In this issue:
Available Adoptable
Welcome Dr. Sarah Tran!
Product Spotlight: Galliprant
Case Study: Heartworm Treatment
Canine Fitness Training
Fitness Corner

AVAILABLE ADOPTABLE:
Meet Poe from Purrlandia!

Poe is the newest resident of our Adoption Ward, but he’s ready to upgrade to a new forever home.
He’s a five-year old, neutered male, domestic medium-haired cat who must stay on a special diet to prevent urinary issues. Poe has a wonderful personality and is ready to show his affection to his new family!
We don’t know much about his prior history with other cats or dogs but with a thoughtful introduction, he will likely do great. His adoption fee is $111. Please let us know if you’re interested in adopting this handsome guy and our staff will happily introduce you!

The Learning Continues
The Viking Veterinary Team is committed to learning and improving to provide the best level of care for our patients! The Veterinarians and Certified Veterinary Technicians are required to report “Continuing Education” credits to maintain their licenses but here at Viking, the technician assistants and reception staff also strive to further their knowledge and understanding in the field.

This spring, Dr. Gilbert, Dr. Brock and Cristen, CVT, attended an update on Canine Influenza by Oregon’s Public Health Veterinarian, Dr. Emilio DeBess. Our hospital’s influenza vaccine recommendations are based on the latest research from this presentation.

Drs. Gilbert, Brock, Tran and Lead Receptionist, Denna attended a presentation by Dr. Chris Pachel of The Animal Behavior Clinic on Aggression in Multi-Cat Households. They came away with some great ideas on how to address these issues for our clients!

Both Dr. Gilbert and Dr. Brock were recognized by Cat Adoption Team as veterinarians in the Portland area that go above and beyond for feline patient care. They were invited to their “CAT Chat” at the end of March to be included in the discussion about how cats are being served in the rescue community. While Dr. Brock was unable to attend (she was working at the clinic), Dr. Gilbert participated in the discussion.

Our staff is always striving to improve Fear Free techniques! We currently have 7 staff members who have completed their Fear Free Level 1 Certification and 5 who have completed the Level 2 Certification. Additionally, a new practice certification was introduced in April that Viking Veterinary Care will be working towards as well.

Our Communication CVT, Cristen, just finished the University of Tennessee’s Certified Canine Fitness Trainer program. She is excited to support Dr. Brock in physical rehabilitation and offer training and fitness classes to keep your dog’s mind and body active! Please see page 5 for more information regarding this program!
Welcome to the Viking Family, Dr. Sarah Tran!

It's official! Please welcome Viking Veterinary Care's new veterinarian, Dr. Sarah Tran! Dr. Tran recently relocated to the west coast from New Jersey, where she was practicing both small animal and exotic medicine.

Dr. Tran brings with her experience in Veterinary Orthopedic Manipulation (similar to chiropractic work), Chinese herbal therapy, Class IV laser therapy treatments, and regenerative medicine (stem cell and platelet rich plasma).

In her free time, Dr. Tran enjoys agility competition, traveling the world, Shotokan karate, spending time with her family, and fostering animals in the rescue community.

In addition to cats and dogs, Dr. Tran will be available to see exotics of the non-winged variety (our ceilings are just too high). To schedule an appointment, give us a call at 971-371-4024!

YOUR VIKING VETERINARY TEAM

From left to right, back to front: Denna, Stacey, Jamie, Chloe-Blayake, Lisa, Lena, Dr. Kristy, Dr. Rosie, Heather, Savannah-Natalia, Cristen (not pictured: Dr. Sarah, Rob, Olivia, Jessica, Ariel)
Dr. Rosie Gilbert Discusses Galliprant
The Newest and Safest Anti-inflammatory on the Market!

As an owner, do you only give anti-inflammatories to your dog when they REALLY need it because you’re concerned about long-term administration of a drug? I’m a veterinarian and I was doing this with my own dog. Great Danes have very sensitive gastrointestinal tracts, and will intermittently have vomiting or diarrhea with even minor “insults.”

My senior girl, Sauvie, didn’t tolerate carprofen (Rimadyl) or meloxicam (Metacam) for more than a few days without issues. So I would wait until the really bad days, when the squirrel taunting was too much or the weather had changed, and my girl was really paying for it. Multiple studies have shown that daily anti-inflammatory use for arthritis pain is much more beneficial, but I couldn’t do it for Sauvie. When Galliprant came on the market, I decided to give it a try for a couple reasons:

1.) It targets the inflammatory receptors in the musculoskeletal system specifically, so it doesn’t cause the vomiting, diarrhea, or loss of appetite often seen with other anti-inflammatories.
2.) It does not stress the kidneys or liver with long term administration. In safety trials, dogs received a 15x overdose for 9 months and had no adverse effects.
3.) It is very safe. If my younger Dane got on the counter and ate the whole bottle…it’s okay. If I drop a pill and my crazy cat gets to it before I do…it’s okay. No trip to the emergency room. No life threatening issues. I love my job but I don’t want to go back to the hospital to treat my own animals!

Since starting Galliprant, Sauvie can move around much easier in the morning…every morning! She has never shown signs of gastrointestinal issues and her quality of life has improved. As with any recommendation I personally make, I am not receiving compensation for sharing my experience. But I get asked a lot by clients, “What would you do if this were your dog?” and here’s my answer: I would give it a try.

I still recommend preliminary bloodwork, then rechecking it in 3 weeks as with any long term medication. If repeat labwork is not an option for some owners, I feel much better about it if the dog is on Galliprant rather than any other anti-inflammatory.

This medication is more expensive than generic carprofen, so assess the risks vs. finances of which anti-inflammatory works for your dog. There are significant rebates available from the manufacturer. (https://www.elancorebates.com/) Galliprant is not approved for use in cats and has not been tested in dogs under 9 months of age or under 8 pounds.

Viking Veterinary Care does have some samples available if you would like to try it on your own dog. It works best on an empty stomach and is given once a day. If your dog is already on an anti-inflammatory drug, please allow 3-7 days between stopping one medication and starting the other. Is Galliprant an option for your canine companion? Give us a call at 971-371-4024 or email us at info@vikingveterinarycare.com to have one of our veterinarians evaluate your pet’s case.
COMING SOON: FITNESS TRAINING, FOR DOGS!

Cristen, one of Viking’s Certified Veterinary Technicians, completed the Certified Canine Fitness Trainer Program at the beginning of March. She learned about this unique program by attending Fenzi Dog Sports Academy Training Camp last June and was intrigued by the combination of training and fitness. This program focuses on the physical activities of dogs to help them live a healthier, longer life.

Fitness training can be adapted to dogs in many different life stages. It addresses fitness in terms of mental work (behavior/training), balance, flexibility, strength and cardio. During the exercises, the trainer pays close attention to form to ensure they are being done safely and the dog is gaining the maximum benefit.

Do you have a puppy that has outgrown Puppy Play Day? If you are interested in confidence building, training, and continuing to build positive experiences at the hospital, fitness training may be a great option! While puppies cannot participate in a training program that involves repetitive movements, as their growth plates don’t close completely until they are older, we can work on foundation behaviors and surface training to challenge their mind and body.

Do you have a dog that still seems to have boundless energy no matter how frequently they chase a ball? These dogs often live for this exercise and do it almost to the point of injury (and sometimes even past that point). Fitness training is a great way to work their entire body and engage their brain, safely and effectively exercising them physically AND mentally.

You may be thinking that this would be a great program, if only your dog was younger. But, don’t be discouraged! Senior dogs benefit greatly from fitness training! A program can be developed to increase balance, flexibility and proprioception. Working with your treasured, aging companion can be a great way to spend quality time with them! For a specific example of this, please see Canine Fitness Corner in this issue.

Your dog’s first visit would include a total fitness assessment, a discussion of their history and a conversation about what goals you have for your pet. They would get acquainted with the room and show off their known behaviors. Then at the end of that visit, you will receive a report card with exercises to work on for next time. With each visit that follows, the program would be tailored to suit the needs of you and your dog. Periodic reassessments will be performed at along the way to monitor progress.

Initial assessments are $75; subsequent classes are $55 each. A package of six classes will be available for $300. If this is something you are interested in doing with your dog, please email Cristen at cristen@vikingveterinarycare.com. Our clinic is working out some of the final details prior to launching this program, but we’re close! When the final pieces are in place, we will contact those interested to schedule their initial assessment.
**CANINE FITNESS CORNER: Daeli gets a Fitness Prescription**

During her training for the Fitness Trainer Certification, Cristen completed a total of three case studies, including her personal pet, Daeli, a 12 year old beagle. Daeli is now considered a senior dog and Cristen noticed her lagging behind on walks. While medication is often the answer to soreness and inflammation in older dogs, Daeli has a history of extreme sensitivity to certain drugs. Daeli’s aches and pains are managed with the help of the Class IV Therapeutic Laser and acupuncture treatments twice a month with Dr. Brock.

Cristen’s goals for Daeli included increasing her strength, balance, and proprioception while also providing mental stimulation. Strength and balance are clearly important to all pets but in senior dogs, like Daeli, proprioception plays an extremely important role. Proprioception is the unconscious ability to recognize where the body is in space. Many senior pets (and humans) may have falls on stairs or with a change of surface because the nerve connections are not communicating well. Proprioception can be improved by challenging those nerves and seniors with good proprioception have less frequent or less severe injuries from unexpected foot placement.

Daeli started her exercise program by learning foundation behaviors. She already knew a lot of the basics, such as sit, down and stand. The challenge was getting her to hold those positions for any length of time. With a lot of practice and positive reinforcement, she learned how to consistently perform what she was being asked to do. Then, equipment was gradually introduced.

This little lady now can do several behaviors on equipment. Cristen has seen improvements in her balance and flexibility, as well as her confidence. Daeli doesn’t lag behind on walks any more and seems more sure-footed on the stairs in her home. Something that surprised Cristen more than anything was Daeli’s rekindled interest in playing! Even with the two young dogs she shares her home with and a house full of toys, Daeli never really seemed to enjoy playing as she aged. Cristen is confident that Daeli’s treatment plan of acupuncture, laser and fitness has contributed to her engaging more at home and even playing tug with toys again!
Yes, We Have Heartworm in Oregon: A Case Study in the Treatment of Heartworm
Cristen Yurkoski, CVT & Rosie Gilbert, DVM

**History:** Bear was an 11 month old, male neutered Chihuahua Mix who was adopted through a rescue group and presented to Viking Veterinary Care for his first exam with his new owner. He was brought into rescue as a puppy from Louisiana, where heartworm is extremely common. Bear was seen previously at an emergency hospital for difficulty breathing, but no other issues had been seen at home.

During his examination, Bear had no abnormalities heard in his heart. He was in great body condition but had occasional bouts of gagging. As heartworm is an emerging disease in the Portland area, a heartworm test followed by a parasite preventative were recommended in accordance with the Companion Animal Parasite Council (www.capcvet.org). Bear was sweet but shy during his visit, and our team wanted to end Bear’s first experience at our hospital on a happy note. He was sent home with medication to help decrease anxiety and came back for his blood test soon after.

**Diagnosis:** To test for heartworm, our staff collects a small amount of blood, adds a reagent mixture, and applies the whole solution to an antigen test. An antigen is defined as a toxin or other foreign substance that induces an immune response in the body, indicating exposure. There are three outcomes possible: A negative result shows that there is no evidence of heartworm in the pet, while a positive result can be indicated by a low antigen level or a high antigen level based on the severity of infection.

Unfortunately Bear’s test showed a high antigen level. Due to the long, potentially painful treatment for this parasite infection, Dr. Gilbert ran a confirmatory test to be certain of the diagnosis. Bear’s blood was examined under the microscope and microfilaria (heartworm larvae) were wiggling around.

**Treatment:** Heartworms can live 5-7 years in the body and can be over a foot in length. If left untreated, they cause heart failure, liver and kidney damage, respiratory distress, and eventually death. A major concern during treatment is killing off too many heartworms/larvae too quickly, causing them to obstruct Bear’s airways. To prevent this from happening, a very involved plan was developed and set in motion to help Bear rid his body of this potentially fatal parasite infestation.

For Bear’s safety, Dr. Gilbert elected to use the “slow-kill protocol” to gradually kill off the larvae and adult worms in a manner his body could handle. First, Bear was started on a course of Doxycycline, an antibiotic and anti-rickettsial medication to treat an organism that can reside within the heartworm (essentially a parasite within a parasite) which can be introduced to the pet’s body after the worm has
died. Bear was also started on diphenhydramine/Benadryl (antihistamine) and prednisone (steroid) to reduce the risk of anaphylaxis caused by the body’s reaction to the dead/dying worms.

A parasite preventative (Sentinel Spectrum) was started to begin killing the heartworm larvae that circulated in the blood before they could mature and lodge in the heart. Bear took his Sentinel Spectrum monthly, and after the second dose, Bear’s body was as prepared as it could be to handle killing the adult worms.

Immiticide is the only treatment for adult heartworms. It is an arsenic derivative that must be given as an injection in the pet’s lower back muscle. If the medication goes where it isn’t supposed to, it can cause tissue damage. It is also extremely painful, so the pet must be sedated for this procedure. Addressing pain is always a top priority at Viking-Bear received pain medication before and after his injections.

The “slow-kill protocol” from the American Heartworm Society required a series of 3 immiticide injections. The first injection is to kill off the weaker worms. Thirty days after injection #1, injections #2 and #3 were given 24 hours apart to eliminate the remaining adult heartworms. After each injection, Bear’s owners had to keep him extremely quiet (cage rest) and limit exposure to stressors for 4-6 weeks while watching for any abnormalities in Bear’s breathing. If his heart rate increased, too many of the dead/dying worms could dislodge at once, causing an embolism in the lungs.

Bear’s antigen test was rechecked 6 months later and he was negative for heartworm! Another recheck is recommended 12 months after treatment to confirm he is indeed heartworm free.

Summary: There are few parasites that can be so dangerous for a pet to host than heartworm. In 2017, 42 cases of heartworm were reported in Washington County and 63 cases in Multnomah County. Oregon now has a repository of dogs and coyotes with heartworm, as well as the mosquitoes that spread the larvae when they feed. Microfilaria circulate in the blood stream for ~6 months before migrating to the heart-this is why we can start puppies on preventatives without a heartworm test if they are under 6 months of age.

Parasite preventatives for heartworm are essentially monthly dewormers. By killing off microfilaria in the blood stream every month, we can prevent the worms from maturing in the heart. Heartworm larvae develop at 57 degrees Fahrenheit; with the increasingly warm weather reprieves during the winter, we are now recommending staying on a parasite preventative year-round (Sentinel Spectrum, Heartgard, Trifexis, Revolution, Advantage Multi, Interceptor, etc.). Prevention saves lives, and also spares our dogs from an expensive, risky, painful treatment. Bear was a very lucky pup to have owners so committed and dedicated to his health!

If there is something you are interested in seeing in the newsletter, please send suggestions to cristen@vikingveterinarcare.com.