



ANIMAL CRACKERS

QUARTERLY NEWSLETTER ~ NOVEMBER 2018

FOCAS's Programs for the Animals

FOCAS does much in supporting the needs of the animals at the Calaveras County Animal Shelter. We sponsor adoptions, purchase supplies, pay for transporting animals to other shelters where they have a greater chance of adoption, pay for some maintenance items, and do as much as we can to help make life a little better for the animals in their care.

But FOCAS also has some specific programs for care of the animals' needs and with the separation of the Calaveras Humane Society (CHS) from the government campus, we are now taking on some new programs previously supported by CHS so it seemed a good opportunity to give an update and explanation of these various programs.

Last issue we told you about second chances for cats through a partnership with the Oregon Humane Society, sponsored and funded by Kathleen Morse and Jeremy Zawodny. This is the only program 100% sponsored and fully funded.

The other programs are funded through general donations and fundraisers. Donations can always be ear-marked for special programs so if any of these seem like worthy causes you would like to support, just make mention on your donation

which of the following specific programs you want to support.

The Gypsy Fund was created to help adopters pay for spay and neuter services for shelter animals. Originally, Michele and John Rugo donated \$2,500 to help people who could not afford the Animal Service's fees as well as the spay and neuter charges.

Apples for Animals was started by Diane Finnegan, owner of the Save-a-Pet Thrift Store in Valley Springs. Diane started selling apples from her orchard, with those funds being used for necessary medical needs of the animals, other than spay and neuter.

New to FOCAS are the Miss Kitty Kitty (MKK) and Men to Boys (MTB) programs.

MTB started in March 2013 and MKK started in October 2013 by a CHS volunteer who has retired and, as a result, these highly successful programs have been transferred with much appreciation to FOCAS.

The original purpose of MTB and MKK was to alter intact male juniors and adults of breeding age that came to the shelter as strays and owner release. The intact boys were surrounded by various cats with some being in heat.

The urine of the dudes was stinky and they could be yeowly. The program was soon expanded to include the female kitties. The ladies in season made quite a fuss while they were in heat and both male and female cats were making the adoption room unpleasant for the staff, volunteers or potential adopters. They kitties could not help it, it was just their hormones!

MTB pays for the neutering and MKK pays for the spaying. MTB and MKK also pays for a rabies vaccination. MTB and MKK funds are now being used to alter all kitties, regardless of their age.

In addition to improving the shelter environment, MTB and MKK has helped increase kitty adoptions. And since altered cats can leave the shelter the day they are adopted, valuable space is more readily available for new arrivals at the shelter. *MTB and MKK is a win-win for everyone!*

Second Chance Dogs is the program developed by Margaret Blair – Twin Cedar K9 in Jackson. Margaret is a professional dog trainer and started this program to help shelter dogs get new forever homes.

Margaret set up two kennels – one for Calaveras and one for Amador. She takes a dog from each county, socializes and trains them in basic obedience and then finds them forever homes.

FOCAS supplies heartworm medicines, occasionally food, and covers the cost of spay/neuter, rabies and any medical that might be needed for these dogs. This program has saved over 200 dogs since its inception.

Also, last (but certainly not least!) new to FOCAS is the Return to Field (RTF) program. Here is a brief description from CHS about the differences between the TNR and RTF programs.

Community Cat Programs: TNR and RTF (From Best Friends, edited by Calaveras Humane Society's Feral Feline Program)

TNR (Trap/Neuter/Return) and RTF (Return to Field) are humane and effective programs that reduce the population of free-roaming cats. In a TNR program, community (i.e. stray or free-roaming) cats are trapped, spayed or neutered, vaccinated and returned to the locations where they were found. The Calaveras Humane Society advocates and sponsors TNR in Calaveras County.

RTF involves sterilizing, vaccinating and returning stray cats brought to the shelter by the public. The focus is on allowing community cats to continue to live and thrive at the location they were found, rather than occupying space in the shelter, where they are unlikely to be adopted.

FOCAS will be taking on support of the RTF program. These are the cats that are brought to the shelter. Often these are feral cats but may also include domesticated cats that have not had good socialization or that were abandoned.

FOCAS will pay for the spay or neuters and rabies vaccinations. Medical care will be decided on a case-by-case basis and funding availability. The budget for the first year has been set at \$2,500.

Another component of this program is the educational piece for those that think the cats should not be returned to the area in which they were trapped. There is actually a great benefit to returning these cats after sterilization. The rodent and snake population will decrease, the colony population will remain stable (since they won't be breeding) and if the cats are not returned, a new colony will move into the area and the problem will continue.

Meetings are being currently being set up with Amador County Animal Services as they have been doing this program successfully for some time and have offered to help Calaveras get this program going. Partnership at its best!

Be safe this holiday season!

Just a little warning regarding the Christmas treats many stores are now starting to stock for dogs this holiday season.

Many of these so-called treats end up with the dog "enjoying" some time in a veterinary surgery over Christmas.

The vast majority of these rawhide products and treats come from China.

The chews are made from cattle or horse hides and their journey starts with the hides being soaked in a toxic sodium sulphide to remove the hair and fat. More chemicals are used in order to split the hide into layers which is then washed with hydrogen peroxide to give the white "pure" look and remove the rancid smell.

Now comes the pretty festive colors and the glue to form cute shapes.



On testing, these chews have shown traces of arsenic, mercury, chromium and formaldehyde. If that wasn't bad enough, they regularly cause

intestinal blockages, poisoning from chemical residue and choking.

The chews can get slippery when wet and are near impossible to get hold of to save a choking dog.

Leave them in the shop where they belong or if some well-meaning person buys them for your dog put them safely away for later, then dispatch in the bin!

Please be safe with your dogs!

Happy Tails Helpful Training Tips

By Sheri Logan

Growling... What does this mean?



Dogs are constantly trying to communicate with humans but unfortunately, we don't talk the same language. The key to successful communication is for us to be able to recognize and understand the signs that dogs are continually giving us.

With growling, we often jump to the conclusion that a dog is displaying aggression. This is simply not always the case. The dog may be displaying fear or stress by showing his teeth. A dog may also be giving you "calming" signals to avoid any conflict, the same way they communicate with other dogs. By growling, the dog is saying "stop", "stay away", or "go away"! When a dog growls at another dog and then moves away, this is an example of "pack behavior". If the dog's goal is to attack, they will! Dogs use growling to AVOID conflict/violence NOT to start it.

So what do I do when my dog growls?

- STOP whatever you are doing that is triggering the growling and give your dog space. The outcome will most likely be that your dog will stop growling since he is no longer feeling threatened. When you are dealing with non-aggressive behavior, the growling will not escalate once you move away from him because he was able to successfully communicate with you!
- Understand that the growling is NOT the problem but rather the “symptom” of the problem.
- Punishing your dog for growling will not solve the reason for the behavior. It may only cause your dog to become more frustrated and escalate the problem. If the problem is left unaddressed, it can develop into a more serious behavior.

So HOW can I stop my dog from growling?

- It is critical to determine the cause of why your dog is growling, then use behavior modification techniques to reduce their stress & increase the dog’s ability to tolerate these types of situations in the future.
- Evaluate the details of the situation surrounding the cause of the growling, when he is doing it, what triggered it, were other people or dogs present when the growling occurred, etc.
- Then contact a qualified dog behaviorist or certified dog trainer to help you develop a training plan to help teach your dog to cope with future occurrences.

FINAL NOTE: A dog that growls is a GOOD communicator. Punishing the dog takes away the dog’s ability to communicate with you. A dog that is not allowed to communicate “GROWL” can be a very dangerous dog.

Sheri Logan, ABCDT – Certified Dog Trainer
Logan’s Happy Tails
www.sherilogan.thedogtrainer.org

Health tips by Doc Hopper



To Titer or Not ~

Because we live in California, we cannot titer our pets for rabies – we are required to vaccinate every three years regardless. Some states accept a rabies titer in lieu of a vaccination, unless there is a rabies outbreak – then they must vaccinate. And because we have an exposure to rabies here, I am okay with this vaccination.

But I did titer both my dogs last month as they are due for distemper and parvo this month. I don’t give Lepto as we don’t have an exposure – that’s just my personal choice. Both dogs show a very high immunity level to distemper and parvo so I have decided to skip those vaccines and will re-titer in 3 years. I also feed raw (another personal choice) in an effort to keep my kids healthy.

Since the majority of people I’ve spoken to have said “What? What is a titer?” when I mentioned doing this with my dogs, I wanted to share the information with everyone as to what a titer test is all about.

The following is an excerpt from following website:
<https://www.dogsnaturallymagazine.com/titer-testing/dog>

The Dangers of a Little Knowledge

You are part of a growing community of people seeking to provide the best natural care to your animals. You want them to be Vital Animals, those glowing, well-balanced, fully free animals that bring you joy not only today and this week, but for many happy healthy years into the future. And, when it’s time for them to shuffle off their mortal coil, Vital Animals can usually do this at home, with ease, naturally, and without ERs or euthanasia solutions in the equation.

A large part of getting this glorious outcome depends on you walking the Natural Path, and taking responsibility for the animals in your care. It's no longer in your best interests to turn that responsibility over to Dr. White Coat, as he's not on the same path, especially in the most important piece of health care you must decide: vaccinations.

Many of you have, rightly, sought to reduce or eliminate vaccinations after reading in various places that the common practice of repeatedly vaccinating your animal throughout her life is neither useful nor safe. One alternative that's been offered to you is titer testing.

Titers: What, Why, and When?

Titer tests are blood tests that measure the level of antibodies your animal has made. Your dog goes in, gets a needle poked into a vein, blood is pulled into a syringe and it gets tested, usually in a lab but now perhaps, in your vet's clinic. You pay anywhere from \$40 to \$200 to get some numbers on a piece of paper.

Many view these numbers as their "get out of vaccination jail" card. But I submit misreading these numbers may get you and your animal into trouble. Let's dig in and try to avoid that.

The **What**: Numbers? I Don' Need No Steenking Numbers!

The lab report comes back with numbers indicating the amount of antibodies your animal made against those diseases tested (usually canine distemper, parvo, rabies, or feline distemper).

The idea behind titer testing is that if your dog or cat or horse has antibodies against the viruses that threaten to cause disease, you can rest easy that protection exists. That's an immunologically sound thought. But only to a point.

The **Why**: Assessing Immunity

The reason these titers could be of interest is that the numbers on a titer test correlate pretty well with **immunity**. Immunity is resistance to disease. It's what we'd like our animals to have, and it's what we hope is the outcome of those much-maligned things called vaccinations.

But: *Vaccination does not equal Immunization*. Did you know this? It's not common knowledge, even among many veterinarians. It's often assumed that pumping the vaccine into your animal automatically means he's now safe from the dreaded diseases that could kill him. Not so.

For example, if you vaccinate your pup at six weeks of age, or even younger, there's about a 50:50 chance that no immunity will result to distemper or parvovirus. Why? Mom's colostrum gave your pup antibodies against both, and those antibodies are preventing the vaccine from stimulating his own immunity. Mom's protection is temporary though, and we need long term protection.

Many also think that immunity "runs out" on day 364 since the last vaccine was pumped in. When those postcards come, saying, "Beau is due for his vaccinations! Please call for an appointment today!", it sets some people into a bit of a panic. The act of squirting more vaccine under Beau's skin is somehow thought to be akin to filling an empty reservoir. Nothing could be further from the truth.

A truth in immunology is this: Immunity to viruses persists for years or for the life of the animal. And another truth, from the same veterinary immunologists: *Furthermore, revaccination...fails to stimulate...(further immunity)*

The **When**: Run a Titer When it Makes Sense. Save Your Money (and your pet!) by Not Running it When it Doesn't!

It's a given that titers have limits. Any immunologist knows this. They fail to measure a significant piece

of immunity, called cell mediated immunity. The most useful time to run a titer test is after your youngster has received her initial series of vaccinations. Especially if you've limited that series to just one or two vaccinations, the last being after 16 weeks of age. The odds are you've just conferred lifetime immunity to your youngster.

If you want to know how effective your vaccinations were in conferring immunity (i.e. did vaccination = immunization?), ask your vet to run a titer test a few weeks later.

Here's what's useful in assessing those numbers: If there's any measurable titer to the disease in question, your goal has been reached. Your youngster has actively made immunity to those viruses you had squirted in via vaccination. It doesn't need to meet some standard of "protective" to be useful; it just has to be positive. That indicates you are more than likely now the proud owner of an immune pet, and you can confidently say "No!" to more vaccines. For how long? For life.

Falling Titers: Oh-oh or No Big Deal?

Testing yearly will eventually show titers that fall off. Does that mean immunity is gone and you've got to head in for a "topping up" of the immunity reservoir? **No!** (And stop thinking that a "reservoir" even exists. I actually hesitated writing this word, as I don't want you to think this is in any way reality). It only means the antibody levels are waning. And why wouldn't they? It's a waste to keep making more antibodies when there's no exposure to more virus. In its wisdom, the vital force deems its work is done in this area, and stops pumping more antibodies into the blood.

But the good news is this: cellular memory is still very likely present to the bad guy you vaccinated against and, should your buddy ever be exposed to this virus again, BOOM, the antibody production factory fires up and the titer rises once again, and rather quickly at that. So, it'd be a mistake to equate a titer that's fallen with a lack of protection, and a greater one to think you need more

vaccinations to re-establish protection. Immunity is still there, quietly, watchfully alert.

[In the older guys, I like to add a nice immune boost in the form of transfer factors, just to be sure their immune systems are acting out of the greatest responsive intelligence. And perhaps that's a subject for another post.]

My only recommendation, should you choose to titer before giving a vaccination, is to check out the website of Dr. Dodd's lab –

<http://www.hemopet.org/hemolife-diagnostics/titer-testing.html>

first, because most vets use the IDEX lab and the cost for titers is VERY high (I was quoted \$300 for testing!) but I ended paying less than \$100 per dog, which included a vet-tech appointment to draw the blood, lab services to spin the blood and separate the serum (which is what you mail in to the lab) and the actual testing.

May all our beloved canines (and kitties too!) have long, happy, and healthy lives!



Critter Corner



This month we have four lovelies to spotlight – hopefully one (or more!) of these will be your new forever dog.

A048784, Shorty, (red bandana) Australian Shepherd, Female, 8 years, 58 Pounds, heartworm test pending;



A048785, Frances, Australian Shepherd, Spayed Female, 10 years, 57 Pounds, heartworm test pending;



Shorty and Frances are at the shelter because their owner died. While they have lived together for the last few years, they may be adopted separately.

Shorty is a confident dog who arrived with hair loss from a severe flea allergy. Thanks to treatment and medicated baths, her hair has almost completely grown back. She is a motivated eager walker who likes to be the one in charge. When she's in the pen, she's active in a very playful way, almost puppy like. She listens well and will sit when asked to do so. Shorty is good with other dogs and likes to play.

Frances was initially more timid, though now she is happy to see all the volunteers. She likes to walk and is calm and easy on the leash, stopping along the way to smell the roses. Her personality is even tempered, almost a little low key. She's curious and friendly when meeting other dogs; she would like to have a companion.

Both may be housebroken since they keep their kennels clean. Shorty will need to be spayed before going to her forever home. Frances is ready to go now.

We are hoping there is room in someone's heart for these girls. They deserve a chance.

A048940 Davis German Shepherd Dog, intact male, est. 1.5 - 2 years, 90 Pounds, heartworm test pending



Davis is a big dog but respectful of people's space. He walks well on his leash and is quiet in his kennel. Davis is independent as true to his breed, yet periodically checks in for cuddles. He would make a great family dog probably with older children because of his size. He would love to be involved with all activities. Davis needs a fenced yard with lots of space to run and play. He gets along great with other dogs.

Come by the Shelter to meet this great dog. Davis will need to be neutered before going home with you.

AO48752, Ryder, Great Dane mix, Neutered Male, est. 2 years, 90 pounds, heartworm negative



Ryder is an independent dog who likes to play with the ball or his person. In spite of his size and strength, he has nice leash manners and listens well to corrections. Ryder is a confident dog who is also very affectionate.

He did well with all the handling during his temperament testing. While he is good with the smaller dogs, he seems dominant with larger ones, especially females. He will need to meet any dogs you may have. Since he is neutered, Ryder is ready to join your family now.

Contact info: Calaveras County Animal Services 209-754-6509
or svavzincak@co.calaveras.ca.us. or pmorley@co.calaveras.ca.us

Dear Miss Penny Paws



Dear Miss Pennypaws,

Miss Penny Paws

I like to chew on those big raw hide bones but my Mom hardly ever lets me have them. When she does give me one, she watches me like a hawk and as soon as it gets nice and chewy, so I can tear it up, she takes it away from me.

I don't understand why. She says I might swallow a big piece and get a tummy ache. I told her "hey, I'm a dog – I can digest anything!" but she isn't buying it. Please tell her to leave my bones alone.

Signed,
Boneless

Dear Boneless,

The rawhide you love can cause you a lot of problems, from mild indigestion to an intestinal blockage. No matter how tough a dog you may be, you should stay completely away from rawhide – it isn't worth the problems it can cause. Ask your mom to give you chew hooves, nylabones, gummabones, kongs, or a buster cube. You can even have those soft woobies (just watch out for the ones that turn evil that you then must kill) as long as you're supervised and you don't get to the squeakers.

And tell your mom to read the story on page 3 in this issue!

Happy Chewing,
Janet

From The Bark Magazine, September 2018

The U.S. Food and Drug Administration is alerting pet owners and veterinarians to be aware of the potential for neurologic adverse events in dogs and cats when treated with drugs that are in the isoxazoline class.

Since these products have obtained their respective FDA approvals, data received by the agency as part of its routine post-marketing activities indicates that some animals receiving Bravecto, Nexgard or Simparica have experienced adverse events such as muscle tremors, ataxia, and seizures. Another product in this class, Credelio, recently received FDA approval. These products are approved for the treatment and prevention of flea infestations, and the treatment and control of tick infestations.

The FDA is working with manufacturers of isoxazoline products to include new label information to highlight neurologic events because these events were seen consistently across the isoxazoline class of products.

The FDA carefully reviewed studies and other data on Bravecto, Credelio, Nexgard and Simparica prior to approval, and these products continue to be safe and effective for the majority of animals. The agency is asking the manufacturers to make the changes to the product labeling in order to provide veterinarians and pet owners with the information they need to make treatment decisions for each pet on an individual basis. Veterinarians should use their specialized training to review their patients' medical histories and determine, in consultation with pet owners, whether a product in the isoxazoline class is appropriate for the pet.

Although FDA scientists carefully evaluate an animal drug prior to approval, there is the potential for new information to emerge after marketing, when the product is used in a much larger population. In the first three years after approval, the FDA pays

particularly close attention to adverse event reports, looking for any safety information that may emerge.

The FDA monitors adverse drug event reports received from the public or veterinarians, other publicly available information (such as peer-reviewed scientific articles), and mandatory reports from the animal drug sponsor (the company that owns the right to market the drug). Drug sponsors must report serious, unexpected adverse events within 15 days of the event. In addition, they must submit any events that are non-serious, plus any laboratory studies, in vitro studies, and clinical trials that have not been previously submitted to the agency, on a bi-annual basis for the first two years following product approval and annually thereafter.

The FDA continues to monitor adverse drug event reports for these products and encourages pet owners and veterinarians to report adverse drug events. You can do this by reporting to the drugs' manufacturers, who are required to report this information to the FDA, or by submitting a report directly to the FDA.

To report suspected adverse drug events for these products and/or obtain a copy of the Safety Data Sheet (SDS) or for technical assistance, contact the appropriate manufacturers at the following phone numbers:

Merck Animal Health (Bravecto): 800-224-5318
Elanco Animal Health (Credelio): 888-545-5973
Merial (Nexgard): 888-637-4251
Zoetis (Simparica): 888-963-8471





Somewhere, in a parallel, opposite universe,
there's a weird cat who lives alone with his eleven little old ladies.