

Pittsburgh Veterinary
Specialty & Emergency Center
807 Camp Horne Road
Pittsburgh, PA 15237



REFERRAL DISPATCH

FALL 2009
VOLUME 1, NUMBER 3

A QUARTERLY NEWSLETTER FOR REFERRING VETERINARIANS

DENTISTRY SERVICE EXPANSION

PVSEC's Dentistry group will expand its hours of operation to better accommodate its increasing dental referral caseload. Beginning on Monday, September 28, 2009, Dr. Mendoza will welcome dental consultation appointments and procedures on Mondays, Fridays, and Saturdays.

Specialty dental services include: Diagnosis and treatment of oral & dental diseases, dental radiography, dental treatment on high-risk anesthesia cases, complicated and surgical extractions, advanced periodontal treatments, endodontics (root canals, pulp therapies), management of feline stomatitis, restoratives, crowns and limited orthodontics.

VET TECH CONTINUING ED AT PVSEC

Satisfying continuing education requirements for Certified Veterinary Technicians in Pennsylvania often requires travel, time away from work, significant expense, or all three. PVSEC has offered opportunities for educational enrichment to its own technicians in the past and continues to do so. In response to the great feedback we have received on the veterinarian continuing education events at our hospital, the PVSEC practice owners and management have decided to organize another speakers' series to offer state board-approved CE credit to CVTs. We hope to offer evening CE events for CVTs on a quarterly basis.

On Wednesday, November 18, 2009 from 7:00 - 9:00 PM, Dr. Krista Mendoza (PVSEC Dentistry) will present a talk geared specifically toward veterinary technicians who often perform dental cleanings and assist in other dental procedures. Light refreshments will be available at 6:30 PM and attendance will be limited to 40 technicians. Ideas for additional technician CE topics are always welcome. Please contact Andie Furda at afurda@pvs-ec.com or 412-348-2564 by November 11 to RSVP.

ANIMAL CARE & ASSISTANCE FUND EVENTS

The Animal Care & Assistance Fund (ACAF) sponsored a golf outing on Sunday, August 30 at Lakevue Golf Course to raise funds for the benefit of animals in need of life-saving medical care, and to help establish an Animal Blood Bank. Thanks to Beverly Seruset (PVSEC-Surgery) for her organizational expertise, the many medical-supply vendors and private-practice veterinary hospitals which provided financial support, and the PVSEC employees who also gave their time.

ACAF is very excited to announce a newly formed "Special Fund" for the retired K-9 Unit "work" dogs. After their service days, most of these dogs are adopted by their handlers... police officers, who then become financially responsible for their veterinary care. ACAF wants to honor these exceptional dogs for their distinguished service, and to provide specialty and emergency services when needed. On Friday, October 9, 2009 from 6:00 - 10:00 ACAF is sponsoring a fund raiser - K-9 ROCKS - at Diesel on the Southside. "Joe Grushecky and the Houserockers" are the headliners with "Tres Lads" as the opening act. All proceeds from K-9 ROCKS will be directed toward a Special Fund to benefit the retired K-9 work dogs.



For more information on ACAF, the K-9 Rocks concert or to make a tax-deductible donation, visit the ACAF website www.animalcarefund.org.

UPCOMING EVENTS

October 15 7:00 – 9:00 PM
"Upper Airway Surgery" presented by Anthony Pardo, MS, DVM, DACVS—PVSEC Surgery (for veterinarian CE Credit)

November 11 7:00 – 9:00 PM
"Management of Canine and Feline Epilepsy" presented by Edward MacKillop, DVM, DACVIM (Neurology)—PVSEC Neurology (for veterinarian CE Credit)

November 18 7:00 – 9:00 PM
"Veterinary Dentistry for Technicians" presented by Krista Mendoza, DVM, DAVDC—PVSEC Dentistry (for CVT CE Credit)

December 10 7:00 – 9:00 PM
Topic: TBA presented by Rebecca Newman, DVM, MS, DACVIM (Oncology)—PVSEC Oncology (for veterinarian CE Credit)



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Editor

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Contributors

Dentistry Service Expansion

Krista Mendoza, DVM,
DAVDC

New Veterinarians Joining

PVSEC –Tracey Jackson,
DVM, DACVIM; Elizabeth
Toops, DVM, MS, Practice
Limited to Dermatology;
Christine Guenther, DVM,
Practice Limited to Critical
Care

Cassius' Power of
Determination–Tracey
Jackson, DVM, DACVIM

ACAF Upcoming Events—
Michelle Bozic (ACAF
Program Director)

NEW VETERINARIANS JOINING PVSEC

At this time the doctors and staff of PVSEC would like to introduce three of the newest veterinarians to join our growing hospital.

Dr. Tracey Jackson completed her undergraduate degree in agriculture at Kansas State University in 2001 and her Doctor of Veterinary Medicine degree at Kansas State University College of Veterinary Medicine in 2003. Following graduation, Dr. Jackson completed a one year small animal rotating medicine and surgical internship at Colorado State University's Veterinary Medical Teaching Hospital. She then returned to Kansas State University to complete a three-year residency program in small animal internal medicine. Following the completion of her residency in 2008, she completed the requirements for board certification and became a Diplomate of the American College of Veterinary Internal Medicine. Dr. Jackson then joined PVSEC's internal medicine group in July 2009. Her diverse clinical interests include endocrinology, hematology, and infectious diseases. She is skilled in respiratory and gastrointestinal endoscopy in addition to other specialty diagnostics.

Dr. Elizabeth Toops graduated with highest distinction and received her Bachelor of Science degree from Purdue University in 2001. She earned her Doctor of Veterinary Medicine degree from the Ohio State University College of Veterinary Medicine in 2005 and then completed a year-long rotating internship in small animal medicine and surgery at Carolina Veterinary Specialists in Charlotte, NC. Dr. Toops joins PVSEC Dermatology after finishing a three-year residency in dermatology at Auburn University College of Veterinary Medicine and completing a Master of Science in biomedical sciences. Dr. Toops is also a member of Phi Zeta and her clinical interests include canine demodicosis and canine and feline atopy. She will be available for new consults Tuesday through Friday starting October 1st. This addition will significantly decrease the waiting time for new dermatology patients and allow us to provide even better service to our referring veterinarians and their clients.

Dr. Christine Guenther is originally from the Boston area. She earned her Bachelor's degree from Bentley College and spent several years working as a Product Manager for a healthcare software company before deciding to pursue a career in veterinary medicine. Dr. Guenther received her Doctor of Veterinary Medicine degree from Tufts University in 2005. She completed a rotating small animal medicine and surgery internship at Wheat Ridge Animal Hospital in Denver, Colorado in 2006. Following her internship, Dr. Guenther spent three years as a resident in small animal emergency and critical care at Tufts University, completing her residency in 2009. Dr. Guenther's clinical interests include respiratory diseases, sepsis and disorders of coagulation. With the addition of Dr. Christine Guenther, PVSEC will again count Critical Care among the specialty services it offers to the western PA area. Walk-in emergency care will continue to be provided 24 hours a day, 365 days a year at PVSEC. Dr. Guenther will oversee the hospital ICU and will be scheduled at PVSEC four days a week on an alternating two week schedule. For example, for two weeks, she will be on-site Sunday through Wednesday, followed by two weeks on-site Monday through Thursday.

Please join us in welcoming these veterinarians to Pittsburgh and please take the time to introduce yourselves to them at upcoming WPVMA and PVSEC events.

CASSIUS' POWER OF DETERMINATION

During the past several weeks, Cassius, an 8 year-old boxer mix, has become a favorite patient of the doctors and staff of PVSEC. Since he was first presented to PVSEC's emergency department for lethargy, his treatments have involved multiple departments, veterinarians and technicians, and his ever-wagging tail and good nature have secured his place in the hearts of everyone at PVSEC.

His ordeal began with what we believe to be either a copperhead or cottonmouth rattlesnake bite sustained while hiking with his family in West Virginia. A few days after the initial injury, changes in his blood work, clinical presentation and resultant massive tissue necrosis consistent with snakebite began to occur. Cassius survived the acute crisis and the subsequent sepsis before his the necrotic tissue 'declared' itself and the extent of the damage was determined. Since there was a substantial risk of him becoming septic again, immediate surgical debridement was necessary.

To complicate the situation, Cassius' owner was on vacation with her 3 young children (all under the age of 4) at her mother's house in West Virginia when this happened. The initial goal was to try to stabilize him so the owner could drive Cassius home to Denver for continued care. The owner was determined and willing to drive non-stop for 24-hours with her children, if that was what Cassius needed. Unfortunately, Cassius reached a crisis situation the day he was scheduled to be transported and had to undergo surgery here in Pittsburgh. Cassius' "mom" had to return to Denver without her beloved friend.

With concern about the possibility of a second septic event having subsided, complete recovery is expected. His life-limiting factor has become financial. Prior to surgery, his hospital bill was ~\$7,000, which the owners paid in full. It is anticipated the ultimate cost of care will exceed \$20,000. Prior to pursuing treatment, the potential cost was discussed with the owners in terms of this being an "all or none" endeavor: Cassius could not

undergo extensive surgeries only to stop midway because of financial reasons. The owners are committed to follow through with treatment; however the ceiling of the costs is undetermined. Although they are doing their best to keep up with costs, very few people, especially in this economy, have that amount of disposable income.

Cassius is a phenomenal dog who has done nothing but wag his tail during this entire painful process. A lesser dog would have succumbed before now. His gentle spirit and quiet determination has touched everyone in the hospital, from the janitorial staff to the receptionists to the doctors and technicians. Some financial assistance has been provided by funds raised by a 50/50 raffle at the Animal Care & Assistance Fund (ACAF) golf outing in August.

More information on snake envenomation can be found on the [Veterinary Information Network](http://www.vin.com) website: www.vin.com, by calling the **Animal Poison Control Center** (1-888-426-4435), or in textbooks such as **Small Animal Critical Care Medicine** (Silversein & Hopper, eds. 2009).

