



**VCSG**

# Veterinary Care & Specialty Group

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*24/7/365*



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**S e p t e m b e r 2 0 1 9**

**In this edition.....**

- Continuing Education Conference (pp. 1, 7, 8)
- Upcoming event (below)
- Vader's "Friends of the Month" (p. 2)
- Ask the Vet (pp. 2-5)

**VCSG is a proud sponsor of...**

**Four Paws Palooza**

September 7

11:00 AM - 4:00 PM

First Tennessee Pavilion

All proceeds benefit local animal shelters and charities. Dog or cat food donation is appreciated.

## 2019 Continuing Education Conference

Thanks to everyone who attended the Conference!

Eighty people enjoyed an afternoon of brilliant presentations by our guest speakers, an abundance of delicious food, and an opportunity to visit with other area veterinarians and technicians.

Pictures are on pages 7 and 8.

## WELCOME TO CHRIS REEDER DVM, DACVD

Dr. Chris Reeder is a 2003 graduate of Auburn University's College of Veterinary Medicine, summa cum laude. While attending Auburn University, Dr. Reeder received numerous awards including the Distinguished Veterinary Dermatology Award, Veterinary Neurology Award and Merck-Merial fellowship in genetic research on exercise-induced hyperthermia in the Labrador Retriever. After graduation, Dr. Reeder practiced small animal medicine/surgery in Louisville, Kentucky, for 3 years. During this time he was able to further develop his interest in dermatology.

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## WELCOME TO JIM SUMNER Hospital Administrator

Jim and Diana met while attending Kent State University. Jim graduated with a BBA in Accounting and is a Certified Public Accountant. They got married while in college and made Kent, Ohio, their permanent home.

They have two children, Kyle and Heather, a daughter-in-law Stephanie, grandson Finn, and dog Gracie. Kyle, Stephanie, and Finn live in Hawaii with their dogs, Riley and Blu Dog. Kyle is a Commercial Fisherman, and Stephanie is a Registered Nurse. Heather lives in New York City where she works as a Product Development Manager for a company that designs, manufacturers and markets makeup brushes.

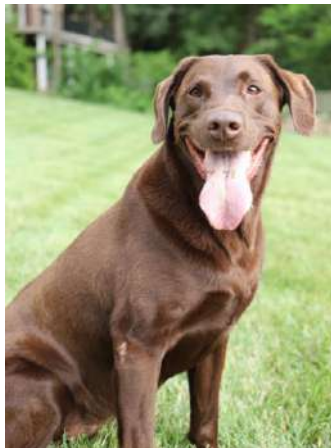
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## Vader's Friends of the Month



*Vader Pullen*



Ruby Begonia



## Ask the Vet:

### Is an Exotic Pet Right for You?

Can you provide what it  
needs to thrive?

#### **Micah H. Woods, DVM**

Small Animal & Exotic Medicine & Surgery

Traditionally, the most common household pets have overwhelmingly been cats and dogs. However, in recent years, there has been an increasing number of people wanting to own exotic pets. The term "exotic pet" is an encompassing term referring to all varieties of small mammals (i.e.-gerbils, hamsters, mice, rats, Guinea pigs, chinchillas, rabbits), birds (parakeets and parrots) and reptiles (lizards, tortoises, snakes, etc.).

All of these animals are becoming more and more common to be owned as household pets. Though many are owned by adults, exotic animals are often acquired as first pets for young children. Due to their size and smaller enclosures, they generally can be housed in a bedroom. However, the novelty of having an exotic animal should not undermine the specific care these animals may require. As an exotic animal veterinarian, the most common problem we see is the lack of husbandry skills that will lead to problems that could likely have been avoided.

Acquiring an exotic pet is easy. For the most part, you walk into any pet store and thirty minutes later you will be the proud new owner of a guinea pig, bearded dragon or parakeet. Unfortunately, the most important part of owning these types of animals is often overlooked. Each species has very different habitat needs, nutritional requirements and medical care. Adequate research and self-educating must be done prior to bringing an exotic animal into a home.

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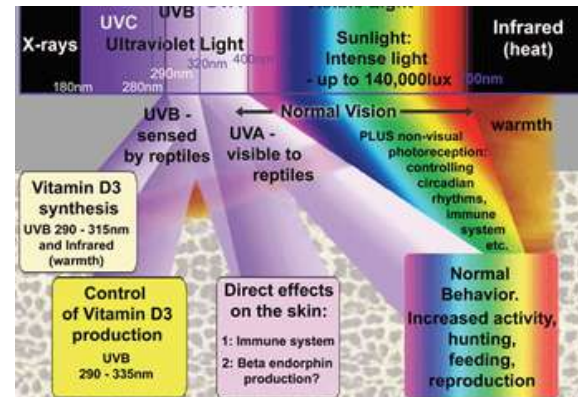


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## Reptiles:

Being exothermic, a reptile's environment directly plays a role in many of their metabolic processes. To them, sunlight is life. Whether it be a bearded dragon, tortoise or an iguana, all require lighting that can facilitate ample UVA and UVB. These forms of lighting are crucial in Vitamin D3 synthesis which plays an integral part of bone growth, immune system, and normal behavior. Inadequate lighting oftentimes leads to one of the most common problems in reptiles, metabolic bone disease.

Their cage setup should mimic their natural environment as much as possible. The more hides and decorations that are integrated the better, as they allow the animal to feel safer, leading it to behave as they would in their natural habitat. Without adequate coverage, many reptiles will stay hidden because they do not feel safe. Cage size needs to be researched to make sure there is ample room for the reptile to live and grow, knowing that it may need to be enlarged as it grows. As I tell many of my clients, the cooler you make their cage the more you will see your pet.



## Birds:

Birds are one of the most successful species on the Earth. In captivity, they range from tiny finches all the way to the Hyacinth macaw. Birds can be a very rewarding pet due to their incredible intelligence, longevity of life, and bonding capability with an owner. Unfortunately all of these attributes can lead to decline in captivity. In the wild, birds live amongst flocks for safety from predators, to reduce fatigue when traveling, for cooperative food hunting, and information exchange. Birds naturally want to live in numbers and often times we do not provide that for them. The most common problems that an owner must try to prevent are stress and boredom.

A cage is not where a bird is meant to live, and being inside one every minute of its life is stressful. Stress can be reduced by adding enrichment toys. Toys for birds are made specifically to be chewed on, stimulate problem solving and enable normal behavior. Stress can be seen in birds in several ways: stress bars on the feathers, feather plucking/self mutilation, aggression, fearful behavior, and decreased appetite.



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Birds are not meant to be kept in a cage all day, every day. There are many negative consequences of a bird being kept in a cage its entire life. Obesity is one of the largest concerns due to boredom eating. It has been found that allowing your bird to "forage" for food out of its cage will enable it to sustain a good body condition score as well as provide enrichment as it must look around the environment for food. This allows their mind to be stimulated to think, problem solve, and remember what it has learned. Birds should spend more time out of their cage than in them. This alone will reduce stress and its negative consequences greatly.

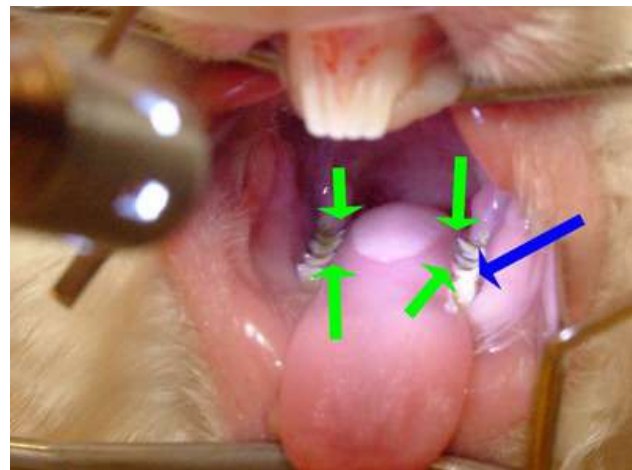


When given the adequate nutrition, environment and enrichment, birds can be very rewarding to keep as pets.

## Rabbits/Guinea Pigs:

These sweet, small mammals can be a wonderful addition to a child's life; however, they often require far more care than one might think. The most time-consuming part of their required care is the cleaning of their cage. These animals are constantly eating, and thus, constantly defecating. This instigates the need for weekly, if not more frequent, changing of the bedding material that they walk and live in. Common issues from lack of cleaning can include urine scald and fecal caking in the rectal area, along with severe matting of their fur.

A common issue among creatures with hypsodont teeth (constantly growing) is that inadequate roughage can oftentimes lead to abnormal wear of their teeth. This is a very common problem that occurs and unfortunately requires filing (floating) the teeth to a normal flat surface. When recognized early, owners will notice the animal drooling, going off feed and weight loss. In the later stages, owners will bring the patient in for not defecating. Dental malocclusions can be a very serious life-threatening issue if not addressed in time. These small creatures will not allow the floating procedure to be done awake, which is why all are put under general anesthesia to facilitate correcting the dental malocclusions. Following the floating procedure, a discussion is had to make recommendations on how to prevent future events from happening.



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Spaying or neutering of these animals is highly recommended. Both males and females are predisposed to many issues if left intact. Male rabbits tend to become slightly aggressive and may begin urine spraying to mark their territory. Female rabbits left intact can often succumb to ovarian cysts and uterine adenocarcinoma. These procedures are often considered “routine” to the general public, yet finding a veterinarian who is comfortable putting these small creatures under anesthesia to perform these surgical procedures can be difficult.

The purpose of this article was to show that exotic pets require specialized care. Even the smallest of our pets have medical needs that may require a Veterinarian to be sought out to provide the best care possible. Just like our dogs and cats, our exotic pets, too, are finding themselves to be not just pets, but family members. In many cases these exotic pets can outlive their first owner and can be passed down to another family member. Prepare adequately for your first exotic pet. Seek out resources that are published material to best educate yourself prior to bringing a new pet into your home. With this information, you and your Veterinarian will be able to provide the best care!

Pictures borrowed from:

<http://www.reptilesmagazine.com/Reptile-Health/Habitats-Care/Reptile-Lighting-Information/>

<https://i.pinimg.com/736x/e4/11/3d/e4113d48a9468e60d4d0b8a866358863.jpg>

<http://hollyshollands.weebly.com/uploads/2/2/7/0/22702222/3224147.jpg?567>



Dr. Micah Woods and Karla  
Walker and Miller



Walker and Miller Woods



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## Dr. Chris Reeder

Dr. Reeder completed a residency in Veterinary Dermatology in 2008 at Animal Dermatology Clinic in Tustin, CA, and became board-certified. He worked to create the first full-time dermatology practice in Louisville, KY, and worked as the senior dermatologist with ADC in Louisville, KY, until August 2016. In October of 2016, he started the dermatology department for BluePearl Veterinary Partners in Franklin, TN. Dr. Reeder has published several articles both nationally and internationally and enjoys lecturing to local and national audiences on dermatology. Dr. Reeder has worked with several industry partners and participates regularly in clinical research projects to pave the way for new treatments to help dogs and cats. He has served American College of Veterinary Dermatology on their credentials committee and ad hoc committees and previously served as a representative on the Executive Board of the Kentucky Veterinary Medical Association. Dr. Reeder enjoys giving back by helping to train veterinary students, interns and residents.

Dr. Reeder's special interests are allergic diseases, immune-mediated skin disease, otitis externa and dermatopathology. Outside of the office, sticking to his combination of midwest and southeast upbringing, Dr. Reeder is blessed to have a small hobby farm to enjoy with his wife and three wonderful children, along with a large range of critters.

Welcome, Dr. Reeder, to VCSG!

Dr. Reeder will see patients at VCSG beginning September 16. Please call Dr. Reeder at 615-438-3436 to schedule an appointment or email him at

[info@lighthousevetderm.com](mailto:info@lighthousevetderm.com). *Practicing excellence in veterinary dermatology by serving people and pets individually.*



## Mr. Jim Sumner

For twenty-seven years Jim was the Hospital Administrator at a large Central Veterinary Teaching Hospital, Referral Center and Emergency Center located in Akron, Ohio. During Jim's tenure, the Hospital grew from a 8000 sq. ft. facility with 10 doctors and 30 employees to a 20,000 sq. ft. facility with 45 doctors and 130 employees. Over 100 Doctors of Veterinary Medicine completed internships or residencies at the hospital. Referral services included Internal Medicine, Oncology, Radiology, Cardiology, Neurology, Ophthalmology, Surgery, Rehab, and Emergency.

For the past year Jim has been the Hospital Director at a Specialty and Emergency Hospital in Denver, Colorado.

Although the Colorado sunshine is nice, Jim and Diana have wanted to relocate to the Southeast and look forward to living in the Chattanooga area.

Jim and Diana enjoy golfing, traveling, and visiting their children and grandson.

Diana is looking forward to the hiking and outdoor activities in the area.

Jim's first day at VCSG will be September 9.

Welcome, Jim, to VCSG!



Jim Sumner  
and Gracie



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## 2019 Veterinary Care and Specialty Group Continuing Education Conference



Claudia Pullen, Liz Olley, Dana O'Lone Long



Liz and Dana at registration



Dr. Billy Pullen and Dr. Chris Reeder



Sam Turnipseed and Claudia Pullen



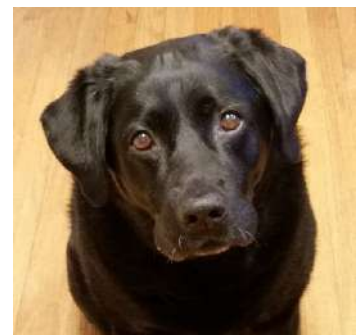
Lucy McEnroe, our youngest guest  
Dr. Rachel McEnroe and Dr. Lawrence McEnroe



Rachel Fuller, Abbey Alsobrooks,  
Hallie Smith



Dr. Gerard Clarke, Ross Blackston, Kittie Palmer



Daisy  
Daisy's Tale Foundation



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## VETERINARY CARE & SPECIALTY GROUP THIRD ANNUAL CONTINUING EDUCATION CONFERENCE

WE COULD NOT HAVE DONE THIS  
WITHOUT OUR SPONSORS!

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- Southern Heritage Bank
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- Staybridge Suites Downtown Chattanooga
- The Bread Basket
- The Chattanooga
- The Feed Co. Table & Tavern
- The Luna Leash - Wendy Caswell
- The Mark Hite Team
- The Tap House
- Threads Signal Mountain
- TransMed South
- Valor K9 Academy



Dr. Lynelle Graham, Dr. Reid Groman,  
Claudia Pullen, Dr. Shelley Rankin



Becky Howell



Liz Olley, Dr. Amy Holford,  
Dana O'Lone Long



Marlee Snow and Ciara Bell