



THE ADVOCATE

ANIMAL CARE CENTERS of Texas
April 2006

It's Springtime ... Don't Ya Just Love It?

There's lots of activity going on with our staff. Brandy at Morgan Street had her baby, Shawna is back as a working mom and even working both locations, Lisa R has been working both locations while Brandy is on maternity leave, Vicki has been working at the Acton Hwy location, Dr. Miller attended a 3 day symposium sponsored by the American Association of Feline Practitioners, Dr. Hardwick attended 4 full days of continuing education at Western States Veterinary Conference in Las Vegas, Dr. McCall, Jenni and Lisa R just got back from an intense 4 days at the American Animal Hospital Association Annual Convention in Long Beach, Dr. Miller, Shannon, Gina and Tiffany went to an outstanding one-day dental seminar in Irving and everyone else gets the crash course on what they learned when they come home excited about new information. **WHEW!** Continuing education for our staff will always be a high priority because **our patients deserve it!**



There have also been a few questions about **WHY** we changed our names and, just in case you're interested, there were some really good reasons. The first, probably most important, was how the Hood County Animal Clinic name seemed to conjure up an image in the mind of townspeople that we were connected with the County. Since there is no connection, we've been reconsidering a name change for several years. With the addition of Animal Medical Clinic, we wanted to show the community that the 2 clinics are connected. The 2 hospitals believe in the same strong principles and the same great quality of care for the four-legged family member.

We are also putting in a new computer system at the Morgan St. location so that we have access to patient records from both locations, we are revising our logos, and we are starting the process of some renovations.

Our excitement continues to grow because this union has been even better than we expected. The result has been one great staff at two locations. It would be hard to find a better group of doctors and staff anywhere. It's rare that reality is better than the dream, but that is what is continuing to happen!





How Much is That Doggy in the Window?

We all remember the childhood song. Nothing tugs on our heartstrings more than seeing a cute litter of puppies or kittens at the pet store or on display at the animal shelter. Perhaps you're considering a new pet - a special one that reminds you of a past companion from childhood or one featured in the latest Disney movie. If it's a purebred you're after, you may research and find the ideal breeder online or in another town nearby. Whatever your motivation, the responsibility of being a "pet parent" is nothing to be taken lightly. Because of this, it is important to consider all the associated costs having a pet involves.

Several online sources and pet health experts have figured the lifetime costs of pet ownership in order for pet enthusiasts to realistically understand the financial commitment involved. Here's the good news: the cost to raise a child (the 2-legged variety) to the age of 18 is estimated to be around \$191,000. Compared to that, being a pet parent is a tremendous bargain!

Just like with children, the first year often has the largest expenses. Not including the purchase price or adoption fees, expect to spend between \$385-\$810 for cats and \$600-\$1200 for dogs. This includes veterinary care (wellness examinations and consultations, vaccines, parasite screening and preventatives, spay/neuter surgery, and dental care), food, toys, bedding, obedience training, collars, food and water dishes, food, and other ancillary items.

Over the next few years, the costs tend to even out. On average, expect to spend \$650 per year for your cat and \$800 per year for your dog. For all us Aggies in the crowd, that's about \$55-\$70 per month. While there are some duplicated costs, multiply that by more than one pet and those costs increase even more. Added together, the lifetime costs of ownership can range from \$6,000 to \$13,000 or more.

Why is there such a wide range of expenses? Because there is a wide range of breeds, costs associated with each breed, and types of management practices. Purebred dogs and cats, unless adopted from a shelter or rescue organization, obviously cost more up front, and depending on their genetics, they may have diseases associated with the breed. For a list of canine breed-specific diseases, see <http://www.upei.ca/cidd/intro.htm>. A similar database has not been developed for cats, but there is some good information available at <http://www.vet.cornell.edu/fhc/>

Pets that need frequent grooming cost more to maintain. Dogs that are obedience trained and confined to a leash while outside or in a vehicle are seldom lost or hit by cars. Indoor cats live, on average, twice as long as outdoor cats, and are much less likely to be subjected to trauma such as cat fights, car accidents, or the neighborhood bully's BB gun. Many of the diseases we treat each day, such as advanced dental disease, heartworm, Feline Leukemia Virus, Parvovirus, and even obesity, are completely preventable, and much less expensive to prevent than to treat.

The purpose of this article is not to discourage anyone from having a pet, but to help us all more realistically plan for the expenses involved. This will allow us, as your pet healthcare providers, to be better equipped and able to extend and enhance the quality and duration of your pets' lives. We greatly appreciate you entrusting us with that tremendous responsibility. As always, if you have any questions about this topic, if you need help choosing a pet, or have any other concerns, we are here to help.

Scott M. McCall, DVM





Can Sparky Fly Again?

Arthritis is the No. 1 cause of chronic pain in dogs. It affects 1 in 5 adult dogs and causes reduced mobility, stiffness and difficulty rising and climbing stairs. A new prescription diet by Hills Pet Foods, J/D, is helping affected dogs have a healthier, happier, more active life. This new food contains several ingredients that help achieve this:

- High EPA levels – this omega 3 fatty acid helps protect the cartilage from damage
- Glucosamine & Chondroitin – provide building blocks for healthy cartilage
- L-Carnitine – helps maintain optimum body weight
- Antioxidants – helps reduce oxidative stress from free radicals
- Proteins & Phosphorus – provides appropriate levels for adult/senior dogs

This food together with gentle, low impact exercise and weight control, can give an arthritic dog a new lease on life. Noticeable results can be seen in as little as 21 days. J/D is available in canned and dry forms and is very tasty to your pet.

Janet Hardwick, DVM



Michael Dale Shirley, III has arrived !

Brandy, one of our friendly smiling faces at Morgan St, along with her husband Michael, welcomed their new son to the world on March 17 at 6:42 pm. He weighed 6 pounds 11 ounces, was 20 ½ " long and of course, Brandy has already been in to show him off! She sure is a proud mom and we all think he's pretty cute!



As always, we thank you for spending some time with us and welcome your comments, questions, and suggestions.
Don C. Miller, DVM and ALL our incredible staff

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