the Northern Alberta Institute of Technology in 1997, and has since been back and forth from the Okanagan to Edmonton in various job in veterinary clinics and emergency facilities. Her love of animals ranges from

the usual pets such as cats and dogs, to more exotic animals such as large cage birds and lizards.

Currently, Nikki's animal family consists of her black lab, Holly and two cats, George and Purrelli. Purrelli was brought into the clinic half

dead as a stray kitten. He received the love and care he needed and soon went home with Nikki.

Nikki enjoys agility classes with Holly in her spare time - a great activity for exercise and to spend time together.

*By Colleen*

## Visits to the Vet Clinic

*Lisa, one of our new receptionists, will be writing a series of articles designed to inform you about some of the routine procedures your pet may undergo here at the clinic.*

When you book your pet for a spay or neuter with our hospital, I will ask you a few questions about your pet. For example, how old is he or she and of course whether this is a dog or cat. Then I will ask you to remove their food dish at 8:00pm and not to offer any more food during the night and morning. I will inform you that we recommend a tattoo which is placed in their right ear for identification purposes, this is optional. As well, that an intravenous catheter will be placed; this is a standard procedure with every anaesthetic that we do and is there to assist in the event of an emergency and will be removed before your pet goes home. If your pet is a female, I will explain that we like to keep these girls hospitalized over night and that she will be able to go home the following day, depending on her recovery. Finally, I will ask you to bring

your pet in on the day of surgery between 8:00 and 8:30 in the morning.

When you bring your pet in, I will have a few things to go over with you, so if possible, allow a few extra minutes. I will need to go over an authorization form. This form allows us to do the described surgery. First, a phone number that we can reach you at is very important. Then I will ask you to read the form and check one of the two boxes. If for some reason something comes up during surgery and we are unable to reach you at the phone number you have left, I will need to know what to instruct Dr Ringness; either do whatever is necessary, or not to do anything extra until we speak with you. This is why the phone number where we can reach is so important. I will then ask you to sign and date the form. Finally, I will ask you to call between 1:00 and 2:00pm to find out how things went if you wish.

When surgery is done, and you've come to take your pet home, there will be take home

instructions to go over before you leave. Number one, keeping your pet quiet for the next 24 hours if they are going home the same day as surgery (male dogs and cats), as they've just had an anaesthetic. Offer only small amount food after 6:00 pm, some animals may gorge themselves after fasting. You can offer water when you get home, but again, only small amounts. Do your best to limit exercise for the next 10-14 days. There is the potential for damaging the incision site if your pet is running and jumping during the healing process. Absolutely NO licking or chewing at the incision site. This may cause inflammation, infection, or worse, the sutures may come out! If you notice this, a cone collar is needed immediately. Even while wearing these, your pet can eat, drink, and sleep. For female dogs, the sutures come out in 14 days, we will ask you to come back in for those to be removed and a quick recheck at that time at no charge to you.

Most importantly, if you have any questions, please do not hesitate to call us 24 hours a day. *By Lisa*



*This kitty is about to have his pre-anaesthetic exam to help ensure he is fit for surgery today.*

**A phone number where we can reach you during the day is essential in case unforeseen issues arise during the procedure.**

## Heartworm Season - continued

*(continued from page 1)*

positive here. While the risk of exposure in our area is slim, if you travel with your dog to the Southern States, Winnipeg, or Southern Ontario, the risk is much higher. The best method to combat this disease is with the prevention medication.

Taken once a month during the months when infection may occur (May to October here in the Okanagan), it provides the protection to eliminate the larva when they are first introduced. As well, this medication is an effective intestinal dewormer, an important part of your pets health-

care.

Earlier, we mentioned cats are also at risk. While it is possible for heartworm to infect cats, it is reasonably rare in low risk areas such as ours, and is not recommended to use preventative treatments in cats at this time.

*By Nikki*



*Remember, heartworm prevention is a good intestinal dewormer as well.*

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*Crescent Falls Veterinary Hospital strives to give you and your pets the premium service you are seeking. From the smile at the front desk, to Dr. Ringness herself answering the phone on all emergency/after-hour calls, we believe in being accountable to you.*



*Kayla was a happy 18 month old Standard Poodle*

## *Interesting Cases*

This issue I thought I'd highlight a very sad but important case we saw in the hospital a few months ago.

Kayla, a young Standard Poodle, presented to the hospital with nasal discharge, sneezing, not able to breath easily (due to the congestion). After several weeks of diagnostics, treatment with antibiotics, antifungals and anti-inflammatories, Kayla succumbed to the disease which had now entered her central nervous system. It was only after our final tests to the lab that we were able to make a positive diagnosis of a fungal infection. Although this had

been on the original list of things we had treated for, I was unaware that there is a particularly aggressive fungal organism which is resistant to most of known anti-fungal medications. Cases of pets and people involving this particular strain of the fungus *Cryptococcus* have been isolated to a region around Parksville on Vancouver Island (Kayla had visited Parksville 6 months prior to any symptoms of the disease), and a few cases isolated to the Abbotsford area. If your pets have traveled or will be traveling to these areas, and develop any respiratory symptoms

(sneezing, discharge) do not wait! Contact us immediately and make us aware that you have been to these areas in the last year. The sooner this disease can be diagnosed and treatment started, the more successful the treatment will be.

*By Dr K Ringness*