



# VCA Salem Voice

*“Connecting VCA Salem Clients with VCA Staff”*

## Medical Director Spotlight:

My life has revolved around animals almost since the day I was born in rural southern West Virginia. One of my first memories is of my family going to pick up our first dog, a pit bull named Zack. I was blessed to have him in my life until I was almost sixteen. I still think of him almost daily, and tell stories about him all the time. Throughout the years we had Zack, we had other dogs, cats, goats, rabbits, iguanas, and even a couple snakes.

The first time I can remember wanting to be veterinarian, I was about ten years old, and my grandmother asked what I wanted to be when I grew up. There were a few brief flirtations with the prospects of being an archaeologist (thanks to Indiana Jones) and a carpenter (after helping my father convert a portion of a building into office space for my mother, who was a practicing accountant at that time), but I never strayed too far from my original plan.

I earned a bachelor’s degree in Animal and Veterinary Sciences at West Virginia University in 2003. I got my official start into the veterinary field as a kennel assistant at a local practice during those studies, working my way up to technician assistant during my two and a half years working there.

I was accepted into the veterinary program at the Virginia-Maryland Regional College of Veterinary Medicine at Virginia Tech as I completed my degree at WVU, and graduated from veterinary school in 2007. Since then, I have worked in general practice and emergency medicine at various locations in West Virginia, Virginia, Chicago, the Pittsburgh area, and Oregon. I love all aspects of veterinary medicine, but emergency medicine will always be my home within the field. The variety of cases, the need for rapid diagnosis and treatment, and the opportunity to save a pet from severe illness and injury are what I like most about emergency medicine.

I moved to Oregon with my partner, Kim, in January 2017 for a change of scenery and lifestyle. We have fallen in love with the Pacific Northwest and consider it our home. We have been blessed to be allowed to be live-in servants of two ornery bambino cats who keep us busy making sure we don’t step on or trip over them, and that they are fed promptly at the times they demand. We enjoy camping, fishing, cooking, kayaking, and exploring our new surroundings.

VCA Salem Animal Hospital won me over with its atmosphere of collegiality, excellent patient care, perpetual improvement, and client service. It is my honor to be a part of a team that cares so much for our patients, and the people who love them and trust us to provide them care. 



*Dr. Seth Thomas, Medical Director,  
VCA Salem Animal Hospital*



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**Photo Gallery** — Clockwise from upper left corner: Bubba the Pomeranian; Zelda the Kitten; Junior Tech Ember with Mom & Senior Veterinary Assistant Jenn; Kiki the Aussie Shepherd; Judi the Greyhound; Avery the Whippet; and, Duke & Nori, the Bambinos

## Dr. Amber Aher joins Medical Team

Dr. Amber Aher recently transferred to our practice from a VCA sister-hospital in the Northeast, “My husband and I relocated to Salem for a fantastic job opportunity. It is our first experience with the Pacific Northwest and we love it here!” She joined VCA Salem “because of the wonderful team of doctors and staff who strive to provide top-notch veterinary care.”

Dr. Aher grew up in small towns and rural areas in both Massachusetts and Connecticut. Spending much of her young life engaged in equestrian sports, owning and showing horses as well as working on a thoroughbred breeding farm. “I became very interested in medicine when assisting the veterinarian with horses and foals.” She graduated from the Royal Veterinary College in London.

Dr. Aher and her husband have two adopted dogs, Annabelle the English Bull Terrier and Conor the Pitbull; “they each have a unique personality but share a love of food, tennis balls and sofa lounging.” 🐾



*From left to right: (seated) Conor the Pitbull; Dr. Amber Aher; (standing) Annabelle the English Bull Terrier.*

## A Reason to Celebrate: Margie is Cancer-Free

Long-time VCA Salem Patient Margie recently received a clean bill of health from Northwest Veterinary Specialists (NWVS) Oncology Department located up north in Clackamas, Oregon.

Prior to treatment at NWVS, Margie was experiencing uncharacteristic lameness, she was diagnosed with osteosarcoma. Osteosarcoma is a form of bone cancer.

Margie underwent an amputation of her right front leg performed at NWVS with follow-up chemotherapy also at NWVS.

In mid-May, Margie at the age of eight, was declared cancer free!

After successfully completing six chemo treatments at VCA Northwest Margie became a participant in a Seattle clinical trial of a newly-developed vaccine used for osteosarcoma. The study evaluates the safety of the vaccine and may extend a patient's life by 3 years.

Needless to say, Margie and her people are enjoying life in remission. Even the drives to Seattle for the study.

VCA Salem's **Dr. Tricia Beal, DVM** is not only Margie's primary care veterinarian. She is Margie's "aunt". Dr. Beal has Margie's sister, Hadley. Dr. Beal and Hadley both love that Margie is doing so well. 



Left: Margie's "I Licked Cancer" portrait after receiving the good news at NWVS. Right: Margie doing just fine on three legs.

## Vaccine Requirement Updates for Services

This spring we updated the vaccination requirements for our canine friends who **board, groom** or have **scheduled surgery** with us. In addition to Rabies, Distemper/Parvo and Bordetella vaccinations, we now require both the Leptosporosis (Lepto) and Canine Bivalent Influenza Vaccines (CIV). If your pet has never had the Lepto or CIV vaccinations they both need to be boosted two to four weeks after the initial vaccination. All vaccines must be current and/or administered two to four weeks prior to check in. **Questions?** Please give us a call and we will be happy to answer any questions you may have about these changes and requirements for services for your pet. Cat vaccination protocols have not changed.

**Thinking about Boarding?** The Fall/Winter holidays are just around the corner. If you are planning on making boarding reservations and are unsure of your pets' vaccination status, please call so we can not only make the reservation but so we can make any vaccination appointments needed prior to boarding. 



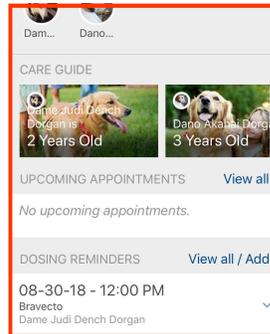
### Did you know...

...That **Care Club memberships** are unique to each individual VCA hospital. This means that memberships are not transferable between hospitals.

**Why?** Care Club plans vary between hospitals, some of our hospitals don't have Care Club available at this time. Since we offer emergency service, ER examinations are covered by our Care Club plan.



VCA has a new “app” for all clients. It’s called “My VCA” and can be downloaded for either iPhone or Android operating systems through the respective “App Store”. If you are a Care Club member there is an added feature, Live Chat with a Doctor 24/7. Yes, you may have a chat session with an on-call veterinarian if you belong to Care Club! Other features include a Dashboard for your pets that includes medication dosing reminders and upcoming appointments as well as a pet Care Guide based on the age of your pet. The app is free, to get started just download it to your smart phone. 🐾



### VCA Salem Animal Hospital

Caring staff helping pets and their people.

We're on the web!

[www.vcahospitals.com/salem](http://www.vcahospitals.com/salem)

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## Salem Leadership Team

Erin Heimerdinger, Hospital Manager

Seth Thomas, Medical Director

Laurie Blair, Assistant Hospital Manager

Heather Whiteis, Veterinary Assistant Lead

Julie Hanberg, Animal Care Taker Lead

Daniel Rahm, ER & Surgery Tech Lead

Rebecca Nance, Client Services Lead



*Did you know...* No two cats or dogs have the same nose – each has a unique pattern of ridges and creases, like a human fingerprint. The patterns can even be used to identify individual animals.



**ASPCA Animal Poison Control Center Phone Number:**

**(888) 426-4435**

Keep this number in your phone. It may save your pets' life. 🐾



### Vision Statement

*Salem's progressive resource to strengthen the human animal bond through compassionate and collaborative care.*

### Core Values

- Respect for the human animal bond
- Integrity
- Progressive
- Compassionate
- Collaborative
- Educational resource