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## NEWSLETTER AUTUMN 2007

### WELCOME in this issue...

**Staff News...**Nurse training continues

**Arthritis...**How it affects our pets

**National Veterinary Nurses**

**Week...**what's it all about?

**Exotic Spot...**The Leopard Gekko

**The Operating Theatre...**a look behind the scenes

**Star Pet...** "Evil" the Conure calls the police!

**Kids Corner...**meet "Ebony" the Black Labrador.

### STAFF NEWS



**Gemma** is coming to the end of her Level 3 NVQ in Veterinary Nursing and faces her final exams in December. If successful she will become a fully qualified Veterinary Nurse and be entitled to put the letters RVN after her name. We wish her all the best of luck.



This September **Kelly** started her level 2 NVQ Veterinary Nursing course at Writtle.

This is the first stage to becoming a qualified Veterinary Nurse (RVN) and although there is much hard work ahead for her we are sure she will do well.

I'm sure you will all want to join us in congratulating **Leanne Knell RVN** our Deputy Head Nurse as she gets married this October. When she returns from the honeymoon she will be **Leanne Anderson RVN**. We hope she has a wonderful time!



## ARTHRITIS IN PETS

Arthritis is the inflammation of a joint. It can occur in any joint including the spine and the jaw and all species of animals can be affected by this painful condition.

Although arthritis is usually thought of as an older pet problem, this is not always the case. Conditions such as hip dysplasia (an abnormality of the growth of the hip joint) and infectious or auto-immune conditions can be seen in young animals. The signs to look out for include stiffness or lameness in one or more legs, swelling of a joint, reluctance to walk or to jump up stairs or into the car. Animals rarely cry or whine when in pain due to arthritis so this is not a good indicator of problems.

Arthritis is diagnosed by physical examination, which can reveal pain when the joints are manipulated or a grating sensation (known as crepitus). This is not always the case and often radiographs (X-rays) are necessary. It is usual to anaesthetise the patient for radiography as the joints need to be manipulated and this can be painful for the conscious patient.

### Arthritic hips



There is no cure for arthritis and treatment is usually aimed at reducing the pain and keeping the patient mobile. Anti-inflammatories and modified exercise regimes are usually advised. Some dogs respond well to acupuncture or other alternative therapies. Glucosamine has been used in dogs either alone or in conjunction with medication and has shown some benefits in some patients. In severe cases for our larger canine patients total hip replacement is available at specialist referral centers.

If you are concerned that your pet may be showing signs of arthritis why not make an appointment with the veterinary surgeon for a thorough examination.

### Normal Canine hips



## NATIONAL VETERINARY NURSES WEEK

The British Veterinary Nursing Association (BVNA) will be running this event from 12th to 18th November following last year's successful Veterinary Nurses day. The aim is to raise the public's awareness of the role of the veterinary nurse in practice. In so doing it is hoped to raise money for the BVNA charity for this year which is the South Essex Wildlife Hospital.

To support this event our nursing team will be offering free weight and teeth checks for your pets by appointment during the week and voluntary donations to the Wildlife Hospital can be made. Please phone us to find out more!



## EXOTIC SPOT ...Leopard Geckos by Jamie Biggs



Leopard Geckos are lizards which originate from the arid grasslands of Pakistan, Afghanistan and North West India.

They can live as long as 20 years or more and can grow to 6-8 inches in length. Extra care should be taken when handling these animals as their tails can fall off as a defence mechanism. The tail will regrow but will never be the same as the original. Providing that they are kept in the correct environment Leopard Geckos are reasonably easy to keep. Up to 3 Geckos can be kept in a 3ft vivarium, however, males should not be kept together as they will fight. Heating must be provided ideally using a ceramic heating bulb and controlled by a thermostat to create a temperature gradient of 87-90F at one end of the tank to

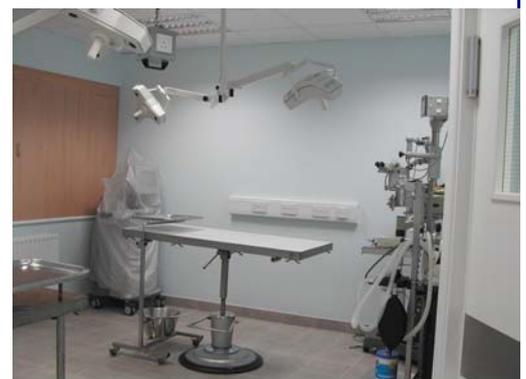
80F at the cool end. At night the temperature can fall to 70– 75F. The humidity should be kept around 60%. It is best to line the floor of the tank with newspaper or kitchen paper as loose substrates can become impacted in the Gecko's gut if eaten. Rocks and artificial plants should be provided as Geckos like to hide. A UV light source is advised but not thought to be strictly necessary as Geckos are nocturnal. Leopard Geckos are insectivorous which means they feed on insects. Suitable foods include crickets, locusts, mealworms, silkworms and waxworms. Insects must be "gut loaded" before being used as food, which means feeding the insects at least 24 hours prior to feeding to the Gecko. Vitamin and mineral supplements are advised and can be provided by feeding the insects on the supplement rather than by sprinkling over the insects prior to feeding as they tend to groom off the supplement before they get eaten! A shallow bowl of clean water should also be available at all times.

## THE OPERATING THEATRE

The practice is equipped with a large operating theatre which was installed as part of the refurbishment undertaken by the partners in 2003. There are two hydraulically operated operating tables each with two state of the art operating lights. The practice has three anaesthetic machines and Isoflurane one of the safest anaesthetic gases is used routinely. All patients are monitored under anaesthetic by our trained nursing staff (Student and Registered Veterinary Nurses (SVN and RVN). Patient monitoring includes Electrocardiogram (ECG), respiratory rate and blood oxygenation levels to ensure the procedure is as safe as possible.

Other equipment regularly in use is the operating microscope for our smaller patients such as budgerigars, rats and small reptiles, a phacoemulsifier for cataract surgeries and most recently an operating laser enabling complex intra ocular surgeries to be performed with fewer complications.

The practice has a comprehensive selection of surgical instruments and all equipment is sterilized by autoclave or ethylene gas.



## STAR PET

This issue our Star pet is a 43 year old conure called Evil! Evil has lived with his current owner for 33yrs. Evil is a mischievous bird and is allowed free range of the house. He even helps himself to his owner's dinner! Evil's owner has heart and epilepsy problems.

One day, alerted by the owner's alarm, an ambulance crew arrived to find the door locked so, fearing the owner had had a heart attack, they called the police who broke into the house. There was no-one home but Evil as his owner had been taken into hospital earlier. There was no other explanation— Evil had set off his owner's alarm setting into motion a chain of events involving two of the emergency services! Oops!



## FRIENDS OF HAROLD WOOD PARK FUN DAY



Lawton and Stoakes were proud to sponsor a bouncy castle at this year's event on the August Bank Holiday. Harold Wood Park is important to the community and the money raised on the day will go towards new sports facilities at the park. The day turned out sunny and warm and was well attended by locals who came to see the attractions including a fire engine and dancing displays.

## KIDS CORNER

This issue Perry Martin has sent us some photos of his dog Ebony. She certainly seems to have made herself at home!



If you have any stories, poems or pictures of your pets and would like to share them with us we give £10 WHS gift voucher for the best!