

BLOCKHOUSE BAY VETERINARY CENTRE NEWSLETTER



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Dear Client,

I realise that by the time you read this newsletter the weather has probably cooled down considerably and you may wonder why I have written about dealing with the heat. Clearly it was very hot when I was writing this and all I could think about was cooling down.

The summer has been very busy for everyone. Geoff and our new nurse Ashleigh went to Tonga to do charitable vet work. You can read more about that on page 3.

Jacqueline did the Tauranga half ironman in January and qualified to represent NZ in her age group at this distance. She then got up the next morning and did the 4 km swim around Mount Maunganui.

One of our nurses Natalie has left us to move up North which is very sad as she was a great member of our team. The timing worked out well though as our trainee nurse Ashleigh had just finished her course so has joined us full time.

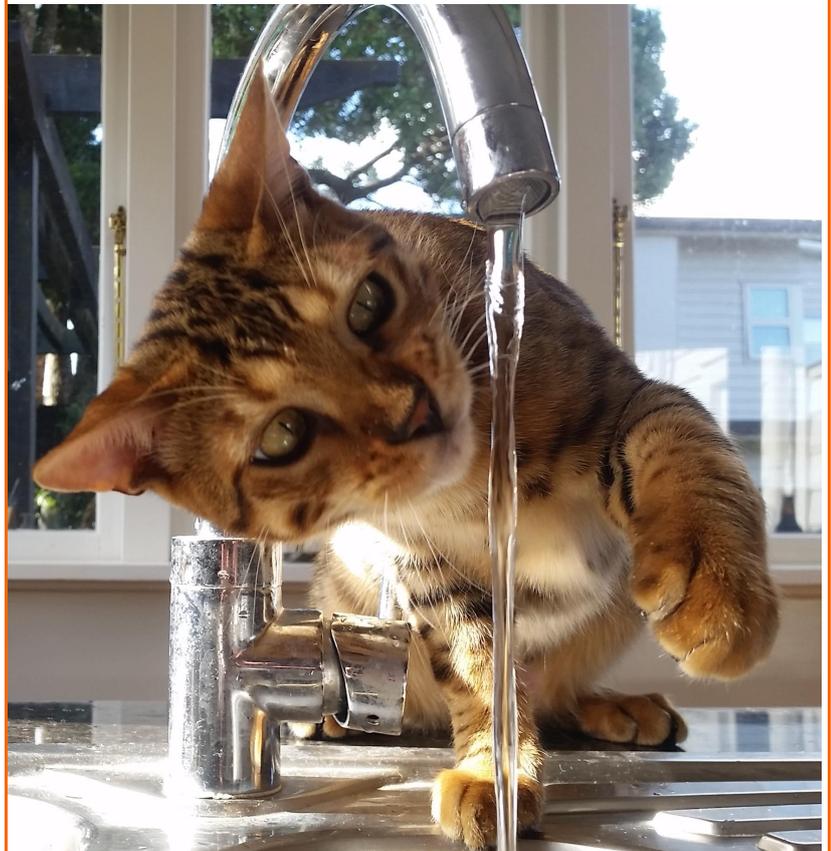
Look forward to seeing you soon.

Lance, Jacqueline, Geoff, Jess & the Team



Ashleigh our newest team member.

11th Annual Blockhouse Bay Vets Pet Photo Competition Winner.



The winner this year is a photo of MacGuyver about to have a drink of water from the tap, taken by his owner Ryan Hibberd.

MacGuyver will be flea and worm free this year thanks to a years supply of ADVOCATE kindly donated by Bayer.

A small selection of entries can be seen on our web site www.blockhousebayvets.co.nz under the gallery page. This year we had the most entries by a long way. So if your photo is not shown it does not mean it wasn't a great picture and we certainly enjoyed seeing what your pets have been up to.

Warning– Dog thieves are among us.

From a dramatic heading like that you are probably thinking that criminal gangs are out there snatching dogs for illegal dog fighting rings.

The dog thieves I am talking about are usually very nice people who love dogs and genuinely care about their welfare.

These people do not have the intention of stealing a dog and will often be offended if someone called them a thief.

I am talking about people who find a dog and keep it. This is actually illegal and is technically stealing.



If you find a stray dog you should contact Auckland animal control and arrange for it to be picked up by the council as soon as practical. Alternatively your local vet can scan for a microchip. In most cases the owner will collect the dog directly from the vet clinic and the dog never goes to the animal shelter. I often find that when I suggest that the dog should be picked up by dog control, people look at me as if I am the devil making such a suggestion. The idea of sending a dog to the “pound” is abhorrent to many people.

So why do we have this perception? It probably goes back to “Lady and the Tramp” and every other children’s cartoon where the dog control officer is made out to be an evil man who catches dogs and sends them to dog jail where they are put on death row.

The reality is quite different. Of the dogs that end up at the shelter, 75% of dogs are reunited with their owner. A large percentage of the remainder are re-homed to new owners and only a small percentage are euthanased because they are not suitable to be re-homed.

I must admit that I would not be keen for my dog Breeze to end up at the pound, however I would much prefer this option than the distress of not knowing where she was. If I found out that someone had been looking after her for several days I would be furious that they had not contacted a vet or animal control immediately. I would certainly not be giving them a reward.

I see Breeze as a member of my family and I know many of you see your pets the same. Just imagine your small child wandered off at the park. A stranger takes the child home and looks after it for a week. Do you think that person would be thanked or arrested by the police?

If you find a stray dog then please do the right thing and take it to a vet or contact the council. Keeping it at your house and putting up flyers or notices on lost and found web sites is not acceptable.

If you are genuinely worried about the pets welfare then you can always re-home it from animal control if its owners can’t be located.

Just think how you would feel if your dog was missing and someone else kept it?

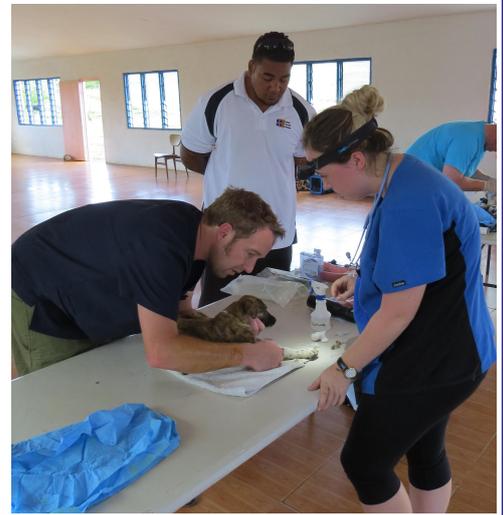
Life as a veterinarian in a busy clinic can be stressful at times, which is why I love it when you guys send me the odd funny email to brighten up my day. I thought I would share this one with you of a Golden retriever (no bias on my part) and his friends.



Tonga trip for Geoff and Ashleigh

At the beginning of December 2015, Blockhouse Bay Vet Nurse Ashleigh Grey and I headed to Tonga as part of a Unitec/SPAW charity trip to look after the pets and livestock in Tonga. Tonga has a limited on-island veterinary service but this deficit is helped out by a charity organisation called South Pacific Animal Welfare (SPAW), a New Zealand based animal charity (see www.spaw.org.nz for more information on the good work SPAW does for animals in the Pacific).

For this trip a group of twelve Unitec veterinary nursing students (inc Ashleigh), two vet nurses, and five vets (inc me) left for the main island of Tongatapu in the Kingdom of Tonga to work alongside the local Ministry of Agriculture staff, providing the veterinary service there for a week.



Geoff and Ashleigh hard at work.

The usual home comforts of Blockhouse Bay Vet Centre are definitely not present in Tonga but despite this the charity mission was a resounding success. There are no gas anaesthetic machines, x-ray facilities, blood machines, drip pumps, hospital cages, surgical monitoring devices, or laboratory services in Tonga. We had picnic tables, intravenous anaesthetics and the skills of the veterinary nurses and students looking after the animals to achieve what we did. The heat and the constant supply of animals placed huge demands on all the vets, nurses and students in attendance but they all excelled and allowed over 200 cats and dogs to receive surgery; many more receiving health checks and treatments for illness and disease, and a huge number of cattle, pigs, goats and horses treated for various medical ailments.

During the week the students assisted with de-sexing operations on cats and dogs, leg amputations, the removal of a puppy's eye, calving a cow, treating a goat that had been bitten by a dog, dealt with lots of pigs with mange, shaved a very hairy Cocker Spaniel, and even helped remove a broken tooth from the former King's dog. A great overall trip and looking forward to 2016.

Hair cuts in cats- A good idea?

It has been a hot summer and we have all been sweating it out at times.

Have you ever wondered whether your cat gets too hot?

I have a fluffy ginger cat called Radish who really doesn't like being groomed.

We sedate Radish about twice a year and clip her entire body leaving her tail head and feet unclipped.

She does look a bit funny when first clipped but within a few weeks it looks really good. The surprising thing I found was how much happier and more active she was after her hair cut. Instead of sleeping all day she would be out in the garden playing.

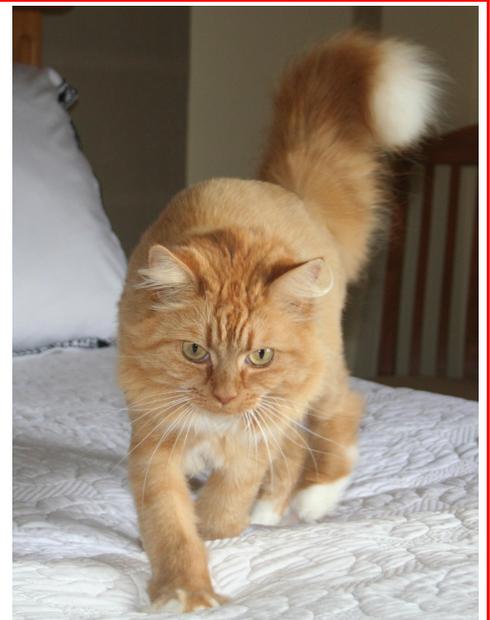
We do the same for many of our clients cats and many of them also find the cat is more active. It appears to me that the cats are cooler and feel more comfortable.

If you want to do this at home you are welcome but be warned avoid scissors or use with extreme caution. I have lost count of the number of cats I have stitched up from an owner cutting a knot off.

Clippers are much better and safer. Don't expect your cat to co-operate though. Some are very tolerant but most are not.

At the clinic we sedate/anaesthetise all our cats for grooming as this enables us to do a good job in a short amount of time without distressing the cat.

If you have a long haired cat with a thick coat then maybe consider a groom to help them cool down.



Radish sporting her new hair cut.

Life of a clinic cat.

My name is CC and I am the owner and manager of the vet clinic. Not everyone knows this and even my staff at times believe they are in charge. You will no doubt have seen me in the clinic overseeing things to make sure everything is running smoothly.

Now you may think running a busy vet clinic would be stressful but actually it can be a lot of fun.

One of my tricks is to run out the front door as clients are coming in.

They are convinced they have just let a patient escape. I turn around come back in again and wait for my next victim. My other favourite trick is to sit very quietly on the shelf above reception. At the perfect moment I can jump down on to the counter and see how high I can make people jump with surprise. Their reaction is priceless.

If you really want to make an impact though you simply can't beat catching a bird, bringing it inside and letting it go. It is hysterically funny, although I do get somewhat annoyed when the staff won't give me my bird back.

All this exercise does tire me out somewhat so luckily I have several special sleeping spots for my cat naps.

So next time you are in the clinic feel free to say hello, although be warned I may swipe you if I am having a bad day. Not my fault I was just born a naughty tortie!

CC



Beating the Heat.

It is proving to be a very hot and humid summer! Lovely for us but it can be quite hard on our canine companions. Unlike humans, dogs cannot sweat. They cool down by panting (sweating through the mouth) and they also can release heat from the pads of their feet. Some dogs are more prone to overheating than others. Short faced dogs (pugs, boxers etc), dogs with thick coats, overweight dogs find the heat extra hard to cope with.....

So what can we do to help our best friends beat the heat?

Cool grass will help to remove heat from a dog; concrete or gravel will make it worse; those Sunday morning trips

to the open air market may not be the ideal place to take poochie in the heat of summer. Dogs are just going to get too hot and bothered, no fun at all.....best to stay at home in the cool.

When it's hot and humid, try to leave the pet at home where they can get out of the sun. If the dog stays outside, make sure there is adequate shade and having access to fresh water with ice chunks will help keep that body temperature down.

We know that after eating the body temperature rises. Consequently if we feed the dog in the evening when the temperatures drop that can help the dog cope with the heat. If the dog is fed twice daily then try to feed a $\frac{1}{4}$ of the daily allowance in the morning and $\frac{3}{4}$'s of the allowance in the evening. Frozen ice pops in a dog appropriate flavour (chicken stock flavour is always a good choice) can help keep the temperature down as dogs get rid of excess heat via the mouth. You can make a tray of "doggy" ice cubes and feed them as treats on hot days.

Try to exercise the pet in the cool parts of the day- early morning or late evening and always carry water for the dog to drink; the water can also be poured directly onto the dog to help keep it cool. Swimming of course is a fantastic way of exercising your pet in the heat.... However remember to be "swim smart"; check conditions and check for hidden dangers in the water. Also check that there are no toxic algal blooms which can be a problem in some lakes. Also be aware of burnt paws on the hot sand and cuts due to shells.

Keep the collar and leash loose and light so that breathing/panting is not impaired when exercising. I guess summer is behind us now but certainly something to think about for future hot spells.

