



# The McClave Tailwagger

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### Hellos and Goodbyes

We like to retain our employees forever if we could, but life sometimes gets in the way. This month, we bid farewell to Megan Potter Helms, our hospital manager, who is moving to Texas with her family. Megan was a rock, a mover and shaker who accomplished a lot in a mere two years. We would have forgiven her for abandoning us if it weren't for the Texas part, but oh well, I guess we have to forgive her anyway! Farewell and good luck Megan and thank you for the last two years.

Farewell to Dr. Lorenzo Escobar who is leaving to pursue a career in pathology in AZ. We wish him the best. Welcome Dr. Betty Lobanov (April 2018) and Dr. Hygan Baghoyan who will be joining us this coming July. More about our new doctors in our next newsletter.

## VCA McClave Turns 70!

It started with a little trip to Arby's taken by our technician Kathy during her lunch break. While waiting for her food, Kathy picked up a local neighborhood newsletter: in it, an article celebrating the anniversary of local businesses. To her surprise, our hospital was number one on the list, unchallenged by far. 70 years in business! Kathy who had been there 22 years had not paid attention; none of us had – we were too busy working. Kathy returned to work, still perplexed. Could it be? 70 years? Back at the hospital, we were all surprised but quickly did the math. We had been there since 1948. 70 years and in one location, amazing for any business and incredible for a veterinary hospital! Granted we may have changed hands and evolved throughout the years, but we are still here, ready to roll every morning. As a matter of fact, we don't even close anymore. Just like Denny's- except we do have to lock the doors after 8PM for safety reasons- but we are always there caring for the little critters that we all cherish.



**The Original Hospital. 1975  
The Main Entrance Was Off Reseda Blvd.**

There are many McClaver's who have been here a long time. Some were high school kids when they joined our team. We would like to take time to thank them for all the great years of service. Here are the die-hards who have been here 10 years or longer: Dr. Greg Sauer: 1985. Dr Nada Khalaf: 1992. Larry Herskovic: 1995. Kathy Puhl, RVT: 1996. Jose Ruiz: 1999. Jaymie Azevedo: 2002. Paolo Ayala, RVT: 2003. Kewan Williams, RVT: 2005. Angie Ochoa: 2005. Dr. Kelly Miller: 2007. Diana Morataya: 2007. Dr. Senta Hutchinson: 2008. Simone Trim 2009.

Yes, the neighborhood may have changed. There are days when I take a little walk at lunch - time and lament the trash, the homeless and the fly-by businesses. There are others though when I greet the mechanic who has also been there forever, and I wave at Carlos who worked in a body shop as an employee before he opened his own garage and I see the same mom walking her kids to school every morning, except lately, one daughter has grown up and walks to school alone. I realize then that we are all one big family- perhaps dysfunctional at times- but a family nevertheless.

Last but not least, our hospital would not have been around if it weren't for you all: our loyal clients. We simply wouldn't be here without you. Thank you for your loyalty and patronage and to another fun "70 years"!

# VCA McClave Animal Hospital: 1948 and still counting...

"After being released from active duty from the Army Veterinary Corps in 1946, Dr. Joe Hird, whom I had worked with previously, asked if I would be interested in a partnership. He had located a piece of M3 property in the West San Fernando Valley on Reseda Blvd in Reseda. M3 property on main thoroughfares was rare. I made the trip to the valley to see the property and agreed with Joe Hird that the location was an ideal place to build a veterinary hospital. In mid 1947, we made a down payment.

We found a good architect, Whitting Thompson, who designed just what we wanted and we were finally able to scrounge enough money to start construction in September 1948. The first hospitalized patient was a boxer with a rattle snake bite.

The initial hospital staff consisted of one, Paul Wallace. He was office girl, secretary, kennel man and groomer. The staff quickly grew. Dr. Hird was primarily doing the large animal practice, while I was primarily doing the small animal practice. The horse ranches and dairies were leaving the valley and Joe decided to move to Bishop..."

The above was an extract from a letter written by Dr. Phil McClave in honor of our hospital 50th anniversary which we celebrated in 1998. Drs. Garth Peterson and Wayne Thiele, whom many of you have known, joined McClave in 1968 and 1974 respectively. The original hospital was expanded in 1975 and in 1977, it received the Animal Hospital Design Merit Award from Veterinary Economics. The office call in 1968 was \$5 and during part of the seventies, it was \$10. In

the spring of 1989, McClave's was expanded into a 24 hour hospital, staffed around the clock, 365 days of the year! The hospital remained under the ownership and guidance of Drs. Peterson

and Thiele until their retirement in 2007 when McClave Veterinary Hospital joined the VCA family and became known as VCA McClave Animal Hospital. From a staff of one, McClave now is proud of 60 employees, among them 11 doctors and hoping for 12!

So what was it like in the beginning? No one was around to describe veterinary medicine in the 50's and 60's, but in his recent autobiography, Dr. Garth Peterson shared some highlights of veterinary life in the valley in the 70's:

"A typical day at McClave's would start at 8AM sharp. There would be people waiting at the front door for us to open. We had no set appointment for office calls and everyone would be received in the order they arrived. Appointments for surgery were scheduled ahead of time and the first doctor to arrive in the morn-

ing would start surgery and often be there for a couple of hours. We could get a good ten surgeries done in the first two hours. Clients also walked in until our doors were shut at 6PM. I was usually the last to arrive and would start seeing clients immediately. Seventy walk-in clients a day would be normal; on a busy day, and most of summer, we would see around a hundred. Although many clients came for vaccines, many would have other concerns, be it skin, teeth, eyes or ears. Often, we found issues that would require the pet to stay over for the day. We could have around twenty small treatment room procedures to do in a normal day. By the time we caught up, our late rush would arrive, and we rarely finished before 6:30 or 7PM. Sundays were crazy as we were only open for one hour although we often came in a bit earlier to check on the hospitalized pets. In that hour, it was not unusual to see about 15 patients."

Although we still have one or two walk-in doctors per day, we are now mostly appointment driven. Gone are the days when pets came in mostly for vaccinations; our core work is now emergency medicine and internal medicine with many hospitalized chronic illness cases. Veterinary medicine is now highly specialized with procedures

and treatments that mirror human medicine. Although some people miss the days when the veterinarian was the "one stop for all" pet needs from retail to grooming and boarding, our profession continues to evolve and pets now have access to state of the art facilities and care. We thank those who have joined us on this journey and hope for many more years of growth.

**"The Very First Hospitalized Patient at McClave Was a Boxer with a Rattlesnake Bite" 1948**



**McClave's 50th Anniversary Celebration. 1998. From Top Left Moving Clockwise: Dr. Bill Innes, Dr. Greg Bowerman, Dr. Tony Kirk, Dr. Glenna Gobar, Dr. Phil McClave, Dr. Gina Davis, Dr. Joanne Sohn, Dr. Garth Peterson, Dr. Wayne Thiele, Dr. Kim Henry, Dr. Nada Khalaf, Dr. Greg Sauer and Dr. Bob Goldman.**

# Summer Safety Tools

Summer is a laid-back season when families get out of town and put off more serious undertaking until the school year. For veterinarians though, summer is burning the candle on both ends. Diseases do not necessary come out in vengeance in summer, summer simply stands out because of exposure - be it exposure to the environment, parasites or other pets. The following is an outline of summer's activities and their corresponding hazards. We are not asking you to live in a cocoon but with a bit of education, planning and preventative measures, you will be set to enjoy a safe and happy summer.

**Travel:** Whether you are traveling by car or plane, you have to decide whether to take your pet along with you. Most cats do not enjoy being away from home, but some dogs do! If you are traveling by plane, you will be needing a health certificate from a veterinarian within 10 days of departure. If you travel by car, it may be prudent to take your pet's medical records with you. Please inquire about the need of heartworm prevention if you are traveling to heartworm endemic areas of the country. If you decide to board your pet instead, please pay extra attention this summer to vaccine requirements. Many boarding kennels are now recommending the Canine Influenza Vaccine and it may be a good idea to obtain

even if the kennel does not require it. Please find out in advance. Cats are not affected by the canine flu.

**Weather:** Heat strokes are real and common. Do not exercise outdoors with you pet when the mercury exceeds 90 degrees. Go out early in the morning or late in the evening.

Pay particular attention to brachycephalic breeds: these are dogs with a flat face such as the English Bulldogs, Pugs, Boston Terriers, Frenchies, etc...These dogs can't not handle the heat due to their small upper airways and they are the number one risk for heat strokes. Keep them indoors during the summer heat in an air conditioned place.

**Hiking and Outdoor Play:** A huge activity in summer. Please watch out for rattle snakes when you hike and keep your dogs on a leash. Hike early in the morning or head to the coast during heat waves. If you like going to the beach, beware of dogs who swallow sand which could create an impaction and rinse off your dog after swimming in the ocean. Watch out for dog fights

if off leash.

**Foxtails:** they are everywhere and are a nuisance. Please clean out your yards, it is cheaper than repetitive visits to the vet. Foxtails can travel deep in the body, even in the lung, and could cause fatal infections.



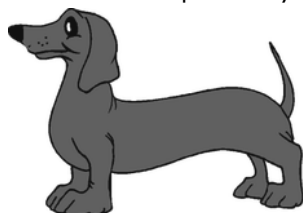
**Fleas and**

**Ticks:** A common reason for summer visits to the vet. Fleas and ticks not only contribute to skin infections, allergies and miserable itching, they also transmit diseases. Murine Typhus is one disease carried by fleas that affects people and not pets. With the ample and safe products that are available, there is no excuse to have your dog or cat infested by fleas or ticks. There are many products (oral or topical) available and some effective ones are now sold over the counter. Ask your Vet. Please do not forget your kitty cats. Even indoor cats get fleas. Do NOT apply dog products on cats. Cats are not little dogs! Have your cat examined by your veterinarian and have him/her prescribe the safest and most effective product. Have a great summer!

## Hoodoo's Diary: Maturity

Hi, it's me, Hoodoo, the really good Dachshund. I am 5 years old, or may be 4; my momma does not know and neither do I, but I don't care.

Momma said age is just a number, but it is funny though, she seems quite excited about her hospital turning 70 years old. She said that 70 was old, real old, and that I could not count that high. I asked if it was as old as she was, but she did not like that question for some reason. She said it was much older - which was a surprise to me as my momma is quite old judging from her inability to catch me when I chase squirrels. She said she was not old, but just



**MATURE.** I asked her what the difference was. She said that being old was about not being able to chase squirrels and being mature was knowing WHEN to chase squirrels. Which surprised me again as I have never seen mama chase squirrels and did not know she wanted to. She seemed a bit exacerbated with this discussion and said this was just figurative speech and I just would not get it because I was a dog. She is complicated my momma, and quite boring if you ask me. I left her and pestered Cat who was... asleep as usual... and likely as old as the hospital. My boring entourage!

I went back to Momma and asked her what happens after one

gets really old. She paused for a second then said that one goes to heaven where one gets to chase as many squirrels as one wants, whenever one wants. Strangely, I had the feeling that this had to do with the figurative squirrel again and I told Momma that I did not want to get old but wanted to play outside and have her near me and grandpa and my old cat and my boring tortoise. So Momma hugged me and told me not to worry and no matter how old I got, a long, long time from now, I will always be her little baby.

I went outside afterwards to sun my cute little buns and I fell asleep. I dreamt that I caught a big fat squirrel, the real kind, and that I lived happily ever after.

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## VCA MCCLAVE ANIMAL HOSPITAL

The McClave Tailwagger is a  
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We are open 24  
hours with a Doctor  
on the premises at  
all times.

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