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WAGGIN' WHEELS!

The Buddy Beck Story- By Terri Beck.

Buddy is an 11-year old Nova Scotia Duck Tolling Retriever who lives in Powell River. On the May long weekend he was chasing sticks and swimming. On Tuesday his hind end was paralyzed from a ruptured disk putting pressure on his spinal cord. After an emergency trip to Vancouver for an ultrasound and MRI, we discovered that Buddy also had one indicator of a spinal cord disease which could kill him shortly after surgery, if it developed. While the odds were low, the surgeon felt that if the spinal cord disease did not develop after surgery, Buddy would have a good chance of living pain free. We opted for the surgery and came home to wait for the surgeon's report.

Fast forward a couple of months of emotionally and physically demanding rehab (demanding on us—Buddy was mostly happy just to hang out once the initial healing was underway).

By August Buddy still did not have use of his hind end so we got him wheels and started venturing out on longer walks again. We use a harness to lift his hind end to move him around the house and he can "scoot" himself around with his front end when we're not there. Buddy does not yet

have complete control of his bladder and bowels so he is in diapers when indoors. Once the initial healing was underway (approximately 6 weeks) we tried to keep life as normal as possible. We started with one night in the tent and although it was mass pandemonium to get Buddy out in time for his morning BM (too much information—I know!) we had some good laughs over it and we were all very happy to be in the tent again. Then we took Buddy out in the canoe for a weekend of camping on the beach and it was soooo fun to watch him race around the beach in his wheels and we discovered that they float!!! Buddy can still retrieve sticks in the water—his main obsession in life. He is also once again chasing sticks and balls on land so is one happy "puppy". Buddy still comes most every where with us- we just have to pack a diaper bag now.



This has been once adventure we wouldn't have missed for the world and every time we give Buddy a big squeeze we are thankful that we made the decision to give him the chance to continue living to the max. It's been a great ride, not without its ups and downs, but we have learned a lot both from Buddy and from all of the medical people and friends who help us. We continue to work with Dr. Marlene for home-

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terrier. Obviously these animals show symptoms of poor control of their hind legs early in life; often in the first 4 months of life. Acupuncture, herbal treatment and regular chiropractics can alleviate some of the symptoms, but can never correct serious malformations.

Spinal arthritis.

This can be a result of excessive use, disc disease, or trauma. It can involve one or two vertebrae, or it can involve the lumbar or entire spine. In the last case we often call this polyarthritis as it involves multiple joints and the cause is often immune mediated. Some breeds are more affected than others- the German Shepherd and its crosses seem to get a larger share; however the Rottweiler and Retrieving dogs also have a high score. The cause of polyarthritis is unknown and in human medicine there seems to be some thoughts of micro-organisms and in endemic areas Lyme's disease. Activated immune complexes are also blamed for this problem. The onset of this disease can be early in life, around two or three years of age; however the effects often don't become apparent until a later age. The first symptoms are often stiffness and inability to jump into the car or climb stairs. Cold and damp weather make it worse. A reduction in range of motion of the spine is obvious in a chiropractic assessment. The arthritis progresses and reduces the circulation to the spine through the foramina between the vertebrae; also the nerves themselves get into the squeeze. This will eventually lead to loss of nerve control with weakness, dragging, crossing, slipping (the splits), urinary and bowel incontinence and eventually result in the inability to get up, walk or move. Acupuncture, with Moxa on colder days, Yang (Kidney Yang) herbs, warmer areas to sleep, anti-inflammatories and anti-oxidants, homeopathic remedies and western medicine (Metacam) all help. Regular chiropractics, es-

pecially in early phases, are very helpful and keep the animal mobile much longer. Rehabilitation involving exercises, swimming and underwater treadmill are extremely useful to maintain nerve impulse control.

Degenerative Spinal Myelopathy.

This term literally means progressive degeneration of the spinal cord and nerves. There are many reasons for this condition and again the German Shepherd and their crosses top the list. Boxers, Corgis, and Retrievers are also on the list. Spinal arthritis as described already is one of these reasons. Spinal trauma and contusion, or damage to the membranes around the cord is another. New research is being conducted into the genetic predisposition of this disease. For more information go to the OFA website and look under genetic diseases and spinal myelopathy. The typical symptoms of this disease are seen in the later age of life. Most of the time there is NO pain involved. There is a slow or rapid progression of loss of control of the hind legs with neurologic deficits such as placing problems, crossing over, losing control on slippery surfaces, dragging and eventual inability to control the hind legs all together.

Treatment is similar as above with chiropractics, rehabilitation, acupuncture, therapeutic laser, and herbal and homeopathic medicine. These can prolong and improve the quality of life. Prednisone can give temporarily relief; however, there is currently no cure for this condition.

There are more reasons why a dog can lose control over their hind legs, cartilaginous thromboembolism, poly-neuropathy and neuro-muscular disease. Unfortunately the list is long, but as we can see from the previous story, it does not always end in sadness.



Buddy Beck and his new friend Marley Bergen- who just recently got her wheels—Buddy was showing her the road!



Gentle Reminder



Please be mindful our email is for progress reports and not to take place of appointments or phone consults. Thank you all for keeping us updated on your pets health.

News "Bites"

By the time you get this newsletter we are approaching Christmas real fast! (You can probably tell from all the snow!) We all wish you all the best for the festive season and a Happy New year!

Many new things have happened in our lives recently! Dr Matheson adopted another sweet little girl from Vietnam, Dr. Erika Raines joined our staff ,Dr. Smith has invited two new kittens from the Kitty Pal Society, into her home—Welcome Bute and Bedwell, and Marjorie and her Berner pack are busy showing their new Berner pup Dixie Bell the ropes!

Two Legged Addition...

Dr Heather Matheson, her husband Rik and their daughter Tineka are very pleased and excited to announce the arrival of Tineka's baby sister Nya Hoai Anh. Dr Heather & her family made the trek to Vietnam in September and adopted Nya from the same orphanage as Tineka came from. It was a very pleasant surprise that Nya & Tineka not only had the same NuNu's (Nanny's) but the NuNu's were excited to see Tineka again. Tineka takes very good care of her baby sister and is helping Mom & Dad out lots; after all she already has lots of dog, cat, horse & chicken siblings what is one more two-legged one.....



Nya's first Halloween

Doctor Addition...



Dr. Erika Raines completed her veterinary degree at Oregon State University's College of Veterinary Medicine in June 2010. She completed her veterinary acupuncture training at the Chi Institute of Chinese Medicine in August 2010, and she is looking forward to completing her training in Chinese herbal therapies. Dr. Raines is looking forward to obtaining further training in both chiropractic manipulations and homeopathic medicine. To integrate western medicine with other healing modalities has been her dream for many years ;she is excited to join Tree of Life Veterinary Care and make her dream become reality.

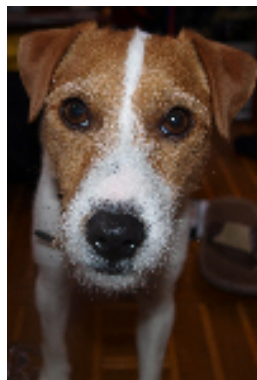
She and her partner Emili share their hearts with their cats Cato and Dominiqua, their dog Baldr and their rat Katharina.

All the staff at Tree of Life warmly welcome Dr. Erika to our team!

Dr. Erika Raines with Dominiqua

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Well folks...no foibles to report for this newsletter!!!! I know, I can't believe it myself....but we must give due where due is due!! (do you think the dew outside is getting to me??!!) Anyway the due goes to Janice and Wilbur—my new best buds. They were kind enough to look after me while my parents went adventuring, and they are the reason that I have no foibles to expound. At least that is the story Janice, Wilbur and I all concocted to tell my folks, so that's all I'm saying. I may or may not have behaved myself while surfing their couch, but so far none of



my antics have been outted!

With my cutest face ...I say Thank you once again to Janice and Wilbur for giving me a terrific holiday away from my parents! But Wilbur...don't think I've forgotten about that blue kong—I'm still gunnin for it!

We all await the next adventure... don't worry folks, now that I'm back home, I'm working hard on my foibles!



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