

**VETERINARY SCIENCE MAKES RIGHT WHAT PET OWNERS
OFTEN MESS UP
5/01/01**

Every season has its traditional rites and for our family in recent years we have found ourselves with one more. Spring heralds the approach of fleas and ticks, the annual bane of both pets and their owners.

A more deadly danger to dogs makes it bow (wow) at the same time in the form of heart worm infestation. It is contacted from mosquitoes that have fed on infected dogs and if left untreated is fatal.

Attention to both problems and their prevention has joined our other annual spring obligatory procedures. Both afflictions are fortunately preventable with prior testing and regular monthly treatments. Thanks to today's technology, the treatments are effective, simple and the possibility of one forgetting to have them has been eliminated. Most veterinary services maintain the data on computers and a reminder comes your way prompting an appointment. The rest of their periodic checks and vaccinations are brought to your attention as well.

I have had domestic pets and animals for as long as I can remember along with the medical problems inherent with them. As a result I have come to know and admire several veterinarians over the years. Their affinity with medical doctors differs in that their patients' disorders are often indiscernible and they have few ways of communicating with them.

In two instances my stupidity nearly caused fatal results for pets of mine. They are worth repeating here if it will keep others from making the same mistakes.

A dog I had tethered in the back of a stake rack truck was able to jump over the rack and hung suspended by its neck over the side. Fortunately, I looked in the mirror in time to avoid her being strangled. Both hind feet were injured, but excellent veterinary care insured no permanent injury. I, on the other hand, was taught a valuable lesson at the poor dogs expense.

In another instance, equally if in some respects more stupid, I nearly caused the demise of both my wife's and granddaughter's cats. In a penny-wise-pound-foolish move, I purchased someone's spot flea treatment from a catalog. In furthering my blunder, I

failed to read the fine print warning not to use it on cats. Within a half hour both cats were having convulsions and without quick action by an excellent vet, would have died.

Animals depend on us for their safety and well being. Take care when tethering them to be sure there is no way they can hang themselves. With the days becoming warmer, never leave them in a vehicle where they can become overheated. Finally, do not take shortcuts with medical care.

One can pretty much judge a dogs' overall intelligence or lack thereof by their demeanor as you can approach the vet's office. The real smart ones have to be carried in. Their superb sense of smell will head them back into the car as soon as their feet hit the ground.

Our old setter Penny hit the ground running outside of the late Dr. Hirschey's office in Boonville chasing a squirrel one day. She pulled up instantly as she passed the door and headed for the car.

I didn't share her aversion to the good doctor's office as he was one of those veterinarians I mentioned earlier whom I came to know and admire. He helped several of our pets over some tough spots and particularly on short notice in the case of three porcupine entanglements.

We both learned what a small world it is after we got to know each other better. It seems that James Dubuar, long-time director of the New York State Ranger School, which I attended, boarded with Dr. Hirschey's family in Michigan while he attended college.

They both had a lot in common as outstanding citizens and as two people I have most admired and respected in my life.