

Animal **LIFE**

VETERINARY MEDICAL TEACHING HOSPITAL



Inside

Sadie survives
kennel fire

Eleana's
Marvel
is filled
with spirit

Miles inspires
those around
him

Back for more



The two words "animal" and "life" share the "L" because—just like our pets—they are a seamless part of our lives.

AnimalLIFE



Patrice Scott, "AnimaLIFE" editor, and Clyde

We want you to share your experience with us

A heartfelt thank-you goes to everyone who took the time to contact us about our inaugural issue of "AnimaLIFE." We were simply overwhelmed by the cards, letters, emails, lists of friends to add to the subscription list, phone calls and requests for more information. Your response touched all of us at the Veterinary Medical Teaching Hospital (VMTH). Thank you.

We heard so many wonderful stories about clients' hospital experiences that we knew we had to share them. So, we redesigned our web site, added "AnimaLIFE" and created an entirely new section called, "Why We Do What We Do." This area will be dedicated to letters from you—our VMTH clients—about your pet and hospital visit. Please visit our web site at www.vet.ksu.edu. Then click on Teaching Hospital.

We'd also like to thank the people who made donations to the Ken Harkin Cat Adoption Agency and to those who expressed an interest in adopting our beautiful Greyhounds. You have made a difference! These are just two of many programs at the VMTH designed to improve the lives of animals. If you are interested in learning more about our development efforts and would like to help us help animals, please call or email me.

And we have more great news from the Horrillos, the Oregon couple featured in our first issue who adopted Kula, a retired racing Greyhound from our blood donor program. For an update, please see the back cover.

We hope that you enjoy this issue of "AnimaLIFE." It holds stories of hope, challenge, commitment, love, loss and new beginnings. And in this issue, like always, we celebrate the human-animal bond with feature articles about Sadie, a yellow Lab, Elena's Marvel, an American Mustang, and Miles, a Golden Retriever.

As always, please contact me if you'd like to share your story. Who knows? It just may be added to our web site.

Sincerely,

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SEEN & QUOTED

My little dog—
a heartbeat
at my feet.
Edith Wharton

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About the Cover

Sadie and Annette Fairbanks enjoy happy days following a harrowing ordeal. Sadie spent a cumulative two months in the Veterinary Medical Teaching Hospital due to injuries sustained in a kennel fire. Sadie's story is on page 7.

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View



Photo credit, Dave Adams

Thank you for the tremendous outpouring of support for “AnimalLIFE.” Many people responded to our first issue; some shared kudos for our faculty, staff and students, others related stories of their often happy and sometimes heart wrenching trips to our hospital and a few shared quite moving stories about the importance of pets in their life. We appreciate your responses and recognize that we all share a very special bond...animals are an important and wonderful part of our life. It appears our new magazine is appropriately named.

Everything we do at the Veterinary Medical Teaching Hospital (VMTH) is intended to improve the lot of animals in our society. There are a number of exciting initiatives under way in the VMTH and all are intended to insure that we can provide the most sophisticated medical care available anywhere. We will share our vision for the future of our hospital with you in this issue, and we will give you a glimpse of the medicine and memories that make us who we are.

A massive renovation of the Small Animal Intensive Care Unit (SAICU) will begin early next year. Construction will take approximately three months, and when completed, the SAICU at K-State will be one of the premier veterinary intensive care facilities on this continent.

We hope that our equine clients will soon enjoy the benefits of a new Equine Medical Center (EMC). The center will have state-of-the-art imaging equipment and the finest diagnostic equipment available in equine medicine today. This is our premier bricks-and-mortar development project, and we will work hand-in-hand with our friends to make this much needed addition a reality.

Plans have been finalized to purchase and install digital radiography and computed radiography systems that will make our hospital among the elite in the nation to be entirely digital in radiology. This advanced technology will significantly reduce radiation exposure for our patients and will enable clinicians and clients to view a patient's radiographic images on any computer terminal in the hospital.

We continue to challenge ourselves individually and collectively to realize our vision of being the preeminent full-service veterinary hospital in the country. Simply put, we want to provide the finest care available for each of our patients and the most complete educational experience possible for each of our students and trainees. And, we want our clients and referring veterinarians to have complete confidence that their needs will be met without exception. A tall order? Certainly, but our constituents deserve nothing less.

Please enjoy the time you spend with this issue of “AnimalLIFE.” Thank you for your interest in our hospital, and thank you for caring about animals.

Warm Regards,

Roger B. Fingland, DVM, MS, MBA
Diplomate, ACVS
Professor and Director
Veterinary Medical Teaching Hospital

Progressive
MEDICINE

“...to realize our vision
of being the preeminent
full-service veterinary
hospital in the country.”

Dr. James Lillich • Equine Surgeon

by Patrice Scott



Photo credit, Dave Adams

“Dr. Lillich is a truly caring teacher. I felt like he was rooting for me the hardest when I felt the least confident.”

—Jessica Hoffman

Large animal or small, it's all about patient care according to Dr. James Lillich, associate professor, equine orthopedic and general surgery.

Dr. Lillich, a native of Santa Fe, New Mexico, is one of three board-certified equine surgeons in Kansas, all of whom are at the Veterinary Medical Teaching Hospital (VMTH). He joined the faculty in 1996 and appreciates the state's rich learning environment. “The exciting thing about Kansas is the great variety of cases you see,” Dr. Lillich says. “We see everything from devastating lacerations, to complicated fracture configurations, to hip problems in Poitou donkeys.”

This range in cases provides the best learning opportunities possible to prepare senior students for private practice.

“Skills are what the students need; skills come from patient care,” he says. “Fundamentals come with broad-based experience.”

It is obvious that students learn skills by managing patients. But students in the VMTH manage those patients under the direct supervision of dedicated teachers and mentors. Senior student Jessica Hoffman says that Dr. Lillich embodies all that is good about a veterinary educator. “Dr. Lillich is a truly caring teacher,” she says. “I felt like he was rooting for me the hardest when I felt the least confident.”

Dr. Lillich's colleagues appreciate his dedication to the veterinary profession. Dr. Todd Welsh, owner of Red Oak Animal Hospital in Bucyrus, Kan., has referred cases to K-State for 19 years. He values all that Dr. Lillich offers

his practice. “I can send him a case or call him for a consult and he will give me information on the prognosis, rehab and recovery time,” Dr. Welsh says. “He's always right. He's that good.”

Dr. Lillich likes the challenge of “wearing a lot of hats,” a reference to his responsibilities as a teacher, researcher and clinician—the academic version of the Triple Crown.

Jessica says that's yet another lesson learned from Dr. Lillich. “When he was working in the lab, he was constantly being paged, making phone calls, solving problems and answering questions. He seems to work more than anyone I know, but enjoys what he does and keeps expanding his knowledge. I admire his ability to keep giving more than 100 percent of his attention to whatever he's working on.”

Recently Dr. Lillich has focused his attention on a major research project. In 2002 he was awarded a three-year grant from the Center of Biomedical Research Excellence (COBRE) to study non-steroidal, anti-inflammatory drugs and their side effects. The investigative study centers on epithelium, tissue that typically lines parts of the body.

This research may someday help humans, too. “Horses are good models for humans because they get the same ulcers in the stomach and colon that people do,” he says. “Horses are valuable for complimenting cell-line research.”

The combination of clinical service, teaching and research is something Dr. Lillich considers a benefit for clients and ultimately, patients. “Many times, a horse is here because our hospital is its only opportunity for survival. There is literally no other place an owner can go that will provide a higher level of care,” Dr. Lillich explains. “Our expertise can mean the difference between life and death. That is why it is so important to be good at what we do. And we offer a level of service that is probably not surpassed in the country.”

Dr. Lillich recently conquered his goal of attaining tenure and looks forward to a lifelong career in veterinary clinical education. It only makes sense that he would do so in the equine section. He's quick to remind those around him that the only way man conquered the world was with the horse.

Dr. Lillich and his wife, Roberta, a veterinarian at Abilene Animal Hospital, have three children. They are Rachel, 6; Olivia, 4; and Matthew, 1. 🐾

SADIE:

by Patrice Scott
Photo credit Dave Adams

From Hades to Home



A nightmare ordeal turns into a hellish recovery for Sadie, a 2-year-old yellow Labrador Retriever, whose will to live, committed owners and dedicated veterinarians ensure her survival.

Jerry and Annette Fairbanks boarded Sadie in their local kennel in Goodland, Kan., before driving to Wichita to attend a funeral. On the return trip, they decided to stop at home. "Usually I just unload our stuff and jump in the car to pick up Sadie," Annette says. "This time I went inside and saw the light blinking on the answering machine."

The message was from the kennel owner, who is a friend of the Fairbanks. He explained that a fire had broken out at the kennel sometime during the night of Nov. 22, 2003. Sadie had been taken to the local veterinarian for observation. It appeared that all five dogs boarded were traumatized and their physical condition was uncertain.

"I am so thankful that I went inside," Annette says. "If I had just driven out there and found that the building was gone and she wasn't there, I don't know what I would have done."

The horror of the fire was compounded by the fact that the dogs had virtually no chance of escape. Hopelessly confined by their cages, all were found huddled at the end of their runs. It was a desperate attempt to distance themselves from the smoldering debris.

“Animals are just like people. Many will fight, some will give up. We could tell from the beginning, in Sadie’s eyes and attitude, that she was going to fight. We can’t explain to an animal what is happening, we have to gain their trust.”

— Dr. Lisa Moore

Sadie’s injuries at first appeared to be superficial. She had two small burn marks on her head and hip. The local veterinarian immediately put her on antibiotics and pain medication. “When I went to visit her, I took her outside to go to the bathroom and her urine was black. They told me that was because of all the smoke she inhaled.”

She spent six days at the clinic before being transferred to Oakley Veterinary Services in Oakley, about 50 miles east of Goodland. Dr. Tammy Swartz, a 1999 K-State graduate, ran tests that confirmed that Sadie’s kidney function was impaired. “She wasn’t eating and more and more burn spots were beginning to surface,” Annette says. “Something was very wrong.”

Dr. Swartz shaved Sadie’s hair in a couple of areas revealing extensive burns. That’s when she referred Sadie to the Veterinary Medical Teaching Hospital (VMTH). “When I found those skin lesions, I knew they were beyond what we could handle,” Dr. Swartz says. “A week post-injury and new lesions were still appearing. Her white cell count kept climbing, and we were dealing with the secondary problems with her kidneys and liver.”

They placed Sadie on a soft mat in the back of Annette’s SUV and hung the IV from the coat hook. “We loaded her up in the car and she had tubes everywhere,” Annette says. “My vehicle looked like a MASH (Mobile Army Surgical Hospital) unit. Dr. Swartz’s office called me twice on my way to Manhattan to see where I was. After the last call, they called the hospital and told them we were 10 minutes away. When I got there, out they came—three people and a gurney. A whole team of people looked at her that night.”

Dr. Lisa Moore, small animal medicine section head, was among the first to examine Sadie. The clinicians determined Sadie had suffered third degree burns over 40 percent of her body. Third degree burns are the most serious in which the fatty layers below the skin are destroyed. While under anesthesia, doctors shaved Sadie from the tip of her nose to the tip of her tail. Her entire dorsum (back) was burned.

“We decided to treat the infected burn aggressively,” Dr. Moore says. “She was given hydrotherapy daily, sometimes twice a day to remove the eschar.” (Eschar is a black leathery scab that typically forms after a burn.) “In addition to controlling the infection, we were treating the renal failure, controlling the pain and meeting her nutritional needs via a feeding tube.”

Senior veterinary student Jerry Smith was one of the first students assigned to Sadie’s case. He was one of five



people needed to give her daily hydrotherapy sessions, a process that took about 1-1/2 hours. “We had to put her in a whirlpool bath every day for weeks then debride dead tissue from these huge burned areas,” Jerry says. “Then we had to rebandage her from head to foot and start all over again the next day.”

Medically, there was much the VMTH clinicians, students, staff, residents and interns could do for Sadie. But Sadie’s survival was up to Sadie. “Animals are just like people,” Dr. Moore says. “Many will fight, some will give up. We could tell from the beginning, in Sadie’s eyes and attitude, that she was going to fight. We can’t explain to an animal what is happening, we have to gain their trust.”

“We could not have done to Sadie all that she required if she didn’t have an excellent temperament and will to live,” Jerry says. “She deserves a lot of credit for all she endured. She is a gem.”

On Jan. 8, after 37 days in the hospital, it was finally time for Sadie to go home—for a while. A massive reconstruction surgical procedure would be necessary but first the wound had to be healthy. The Fairbanks picked up Sadie for what would be just another of their many 600-mile roundtrip journeys to the VMTH.

“I think they (VMTH doctors) felt comfortable sending Sadie home because they knew we’d take care of her,” Annette says. “I was scared at first because I was afraid that I was going to do something wrong. I was very concerned about infection.”

Senior student Aubrey Alfaro encourages Sadie during a hydrotherpay session. “You can do it, Sadie. You can do it. You are such a good girl,” Aubrey tells her repeatedly.



Above: Senior student Jerry Smith reassures Sadie before a hydrotherapy session. Beneath her ear is a feeding tube. Below: Many of Sadie's caregivers gather to say hello when she returns to the VMTH for a check-up this spring.

Sadie's Stats:

- Days in VMTH: 60
- Days in ICU: 36
- Doctors who cared for her: 19
- Students who cared for her: 17
- Number of hydrotherapy sessions: 29
- Number of surgeries: 5
- Time in surgery: 18 hrs/ 40 mins
- Number of prescriptions: 30
- VMTH services used: 7
 - Soft tissue surgery
 - Internal medicine
 - Anesthesia
 - Radiology
 - Laboratory
 - Dispensary
 - Dermatology

Sadie's healthcare became nearly a full-time job for Annette who operates a business from her home. Each day, Annette would don gloves and completely scour their downstairs bathroom with bleach to create a sterile environment. Then, it was hydrotherapy at home.

"She was wrapped in body bandages and had a stockinette bandage over that," Annette explains. "I would remove the bandages, put her in the bathtub, rinse her off, put pure non-processed honey on strips and apply it to the granulation tissue then wrap her head, her back, her tail and half of her legs in gauze."

Numerous medications, feeding her three times a day through a tube in her neck and giving Sadie injections was all a part of their daily routine. "I never thought I could ever give shots," she says. "But let me tell you, I got pretty good at it. I guess the mother in you just takes over, and you do what you have to do."

Dr. Swartz believes Sadie's hospital time was cut in half because of Annette. "If she could do it, she would. If she couldn't, she would call," she says of Annette's commitment.

Sadie's hospital stay was also shortened by ten nights because Jerry, the student assigned to her case, cared as much for her as about her. "Sadie wasn't sick enough to be in ICU but wasn't well enough to go home. She needed a little extra support, so I decided to take her home with me for a few nights." Jerry says. "My wife is a nurse, and she knew how attached I was to Sadie. We were able to get her to eat and she stopped losing so much weight. It was no big deal; Sadie was a pleasure to have around."

Hospital time was also decreased because of increased communication between VMTH clinicians, the Fairbanks and Dr. Swartz. "Sadie received the care she needed from

K-State that I couldn't provide," Dr. Swartz says. "I loved the way they (VMTH doctors and students) kept me updated. When Sadie needed to go back to the hospital, they would call so I knew exactly what was going on."

It was apparent that Sadie was going to require surgery, but surgeons cannot operate on unhealthy tissue. "The most difficult aspect of this case was the treatment prior to surgery," says Dr. Roger Fingland, VMTH hospital director and soft tissue surgeon. "Once the wound is healthy, it is simply a challenge for the surgeon to close that healthy wound. Sadie needed this surgery because her wound was too large for the body's healing mechanism to close the wound."

On Feb. 9, Sadie underwent surgery to close the enormous wound on her dorsum. Dr. Gretchen Sicard and Dr. Fingland performed the surgery. It was a demanding six-hour reconstructive procedure, in which surgeons "replaced" the large wound with dozens of smaller ones created with a "mesh release incision." This technique takes advantage of the body's natural healing ability.

Today, Sadie is a healthy, happy dog with a bright future. She has no long-term medical problems, only scars remain on her back and a few on her head. Now that the full weight of this nightmare is behind them, Annette hopes that something positive will come from this ordeal. She plans to work with their local fire department to teach fire safety tips. But much good has already come from this tragedy that claimed the life of one dog boarded with Sadie on that fateful November night. (The cause of the blaze has not been determined.)

"Sadie's was by far the most intensive, complicated and rewarding case I worked on my entire senior year," Jerry says. "Annette and Sadie taught me what the life of a veterinarian can be like if you have compassion, communicate and truly care about someone's animal."

"Commitment. That's what students learn from a case like Sadie's," Dr. Fingland says. "It is through the effort, commitment and heart of the people who work here, that we have outcomes like we did with Sadie. Our caregivers become bonded with their patients, and that is the beautiful part of the profession." 🐾





Hospital renovation **CRITICAL** to VMTH success

by Patrice Scott,
Photo credit, Dave Adams

Patient care, client expectation, educational needs and emerging technologies are the driving factors behind a massive renovation of the Small Animal Intensive Care Unit (SAICU).

Construction is slated to begin this winter and should take three months. When completed, the SAICU will be a modern, technologically advanced facility for the provision of emergency and critical care. The proposed plan will reconfigure 11 rooms, triple the size of the intensive care unit, update four specialty services and create a physical rehabilitation area complete with an underwater treadmill.

"This is the largest project we've undertaken," says Dr. Roger Fingland, hospital director.

"While we have continually renovated the hospital when new treatment modalities required us to do so, these projects have been smaller in scope and isolated to one area of the hospital. This project has multiple facets that will improve many areas of the hospital simultaneously."

Dr. Rose McMurphy, anesthesiology section head, says this renovation is necessary because the current space for the critical care unit is inadequate. "The biggest factor for us as a vet school is this will increase our ability to train students in critical care, which is becoming more and more important," she says. "We hashed through several different plans, visited SAICUs at four universities and learned the benefits of each plan."

The overall design of the SAICU is open and organized with two entrances to maximize traffic flow. A workstation is located near the center of the room, which will allow hospital staff to monitor all patients in the facility. Next to the workstation is a treatment area with mobile equipment carts and treatment tables. Mobile treatment tables are ideal because they reduce patient handling and allow for faster transport when patients require hospital services outside of the SAICU.

"This design is certainly not the least expensive but it offers the most benefits," Dr. McMurphy says. "It is located near surgery and radiology and has easy access to the outdoors when we need to walk patients."

Other additions include an area to bathe patients and a cage bank for small- and medium-sized dogs and cats. Four specially designed runs for large dogs will ensure patient comfort and allow caregivers optimum access to patients. For the first time, the isolation unit will be adjacent to the critical care unit. Hospital staff can monitor these patients through special barrier windows. However, they must exit the SAICU to gain entrance to the isolation unit to prevent cross contamination.

"This design is based on two years of detailed planning and research," Dr. Fingland says. "The critical care unit in this hospital will be one of the premier facilities in the country and will serve our patients for years to come."

Technology is playing a key role in the facility's design. An upgraded computerized hospital management system will be in place soon and will allow hospital staff to view patient records from computers throughout the hospital. In the SAICU, two computers will be located at the center workstation and a room with five computers will be available to faculty and staff to update records. And, the new management system will allow doctors to view radiographs and order prescriptions from a computer. A telemetry system will allow 24-hour monitoring of all critically ill patients without the discomfort of multiple wire leads.

Other recent hospital renovations have also revolved around technology and heightened client expectation. Substantial modifications were necessary to add the computed tomography (CT), magnetic resonance imaging (MRI) units and linear accelerator.

"This hospital is committed to meeting the needs of our clients and patients," Dr. Fingland says. "People want their animal at K-State if it's critically ill because they know their pet is in a place that has talented, caring specialists and the latest in technology."

If you are interested in learning more about the SAICU renovation and other projects under way at the hospital, please call Patrice Scott, VMTH marketing and development officer, at 785.532.4046. Or, email her at pscott@vet.k-state.edu.

by Patrice Scott

A MIRACLE AND MARVEL



A frisky foal frolics in a rural northeast Kansas pasture. She has a fascinating past, trying beginning and fantastic future. And she has her mom's eyes and spirit.



Eleana's Marvel seems like every other foal. She's playful, energetic and curious. But there is nothing typical about this American Mustang or her arrivals—on this continent or on this earth.

Marvel's mom was a majestic Kiger Mustang named Eleana. Kiger Mustangs were first discovered in the Kiger Gorge in Oregon in 1977 during a Bureau of Land Management roundup. Officials noticed that the 27 "Spanish looking" horses were strikingly similar in color and conformation and carried primitive markings. Intrigued, officials conducted genetic testing. Mustangs are the descendants of horses brought to North America by the Spanish Conquistadors in the mid-1500s. What's unique about Kigers is that a high percentage of Spanish

Photo credit, Patrice Scott



markers remain in their blood, there was little mixed breeding due to the herd's rugged and remote location and because the herd escaped detection for so long.

Ironically, it was modern-day exploration—the Internet—where Randy and Kristi Billinger discovered the breed. They were captivated with their history, and in 2000 decided to buy two Kiger Mustangs, Eleana, age 7, and her foal, Segura. Soon, the horses were on the way from their



Photo credit, Dave Adams

Senior student Amber Horn (above left) and Kari Ensz (above right) played an important role in Eleana's care. "I would braid her hair and brush her a couple of times a day," Amber says. "I thought it made her feel a little better. We all became very attached to Eleana."



Photo credit, Patrice Scott

Kiger Mustangs were first discovered in the Kiger Gorge in Oregon in 1977 during a Bureau of Land Management roundup. Officials noticed that the 27 "Spanish looking" horses were strikingly similar in color and conformation and carried primitive markings.

home in Oregon to their new home at the intersection of Oregon and Thomas roads in Wellsville, Kan.

"Eleana was the first Kiger Mustang in Kansas," Randy says. "The people we got her from kept telling us to remember she was a wild horse." Within weeks, Randy was riding her.

Eleana unknowingly became a media celebrity. Interest in her exploded because of the movie, "Spirit, Stallion of the Cimarron" released by DreamWorks in 2002. "Spirit" is a Kiger Mustang and the Billingers know Donner, the horse used as a model for the movie's animation. Eleana appeared on regional TV programs, was featured in numerous newspaper articles

and attended Equifest in Wichita, a three-day exposition for horse owners and horse lovers. She and Segura were also invited to perform a scene from the movie at the American Royal Concert for Champions event.

Great Expectations

At age 11, Eleana was heavy in foal with her third baby. Because she had a history of delivering early, Randy moved her from the pasture into a 20x20-foot foaling stall in the barn. He installed cameras so they could watch her. On April 21, at 2 a.m., something happened.

"We heard this loud commotion, and I checked the monitor," he says. "I saw her lying out there and my heart dropped."

Randy rushed outside and was horrified to find Eleana's leg pinned beneath the heavy-duty stall door. He pushed. He pulled. He shoved. With all his might, and with Eleana's pained cries urging him, he tried to free her. He couldn't. He grabbed a shovel and was finally able to pry her loose.

Their local veterinarian splinted her leg and advised Randy to take Eleana to the Veterinary Medical Teaching Hospital immediately. At K-State, the radiographs showed catastrophic damage.

There are three joints in a horse's knee. Two of Eleana's were fractured and one had luxated. In laymen's terms, her knee was crushed. A horse carries 60 percent of its body weight on its front legs. Eleana, who normally weighed about 1,000 pounds, was carrying an extra 100 to 150 pounds because of the baby.

Dr. Carolyn Arnold, assistant professor of equine surgery, examined Eleana and discussed their options with Randy and Kristi. "When you can't reconstruct, one option is to destroy the horse. Or, you can cast the leg long enough for her to have the baby, then put the mare down. Or, you can perform a salvage procedure called arthrodesis," Dr. Arnold says. (It is the surgical fusion of a joint using plates and screws to enable the horse to bear weight on its bony column.) "We presented Randy and Kristi with the scenarios, the risks, the benefits and the costs and let them decide."

Their best chance

The Billingers deeply loved Eleana and her baby. They wanted both of them to come home and were willing to go to any length providing it was humane. "We decided to have the surgery," Randy says. Putting Eleana down was simply out of the question. "We had to do everything for her we could," Kristi says. "We had to try."

The clinicians faced a medical mountain: a radical surgical procedure, a pregnant mare, a mare under extreme stress and a mare with a questionable breeding date. Because surgery puts the baby at risk, surgeons worked with internal medicine clinicians to monitor the baby.

Doctors elected not to induce delivery at that time because horses are not like humans. Horses have an 11-month gestation period and foals need 320 days to be viable. The survival rate is slim for foals that are induced. Dr. Arnold says much is required of a foal at birth. They must be able to get up, walk and nurse. Foals are also prone to a predatory attack when lying down.

On April 22, Eleana underwent surgery. To minimize her time under anesthesia for the baby's sake, everything had to be in place. "This was a massive effort," Dr. Arnold explains. "Everything was ready to go as soon as she hit the table. It took three hours to reconstruct her knee." The procedure was flawless.

"She was a tough, tough mare," Dr. Arnold says. Kristi recalls Eleana's strength. "She did not lie down once in seven days after her surgery," she says. "That shows her stamina and will."

During that time, stress was taking its toll. Eleana was exhausted. Her heart rate was elevated and was no longer controlled by her medication. It would decrease when Randy and Kristi visited. Randy, a geologist for the Kansas Department of Transportation in Topeka, and Kristi, assistant manager for proposal services at the University of Kansas research center, drove four hours roundtrip to see Eleana nearly every day.

Driving devotion

After work, the couple would quickly do their chores, pick brome from Eleana's favorite spot in the pasture, hop in the truck and drive to Manhattan. They would arrive around 8 p.m. where they would often find the clinicians staying into the evening hours to meet with them.

"I can't tell you how many nights those doctors would be up there waiting for us," Randy says. "They looked so tired and you knew all they wanted to do was to get some sleep but they waited to talk to us."

Senior students Beth Albrecht and Amber Horn played an important role in Eleana's care. "I would braid her hair and brush her a couple of times a day," Amber says. "I thought it made her feel a little better. We all became very attached to Eleana."

Doctors tested Eleana's calcium levels because they provide an indication of when she might deliver. When the test suggested Eleana was within 24 to 48 hours of



laid Eleana to rest with her head on a special shirt of Randy's and covered her eyes.

Eleana's loss was devastating. But Randy and Kristi had to focus on Marvel. Slowly, Marvel was gaining strength and doing well. On May 20, one week to the day of laying Eleana to rest, Marvel, 17 days old, came home. "We were thrilled to be able to walk her out of the hospital and

Far left: Randy, Kristi and Marvel at home.

Left: Another late night at the VMTH. Randy says that nothing could have kept he and Kristi away from Eleana and Marvel. "Not even if they locked the place up," he says.

delivery, the doctors induced her. On May 3, 12 days following the accident, Eleana had her baby. "It was a perfectly natural delivery," says Dr. Beth Davis, assistant professor of equine internal medicine.

"We gave our video camera to Dr. Arnold, and they taped Marvel's birth for us," Randy says. "That's how thoughtful they were."

Marveling at Eleana

The joy of Marvel's birth was overshadowed by the medical teeter-totter they were on. The foal was critical, but in the first couple of days following Marvel's birth, Eleana was improving.

The foal was too weak to nurse, so the doctors filled pails with milk and taught Marvel to drink. Meanwhile, Eleana's condition was deteriorating. "She would not take her concentration off Marvel—not even to eat," Dr. Davis says. "She had a fierce maternal instinct. Because she was a Mustang from the wild, she had instincts that your average backyard horse doesn't have. She was going to do everything she could to get her foal through this crisis."

"When we were up there one night, I was sitting with Marvel," Randy says. "Eleana just looked at me and looked at the baby and said with her eyes, 'I'm not ready to go yet.' Three days later I was lying on the mat and Eleana looked down at me, and she said it was time. She was standing farther away from the baby than she ever had. She was telling me it was our baby now."

On May 13, they said their goodbyes. "We took the braids out of her hair, took a lot of pictures and shed a lot of tears," Kristi says. "You don't know how bad we wanted to bring her home," she says of the heart wrenching reality playing out before them.

They did bring Eleana home—for her burial. Randy faced the grim task of preparing her grave. He called a neighbor to borrow a bobcat while driving to Manhattan. When they returned home with Eleana, their friend had already prepared her grave. In a solemn ceremony, they

take her home," Randy says. "She's here because of the doctors at K-State."

For the next two-and-a-half weeks, Randy and Kristi slept on an air mattress in the bed of Randy's truck parked in the barn. It made those routine nightly feedings much easier.

"We had to get up and feed her every two hours and give her medicine," Kristi says. "Marvel was an orphan and needed a lot of care."

There's a saying "it takes a village" referring to successfully rearing children. In Marvel's case, it required a neighborhood. Perplexed how to care for her during their work day, their neighbors, a school teacher and her

"We were thrilled to be able to walk her out of the hospital and take her home," Randy says. "She's here because of the doctors at K-State."

two children, announced they had the solution. They came over three times a day, every day, all summer, to care for Marvel.

The clinicians, students and staff will always remember Eleana and Marvel and the devotion Randy and Kristi felt for them. Randy recalls that a hospital client left a little Spanish star for them as a token of encouragement, and that everyone seemed to know about Eleana and Marvel. "Even the lady who cleaned would check on us and ask us how our horse was," he says.

While horses are not her specialty, Amber says there will always be something special about Marvel, Eleana and the Billingers. "That case specifically shows me how precious the human-animal bond is no matter the size of the animal."

The clinicians feel a great sense of pride that Marvel survived. They were elated to hear she is thriving and to see pictures showing how much she's grown.

"She bears a striking resemblance to her mama," Dr. Davis says smiling. "She has her mama's markings."

And spirit. 🐾

A man wearing a blue sleeveless shirt, blue shorts, a yellow cap, and a backpack stands next to a brown dog. They are positioned in front of a multi-tiered waterfall cascading over rocks in a lush, green forest. The scene is bright and sunny, with sunlight filtering through the trees.

HOW MANY MILES TO HEAVEN?

by Patrice Scott

For this gregarious Golden Retriever, it was 14,000.

Was he unwanted? Did he run away? No one will ever know exactly how the energetic 1-year-old Golden Retriever arrived at the Helping Hands Humane Society shelter in Topeka, Kan., in May 1998. But when Dann Fisher saw him in the last cage in the last wing of the shelter, he silently professed, "that's my dog."

Dann, an associate professor of accounting at K-State and long-distance runner, took the happy dog home. While reading a book about famed marathon runner, Johnny Miles, Dann had an epiphany. He announced to his wife, Shannon, the dog's name: Miles.

Miles was a natural athlete. He and Dann ran more than 14,000 miles in six years. Together, they've run marathons, been to mountain tops, across mountain divides, along and through streams and rivers and lost in forests.

"I became known as 'the guy with the red dog,'" Dann says. "Miles' favorite day was Sunday when our friends with the Flint Hills Harriers would meet in our driveway for a group run." Dann quickly learned not to put Miles, an extrovert, on a leash before he had greeted everyone. Otherwise, Dann, an introvert, was entangled in the leash and spinning in circles to free himself.

From remission to mission

In October 2003, Dann noticed that Miles was slowing a bit. It seemed only natural since they had been running partners for six years. However, one afternoon, Dann was petting Miles' neck and felt bumps. The couple took Miles to see their veterinarian, Dr. John Lyons.

"I was sitting with Miles, tears streaming down onto his red fur when the phone rang," Dann recalls. "Shannon answered. From her tone, I could tell the news was confirming my worst fears. I braced myself as she hung up the phone. Tears were flowing down her cheeks. 'Dr. Lyons thinks Miles has lymphoma.'"

Dr. Lyons referred them to the Veterinary Medical Teaching Hospital (VMTH). Dann and Shannon were at times overwhelmed by the situation. Cancer. Hospital. Decisions. Chemo. Life. Time.

Their uncertainty vanished when they met Dr. Stacy Santoro, Miles' oncologist. "Our first meeting with Dr. Santoro relieved many of our fears," Dann says. "She was so reassuring, and we all agreed that the emphasis of Miles' treatment would be on quality of life."

Miles began chemotherapy and was in remission for four weeks. "Dr. Santoro called me at the office and informed me that Miles was out of remission and was in for a struggle," Dann says. "She felt so bad for him that she kept him in her office and was sharing her lunch with him."

During his five months on chemotherapy, Miles averaged running 50 miles per week. "We understand medically and scientifically that many of the patients we treat are terminal," Dr. Santoro says. "Our goal is to treat the cancer but to preserve the patient's quality of life at 100 percent. If Miles wasn't running, he wasn't happy."

On a run at Randolph State Park, the situation hit Dann. "I sat on a rock, and feeling very sorry for myself, I began to cry," Dann says. "Miles came up and licked my face. At that moment I decided it was my responsibility to make sure that Miles had the best experience possible in his remaining days. This was my mission."

Teacher becomes student

"During our trail runs, Miles would stop for no apparent reason and lie down next to the trail. I'd join him in the grass. Without fail, the spot



Dr. Stacy Santoro and Miles

continues on page 16

The Miles Fund

Every day, someone says goodbye to their best friend at the Veterinary Medical Teaching Hospital because of a disease such as cancer, diabetes or colic. The question is, how many more of our best friends like Miles or Scarlet or Rufus or Benji or Mandy do we have to lose much too soon?

While we've come a long way in detecting and treating diseases, we have miles to go. That is why the hospital is naming its primary development fund, "The Miles Fund." Any gift that is made to the hospital will go into The Miles Fund, and donors can direct their gift to support any area of the hospital they wish. A donor can choose to support large animal or small, any specialty area such as oncology or small animal medicine, or they can create a memorial through a naming opportunity.

"Miles was an inspiration to those who got to know him and provide him with advanced medical care," says Dr. Roger Fingland, hospital director. "This fund is being named in Miles' honor because he had the heart of a champion and a winning attitude. Through The Miles Fund, we can provide hope for pets that give us so much."

continued from page 1

would have a spectacular view that I had never noticed before. Our runs were no longer about training. They were about spending quality time together. At the trailhead upon finishing a run, he would flash me that Golden Retriever smile that told me he was enjoying and appreciating another day in the woods. I was learning to enjoy each day, learning to live in the moment.”

The two who had spent so much time running together were now running out of time. “Before bed each night, I would sit with Miles for an hour or more. I told him that I loved him and that I appreciated the courage he was showing. I asked him to give me a sign when it was time to let go. The bond we built through all those hours on trails was so strong that I know he understood.”

On a mid-March day, Dann and Miles completed a 10-mile run. “I can still see him waiting impatiently for me, coaxing me to catch up,” Dann says. “He insisted on running another three miles with Shannon.”



Dann with Bart,
his new running companion.

That evening, the couple noticed his lymph nodes were swollen, and he had spiked a temperature. They took him to the VMTH where he spent the night. Dann and Shannon, in turn, spent a sleepless night at home.

The next morning, they shared their decision with Dr. Santoro. She put Miles to sleep at their home. Miles drifted away on the front porch—the very place that he had drifted off after so many enjoyable runs with his Harrier friends.

“The first time I ran without Miles, it was like I’d lost my left leg,” Dann says. “Not hearing the jingling of his tags next to me...”

Sometimes medicine heals, sometimes it cures. Sometimes it just keeps us who we are and able to do the things we enjoy for a little longer. That’s what it did for Miles, and Dann and Shannon couldn’t ask for more. “What I got out of those last five months with Miles is priceless to me,” Dann says.

Losing Miles was crushing. But it was their love for him that ultimately encouraged them to get another dog. “Miles would say, ‘It took me a long time to train you. There are a lot of us out there who need a good home. Go!’”

In May, six years to the month after adopting Miles, Dann and Shannon adopted Bart, an Australian Shepherd in need of a home because his owner was moving. Dann has eased Bart into a running regimen as they have embarked on a new journey together.

With the inception of The Miles Fund and gifts from people who love animals, perhaps we will all enjoy more years with our pets. And, Dann and Bart will be together for more than 14,000 miles. 🐾

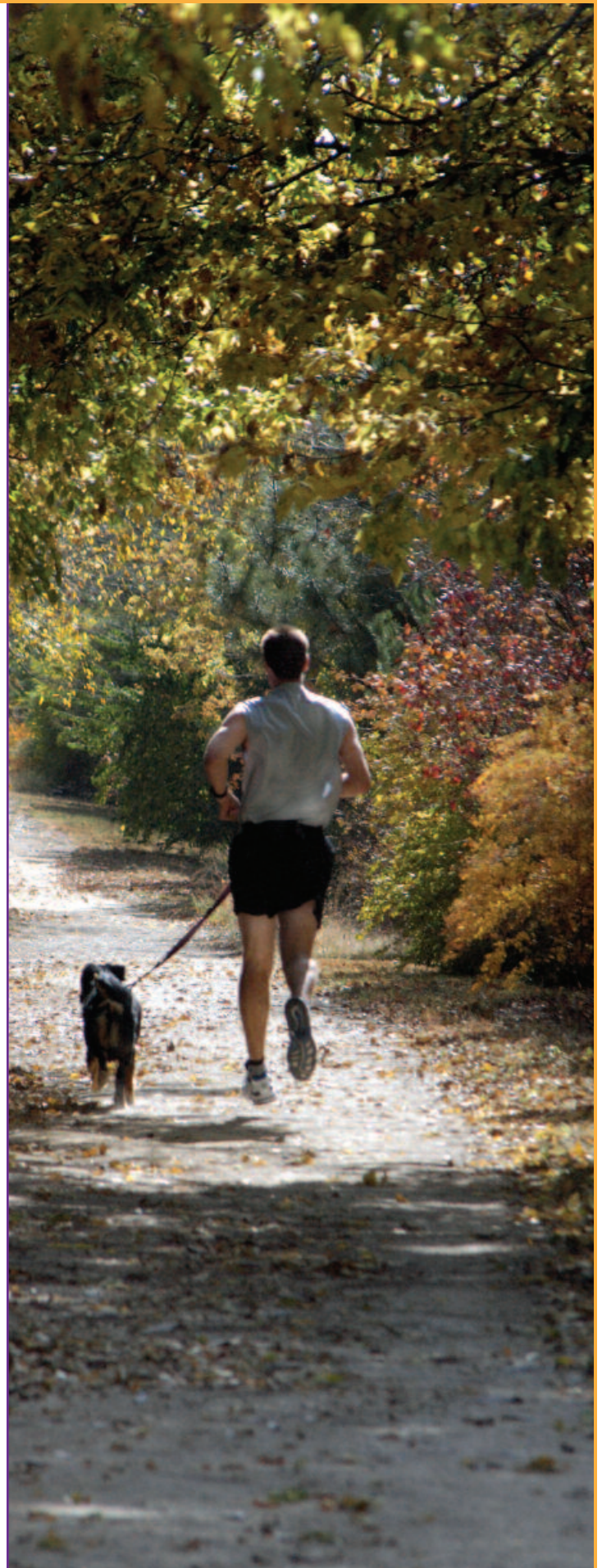


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Making a **TONN** of Difference to animals and his alma mater

by Patrice Scott

Trust and confidence.

Those are the two reasons that Dr. Shane Tonn, owner of All Pets Veterinary Clinic and Town & Country Animal Clinic in Newton, Kan., refers patients to the Veterinary Medical Teaching Hospital (VMTH) at K-State. Dr. Tonn's mixed animal practice includes two clinics with 6,000 patients and 17 employees.

While he can refer clients to other clinics or hospitals, he routinely chooses the VMTH.

"I have total confidence in the faculty, staff, interns and residents at K-State," Dr. Tonn says. "I know how they handle cases, and they keep me informed. I trust them."

Dr. Tonn works with several specialty areas within the VMTH when his patients require advanced medical care. He says that doctors in a mixed animal practice don't have time to become experts or to perform every surgical technique. "K-State is essential to our success," he says. "We need the experts at K-State to rely on, to treat animals we can't and to have them available to send patients to. Sometimes I will call them for a consult and ask, 'Am I missing something? Is there something else I should be doing?'"

Dr. Tonn says his practices refer patients to the VMTH for technically advanced procedures and complex medical conditions. The majority of cases are referred to orthopedics, small animal medicine, oncology and the equine section for colic surgeries. "When I send a colic to K-State, that is the best chance for that horse to make it," he says. "In fact, I have never sent a horse there that was operated on that didn't come home."

As a child, Dr. Tonn loved animals. His grandfather was a medical doctor and encouraged him to go to medical school. However, his affection for animals coupled with an interest in horses discovered at his grandparents' horse ranch solidified his decision to become a veterinarian at age 12. He graduated from K-State in May 1997 and set a goal of owning a practice within five years. He signed the papers in April 2002.



Photo credit: Patrice Scott

Dr. Tonn's family and clients are happy about his career choice, and so are the veterinarians at K-State who express their respect for his work. "Dr. Tonn is very knowledgeable, has very good instincts, aggressively treats complex problems and bases his therapeutic decisions on common sense issues specific to his client and patient," says Dr. Bonnie Rush, equine section head and associate dean for career development.

In vet school, Dr. Tonn realized the importance of a strong caseload. Referrals are his way to support this need. "If students don't have the challenge of managing difficult cases, those students may have a difficult time in private practice," Dr. Tonn says. "They need those cases to gain confidence, knowledge and experience."

Referring cases is not the only way that Dr. Tonn supports the College of Veterinary Medicine. He interviews students for admission to veterinary school. "I consider myself pretty lucky to have gotten into vet school based on the quality of students that were interviewed," Dr. Tonn says. "Their life experience and the professional things they've done to increase their chance of being admitted is incredible."

Dr. Tonn and his wife, Angela, have three daughters: Ashlynn, 8; Rebekah, 5; and Adeline, 1. They also have four horses, five dogs, three cats, two goats and one beta fish. 🐾



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Animal**LIFE**

Back for more

Mary and John Horrillo had such a positive experience last fall adopting Kula (pictured right), a Greyhound in the hospital's blood donor program, they decided to do it again.

Last month, the Oregon couple, their 2-year-old grandson Matthew, four dogs and one foster dog, drove to Manhattan from their coastal city home to adopt Scooby (pictured left). They renamed him Molokai in keeping with John's Hawaiian heritage.

"We were pleasantly surprised at how smoothly everything flowed with six dogs and a toddler," Mary writes in an email upon their return home. "Both big boys slept comfortably on the floor of the RV at night and on our bed during the day. Tell everyone thank you for this sweet, friendly, knock-down handsome Greyhound," she continues. "He is a love, very curious and a Velcro boy. Greyhounds are much more than I ever dreamed they would be. THANKS!"

So, Mary and John, see you next year?

If you'd like to read the Horrillos' story in the May '04 issue of "Animal**LIFE**," please go to www.vet.ksu.edu and click on Teaching Hospital.



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