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The Pet Professionals

Tony Viganò , Michelle Harrison & Melanie Criddle. Veterinary Surgeons

SPRING 2017

THE BULLMASTIFF



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ROAD TEST: THE BULLMASTIFF



Known as the Gamekeeper's Dog this gentle giant is extremely powerful and whilst needing a strong consistent handler the breed is very good natured and quite docile unless provoked.

HISTORY:

The breed goes back to the 1800's and is the only guarding breed to originate in England.

At the time of its creation there were many large estates in England, the owners of which frowned upon game on their estates being poached. Gamekeepers were employed to oversee the game and they needed an assistant. Mastiffs were too slow and the Bulldog of the time too ferocious so a cross between the two was developed. The Bullmastiff as it was known would track down and tackle a poacher but they were trained not to bite and so held the villain down until the gamekeeper arrived. As time went on and the need for these dogs diminished, the originally popular brindle colour made way for the now favoured fawn variety.

APPEARANCE:

This is a powerfully built and agile dog with a broad wrinkled head, short square head and dark muzzle.

They have a black nose with large nostrils and an alert, intelligent expression.

With V shaped, wide pendant ears they have a short slightly rough coat, which comes in brindle, fawn, red and often with black markings on the head.

They grow to 61-70cm in height and a massive 45-60kg in weight.

CHARACTERISTICS:

A devoted and alert guard dog, they are good natured though can be willful.

Docile until provoked they are not likely to attack but will knock down an intruder and hold him down.

They are fearless and protective, even territorial and so can be wary of strangers and so care must be taken to properly socialise and train them in the domestic situation.

They are tolerant of children, intelligent, even tempered and affectionate with their human family so make good companions in the right circumstances.

WHO SHOULD OWN ONE:

These are a breed not recommended for fragile or timid owners. They crave human attention and are generally good with children though can be dog aggressive and wary with strangers so training is essential.

They are fine with other pets as long as they have grown up with them.

They are relatively inactive indoors and so adapt well to apartments though can be lazy and so they need exercise and diet control lest they become overweight.

They do not tolerate extremes of temperature and heat stroke can be a problem in Perth's hot weather.

DOWNSIDES:

They snore, slobber and drool like many of the short muzzled breeds so be prepared to clean up after them!

They are also relatively short lived (between 5-8 years).

Upsides:

A mellow, easy going intelligent dog with a real presence and attitude.

VETERINARY PROBLEMS:

Like most giant breeds elbow and hip dysplasia (hereditary early arthritic conditions of the elbow and hip joints) should be selected against when choosing a puppy. Bloat (a surgical emergency situation if it progresses to gastric torsion) due to gas build up in the stomach after eating is not uncommon and so they should be fed small meals and not exercised immediately after eating.

Tumours such as long bone tumours are not uncommon in relatively young dogs.

Eye problems (turning in and out of the eyelids...termed entropion and ectropion) are seen and these are also hereditary problems.

Interdigital cysts (fluid filled bursae between the toes) are also common due probably to poor conformation of their feet and their great weight.

In summation this is not a breed for everyone but they are a beautiful dog and in the right hands and circumstances are a delight to have around.

Many of the listed veterinary problems can be avoided or minimised by choosing a puppy from breeders who have selected against these conditions. Finally anyone taking on a dog of this size must be in a position and prepared to spend time with them with early socialization and training essential.

Tony Viganò



SWANBOURNE DASHBOARD

Spring has finally arrived some people will be saying, after what seems to have been a long wet winter.

Most dogs and cats hate the rain and so have probably been living inside most of the time in the last 3 months as have many of their owners!

Spring brings with it an endless list of potential dangers for our pets as we start to venture more regularly to the park and your best friend is reunited with his/her group of cohorts for that much awaited daily romp. Care needs to be taken as the ground rules are re set amongst the groups as doggie feelings can be hurt when the exuberance of seeing their friends boils over to skirmishes over whose ball and frizbee that really is and so on!!

Equally those parasites such as fleas also become more active and so an increased vigilance for heartworm (mosquito born) and intestinal worms is required although we do recommend preventives be given all year long in Perth's temperate climate. Best to ask at reception to ensure what you are using is the cutting edge both in efficacy and ease of application.

Flies and bees are also more prevalent as the weather warms up and as I write this the territorial magpies and butcher birds have become very active as the fledgling season starts and care must be taken when walking through nesting areas as bird attacks, particularly involving young children can be significant and potentially dangerous. Wearing a hat with tassles is highly recommended!

See our Spring Perils article later in this newsletter for more suggestions.

So what is happening within the practice as we enter Spring?

Currently Dr Mel Criddle is on an overseas holiday with her family and will be attending the World Small Animal Conference in Copenhagen amongst other things, and whilst she is away soon-to-be-vet Talia Morgan has joined the practice to lend a hand before she starts in earnest in October. See more information about Talia in the team profile section of this newsletter.

Tony and Mel continue to share the Thursday 6PR talk back spot with Simon Beaumont, and Saturday's Weekender with Harvey Deegan has commenced again now that the AFL season is all but done. Be sure to pose a question to keep them on their toes and you may even win one of the weekly "best caller" prizes offered by our many veterinary sponsors.

The practice has recently purchased some specialised dental equipment including a dental xray machine and a specialised tooth extractor. Routine dental xrays will now be available when required in an attempt to better

diagnose tooth root and other problems, whilst the extractor will make easy the removal of deep rooted and fractured teeth.

Tony's heart surgery to correct an aortic aneurysm and spare the adjacent aortic valve has been a resounding success and he is back at work slowly building momentum again.

Neri our iconic Dog Trainer is back in the UK with the wolf man Sean Ellis and his wife Kim, furthering her experience for the next 6 weeks. Basing her training on wolf behaviour has revolutionised the way we look at the early training of puppies and young adults. Our Good Citizen Program starting with puppy preschool and extending throughout the life of the dog has made an amazing difference to the way new owners view their dogs and as a consequence to the enjoyment and pride they now feel towards their dogs. It is no accident that near 100% of newly acquired puppies now turn out to be valued family members and exemplary citizens.

The State Veterinary Conference is on the calendar in October including the Trade Fair, now the best regional conference in Australia behind the Annual Australia wide event. We will be sending a contingent of nurses and vets along to catch up on all the new techniques and equipment. We will no doubt highlight some of this information in the Summer Swanbourne Dashboard.

As previously mentioned, a special welcome to Talia Morgan who graduates in October and joins the practice, and also to Phillippa Suter our new part time receptionist who has also commenced the Veterinary degree at Murdoch University. You will see both Talia and Phillippa regularly around the practice. Both are featured in the Team Profiles in this edition of the newsletter. Welcome to both of them and we look forward to a long association as part of the Swanbourne team.

We recently held our Winter Dinner for the team and their partners at the University Club in Nedlands. Excellent food and company made the night a resounding success. This is an annual event and is something we look forward to when the Winter starts to way down the spirits.

Finally an engagement and a wedding will make the leadup to Christmas a busy time for some of the team as well look forward to the warmer weather.

Tony Vigano



PET TALK!

Spring Peril

Spring will be a welcome relief from the rain and wild weather for many people as well as our pets. Many dogs hate the rain and even the sound can be as bad as thunder in causing anxiety. Cats equally stay inside by the fire and the activity rate of everyone in the household drops as the humans watch sport on TV and the pets can be neglected.

As the weather warms not only do pets and their owners come out of hibernation but parasites, snakes and other nasties also become more active. In Perth our temperate climate means we should never let our guard down against parasites external and internal but many people do and the compliance rate of monthly preventives can be as low as 5/12 months a year which means that burst of warm weather in winter can spell disaster if heartworm preventives and other parasite control has lapsed.

1. Heartworm:

I fear that vigilance has fallen off alarmingly with heartworm control since the disease was first discovered in Perth based canines some 25 years ago. Control is easy and I favour the annual injection which can be given at the same time as annual vaccinations. The injection is made of spherules that are dissolved gradually from the site of the injection over the next 12 months giving good control. Heartworm prevention is also available in monthly oral medications and remember we have the right temperatures, the right mosquitoes and bodies of water such as lakes and the river for the disease to be ever present. The only factor that saves us is that the majority of dogs are protected as the disease requires an infected dog population to be propagated. This I fear is falling off and cases are being reported in Perth once again. Ask your vet!

2. Intestinal worms:

From a human health point of view control of internal parasites is important and this is easily done with the plethora of products on the market given monthly, three monthly and either individually or in combination with other preventives so again ask your vet!

3. External parasites:

These ramp up as the weather becomes warmer and fleas head the list but ticks and lice are also prevalent and easily prevented

4. Flies:

A major problem in areas such as horse studs but also seen in suburbia around rubbish bins and outside/backyard areas particularly if food is left uneaten, there is compost around or faeces from the family pet are not cleaned up regularly....bag this as soon as you see it and keep a special bin that can be put out for collection or deposited in the special bins provided at most parks and recreation reserves. The use of pyrethrin sprays in the back yard, aerosols such as Ndem on the pet and topical ointments on prime areas of your pet such as their ears all help to reduce this annoying problem.

5. Bees:

A major problem all year round particularly for susceptible animals here stings can cause anaphalaxis in pets and people. Watch out for that sudden yelp and lameness or grossly swollen face during a walk at the park....a visit to the local vet may well save a life and if your pet (or child?) are susceptible the consequences become worse after each encounter and desensitisation may well be necessary.

6. Birds:

We are so lucky in Perth having an abundance of bird life in the suburbs to enhance the beauty of our gardens and recreation areas, but beware the territorial species such as magpies, butcher birds and honey eaters which delight in dive bombing both people and pets during the mating season in Spring. A hat is a must and I also carry an umbrella as they can draw blood or worse as they dive bomb intruders into their breeding areas!

7. Equally give birds a chance in your garden by ensuring the family cat is wearing a bell as these fire side tabbies during the winter turn into efficient killing machines as they creep up and mesmerise birds and their young, just doing what comes naturally but very distressing when it happens

8. And on the subjects of cats, please keep them inside from dusk as they are busy meeting and mating during Spring (those that are not sterilised...as they all should be!) and the ensuing fights throughout the night can keep the neighbourhood awake as they scream at each other, locked in mortal territorial battle.

9. Noxious Plants:

When planning your garden please get advice regarding the species you should plant. There are a plethora of noxious plants in every garden and this is a topic about which most pet experts have only a sketchy knowledge. I have included a list to avoid with these notes. Equally planting native species will ensure your garden is full of birds, frogs and other marvellous creatures.

10.

On the topic of "house and garden" and before you get too enthused as Spring starts to bloom, care must always be taken when using snail baits, lawn fertilisers and other caustics outdoors. Frogs and reptiles (avoid snakes!) are greatly affected by these agents and snail bait can be very toxic to dogs as they attract dogs and should be used sparingly (follow the directions!) and preferably put in wide necked jars and conduit pegged to the ground as the products will attract snails. Try to use animal friendly products at all times and don't leave stocks of nitrogenous fertilisers and snail bait in reach of inquisitive pets.

11. At the Park:

After a long wet winter your dogs will be overjoyed to once again have that daily romp in the park, chasing balls and Frizbees and meeting their cohorts. Beware of squabbles that may occur between focussed individuals that become obsessive about



their own balls and tug toys as this can cause mayhem, injury and bad feelings amongst owners! Ensure your dog has been properly socialised at puppy and obedience classes so they become good citizens and learn to share, recall and generally follow your instruction to the letter! Severe fines and worse can ensue if they transgress on a regular basis.

12. Travelling in the car:

Please ensure you secure your dog just as we must do. There are some handy harnesses that clip into seat belt anchor points to prevent your best friend from injury when you are forced to stop suddenly, not to mention the damage they can cause flying around the car! Car sickness is also a problem in many dogs and this can be reduced by regular trips to desensitise them but also how and where they travel in the car. It is a combination of motion sickness (try putting them on the floor behind the front seats) but also anxiety due to fear so medications may also help initially to familiarise them with car travel. Most dogs get to love travelling in the car and being with their people.

13. On the subject of cars and we talk about this constantly, please do not leave dogs or any animals for that matter unattended at any time in a locked car. Heat stroke can occur within 6 minutes even in temperatures as low as 25C. Spring is a critical time as the temperatures can climb higher than you think!

14. The sun's heat particularly in the middle of the day can be detrimental in white cats particularly with sunburnt ears and noses and also white staffies and boxers. Consistent sunburn can lead to squamous cell carcinomas in dogs and cats so be sure to protect them from this. There are some good screening lotions available for pets though of not much value in cats.

15. The beach is back on the agenda in Spring so watch out for blowfish (beach and river) as these can be very toxic and also errant anglers who leave fish heads and gangs of hooks on the beach leading to these being caught in mouths and worse.

16. Throwing sticks for dogs at the beach is an absolute no no. Some dogs are incredibly quick catching them in the air and as they land pouncing on them with such ferocity that the sticks can be driven deep into their throats. Please use frizbees to exercise them and not balls either as I have seen these caught deep in their throats, particularly squash balls which can also damage eyes as they fit neatly into eye sockets. Backyard cricket is best played with a tennis ball as cricket balls can break windows (!) but also teeth and limbs!

17. Swimming is great fun but the water can exacerbate ear problems so speak to your vet about a management problem for chronic swimmer ear!

18. Some dogs also swallow water at the beach when jumping through waves and biting at the foam. This leads to vomiting in the car on the way home so give them time to settle down before that long trip home.

19. Also remember older dogs and the family pool can be a lethal combination with tragic circumstances when they can't get out. If you go out, and at all times anyway, keep the pool gate firmly shut.

20. Barbecues can be a problem because of that hot plate taken off to drain the fat and meat

products. Very inviting but desperately hot and not good for eager tongues! Just like those hot bitumen roads on bare pads.

21. Beware also that guests do not casually drop or feed the dog at the BBQ party. Offcuts of fat and particularly onions can be very toxic with the latter causing anaemia in susceptible animals.

22. Reptiles:

Beware of snakes in the Spring. They come out of hibernation full of venom and are a constant problem. Dugites in the sand dunes and inland and tigers around lakes and rivers must be avoided at all costs. Keep your dog on the path and trained to recall under all circumstances. It is best to walk in the early morning rather than the heat of the day at avoid any unpleasant surprises.

The list of issues we encounter with our pets in the Spring is endless but is also a special time, beautiful in most respects but there can be a sinister side for our pets.

CLIENT CONTACT

Snail mail is well outdated, now poorly serviced and way too expensive.

We would therefore like to engage you regarding annual health checks, wellness reminders and newsletter mail-outs in the least possible obtrusive way.

You may well receive a phone call or SMS message soon asking for your email address and preferred SMS contact as we believe this is a far more efficient manner of contact in this era of communication.

We have the capability of doing this through our veterinary software package and so just to get things right we just need the correct information.

If you would rather not be contacted this way and snail mail suits you better or would prefer no contact please tell us.

We have "update your details" forms at reception and so you may well be asked to fill these in at your next visit to facilitate this collection of data.

Tony Viganò



ASK THE VET

Question:

Jennifer from Claremont asks:

We have a new puppy from Queensland and the certificate we received from the breeder signed by her vet recommends a final initial vaccination at 10 weeks of age. Having been to your practice for puppy class it becomes apparent that you recommend a final initial vaccination at between 14-16 weeks of age. Why is this?

Answer:

Many modern vaccines now have 10-12 weeks as the date when a final vaccination should be given.

The fact is that the maternal antibodies that the puppy receives from its mother tend to block the effect of the vaccine so a graph which has been around for many years depicts the falling off of the effect of the maternal antibodies and hence when the final vaccine is best given. Traditionally this was always 14-16 weeks of age but this is only an average of the responses of puppies to both the effect of the maternal antibodies and the rise of the puppies own antibodies as the early vaccines take effect.

Recently this has been the focus of discussion in both the World Small Animal Veterinary Association and the Australian body. Whilst scientifically the claims of the vaccine manufacturers are correct in claiming a good response at 10-12 weeks, both the above veterinary bodies have agreed that best practice is met when the final distemper, hepatitis, parvo vaccine is given at 14-16 weeks and this has become the gold standard.

We therefore in this practice recommend an initial puppy vaccination at 6-8 weeks (generally given by the breeder's vet). Then depending on when we first see the puppy we will recommend the next vaccination (generally the canine cough plus the DHP) be given at 10-12 weeks with a final DHP to be given at 14-16 weeks of age (4 weeks later). This will vary depending on the age of the puppy when first presented but we do like the puppies to have a cover against canine cough as well when they first attend puppy school and this can be given in one dose using an intranasal vaccine at 10 weeks and works quite quickly. Alternately a canine cough vaccine (2 shots) can be given 2-4 weeks apart by injection and the initial one may have been given by the breeder so will follow this up when we first see the puppy.

As a corollary to all this the World body has recently recommended a blood test to check antibody level at 6 months OR another C3 (distemper, hepatitis and parvo), just to make sure and to mop up any of those dogs "falling through the cracks" due to juvenile immune suppression.

Your attending veterinarian will explain all of this when your puppy has its vaccinations and prior to puppy school.

QUESTION:

John from Nedlands asks:

"My dog recently has been diagnosed with impending anterior cruciate disease and whilst he is only 16 months old an expensive procedure has been recommended. He is a well grown Labrador for his age and a bit overweight. Do we need to embark on this procedure at such a young age?"

ANSWER:

The knee or stifle joint as it is known is the most frequently surgically invaded joint in the dog. For many of the same reasons in people this joint can be structurally unsound due to conformation issues from birth and so ruptured anterior cruciate ligaments in man and dogs can be due to the stress put on this hinge/swivel joint resulting in damage because the tibial plateau is at a greater angle in some dogs (and some people) than others and it appears this predisposes the joint to laxity and hence early damage (partial rupture) and finally rupture of the anterior cruciate ligament.

To this end and because of better diagnostic techniques we are now recognising cruciate ligament disease before the ligament actually ruptures, and in performing the TPLO (tibial plateau levelling operation) much better results are obtained than the old external joint sling methods AND the menisci (commonly called the knee cartilages) are protected and so joint health is maintained going forward. A way better outcome albeit more expensive than the older techniques.

Waiting as we have done previously until the joint is chronically arthritic (which occurs as a consequence of laxity or instability in the joint over time) and then trying to tighten the joint using extracapsular techniques, in my opinion is not effective in creating an outcome which benefits the dog. They may walk better to the untrained eye but invariably carry the leg when they run and also suffer from bouts of pain from time to time.

In my view correcting the angle of the tibial plateau at surgery which is done by removing the top of the tibia and then plating it back into place at a lesser angle is a way more effective technique.

Why don't they do this in humans you may ask? I can't really answer that except to say the anatomy of the dog may lend itself better to this approach but I do know that research being done with netballers and the like has indicated that the angle of the plateau certainly does contribute to ruptured anterior cruciates so watch this space.

Should they be done electively? A good question but certainly larger breed dogs that have niggling problems with their knees as your dog does, in many cases do go on to have chronic problems. As more of these elective procedures are done we will get a better impression of how effective early intervention is over the next 10-20 years.

Tony Vigano



TEAM PROFILES

Talia Morgan

Our newest draft pick is Talia Morgan and Talia will join the Veterinary team as a new graduate in October

A Perth girl, Talia was schooled at John Septimus Roe Anglican Community School before she graduated to Murdoch University doing a Biology degree as her undergraduate qualification.



From there she worked as a biologist at UWA but the wider world beckoned and she became a Flight Attendant servicing Australia and Asia with Qantas for 6 years.

A champion figure skater at school, she always wanted to be a vet and finally joined the Murdoch course which she finished in October this year.

Married to Rob who is an engineer in oil and gas, they have two girls Evelyn and Sasha plus two rescue cats Spider and Simon.

Her special interests at this point are animal behaviour but she is also drawn to feline medicine (and Evelyn is a Cats supporter which was music to Tony's ears and swung the deal when she applied!).

We feel sure you will love Talia and we look forward to a long association

Tony Viganò

Phillippa Suter

Hi, my name is Phillipa Suter, and I'm the new casual receptionist that you will often see on a Monday or Tuesday afternoon here at Swanbourne Veterinary Centre.



I went to school down at Bunbury Cathedral Grammar School, and have since moved up to Perth to study and am now a first year Veterinary Science student at Murdoch University.

My parents are both Vets, with my mum owning a mixed practice down in Dardanup, and my Dad is the Head Sheep Veterinarian for the Victorian Government. I grew up on a small hobby farm surrounded by animals; sheep, cows, alpacas, a goat, cats, dogs, rabbits, and the occasional hand-reared joey or injured animal.

My dog "Blue", a very boisterous Maremma sheepdog, is my best friend, and it's been very hard to move up to Perth and away from her.

I am still yet to decide where my course will take me, but it's a privilege to work here and get to know you and all your beautiful furry friends.

ACTIVE PET REHAB

Active Pet Rehabilitation - A new rehabilitation therapy referral business available to small animal practitioners in Western Australia.

Established by Carmel Keylock RVN (W.A.), MNAV (U.K.), employed within the veterinary profession since 1984 and now involved in the rehabilitation field, Active Pet Rehabilitation provides an independent service, working in conjunction with veterinary professionals, for canine rehabilitation following injury or disease.

Carmel has been working alongside orthopaedic and neurological referral specialists in the U.K. since 1996 and is also studying towards her Certified Canine Rehabilitation Practitioner status with the University of Tennessee.

Active Pet Rehabilitation is currently running the only aqua treadmill for pets in Western Australia, a huge step forward in controlled, targeted rehabilitation, providing better recovery, faster. With a unit designed specifically for canine rehabilitation, the aqua treadmill allows dogs to begin the treatment process

earlier than normal. Using the natural properties of water, the treadmill creates a low-impact workout that helps the animal to increase muscle strength and endurance, as well as benefiting nerve function and gait re-education.

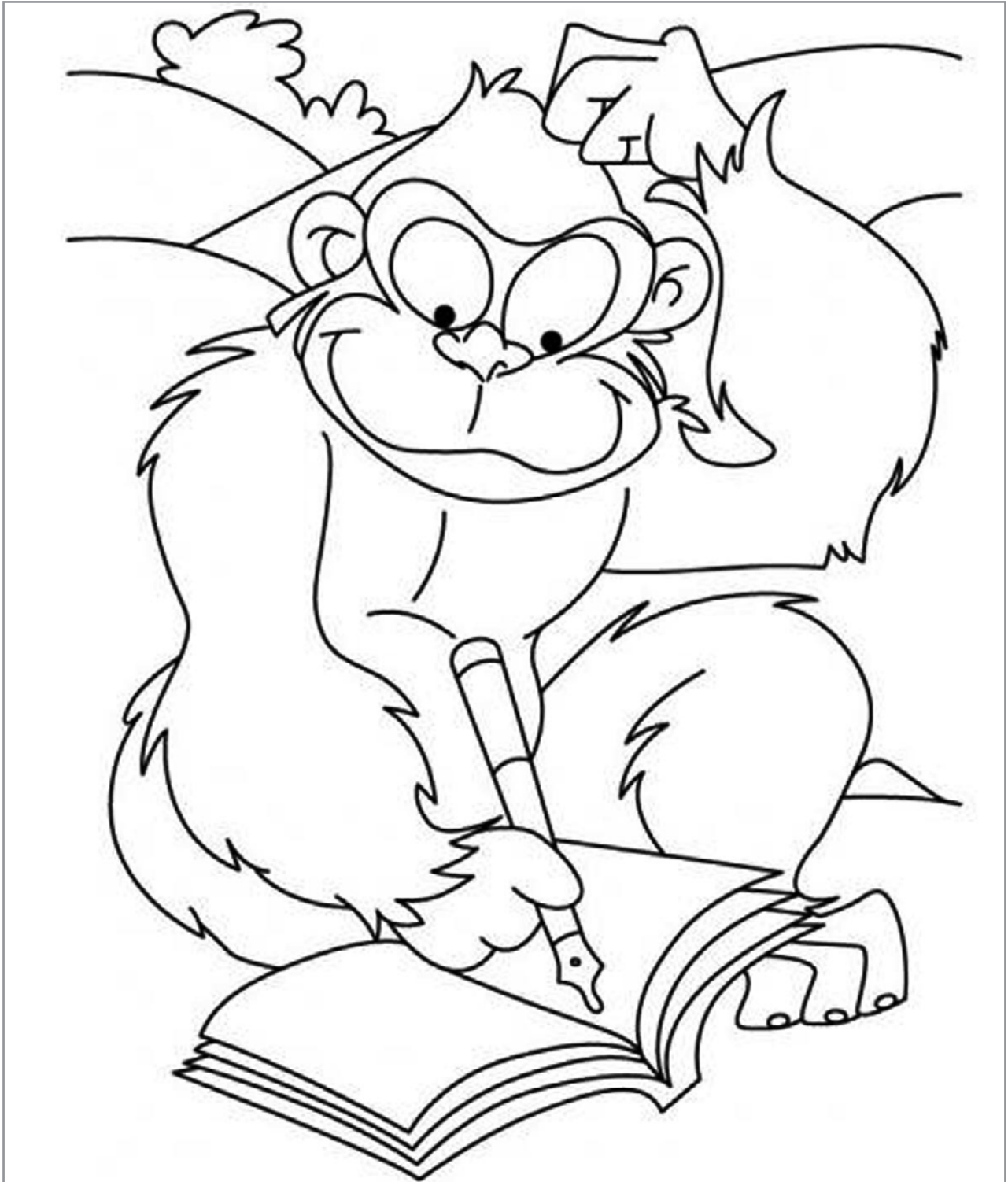
Patients that benefit from rehabilitation services include those with back pain (from muscle problems to spinal problems), arthritis (both young dogs and old), and post orthopaedic surgery patients (from road traffic accidents to joint surgeries). Not to mention young dogs dealing with growth abnormalities including hip dysplasia, luxating patella and Legge Perthes disease.

Other therapies provided for veterinary practice patients include, therapeutic ultrasound, phototherapy laser, neuromuscular stimulation, as well as active and passive exercise programs customised for each patient. Carmel works on a referral basis and can see your pet at Swanbourne, or at her premises in the Mosman Park Veterinary Hospital at 588 Stirling Highway Mosman Park where the aquatreadmill is housed.



Kids★ Corner

Children up to 12 years old are invited to enter our colouring-in competition.
Please post or return your entry to Swanbourne Veterinary Centre by
December 31ST 2017 for your chance to WIN a year's supply of Flea Control
products for your pet, plus a pet toy for your best friend.



Name:

Age:

Address:

Contact No.:

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Good Luck!

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