

# FALMOUTH VETERINARY HOWLER



Falmouth Veterinary Hospital, 174 US Route One, Falmouth, Maine 04103  
falmouthvet.com falmouthvet@maine.rr.com 207.781.4028

## PET SPOTLIGHT THIS MONTH IS Teddy Collins!

Teddy The Bear is a much loved four-pawed child of Deb and Mike Collins who live in Portland. Ted is an exuberant and fun-loving yellow Labrador Retriever, his golden hue is sometimes referred to as "Fox Red".

Ted will be celebrating his 2nd birthday on April 20th.

Top tail wagging moments for Ted include: playing with other dogs, swimming at Mackworth, wave jumping, hiking in the woods, snow-bank diving, fetching balls and snuggling with his parents. Ted's favorite song is the Green-Eyed Fleas "Teddy Bear Picnic" and he loves to watch any TV shows or movies that star dogs.

## February is National Pet Dental Health Month!



Dental care comes in two forms: professional cleaning and polishing at the veterinary clinic, and brushing at home. If you are unable to brush your pet's teeth there are products to help dissolve and prevent tartar buildup. These products can be directly added to your pet's water dish and food.

Although brushing may be difficult, start your pet at a young age. Begin by simply rubbing your finger gently on the gums. Ask your veterinarian to demonstrate and recommend what tooth pastes and or gels to use. (CET and Clenz-a-Dent flavored toothpastes are examples.) Another easy option is buying gauze and using that to rub the teeth. Your veterinarian will know which product is best for your pet.



Proper diets also play an important role in prevention of dental disease. Just like humans, pet's dental problems begin with

plaque, a soft sticky residue that hardens over time into tartar. Tartar buildup leads to gum infections, painful abscesses in the mouth, loss of teeth, and can contribute to heart and kidney disease.

As your pet ages they may require a professional dental cleaning performed by your veterinarian. This may need to be done as often as every 6-18 months. An astounding 80 percent of dogs and 70 percent of cats over the age of three already show signs of periodontal disease.

Professional dental cleanings are usually performed while your pet is under general anesthesia. Your vet may recommend a complete blood panel, and urinalysis to detect underlying conditions prior to the dental cleaning. Some vets will prescribe antibiotics and pain medication prior to, and after the cleaning. A thorough physical examination, heart monitor, IV catheter and fluids are also important while the dental procedure is performed.

Please see *DENTAL* on page 4

## Obedience Classes

K9 Games Inc. Dog Training Center is offering classes at the Falmouth Veterinary Hospital. Ginny Seavey, owner and trainer of K9 Games, has more than 45 years of training experience. She offers both private lessons and small classes.

The next training classes here at Falmouth Veterinary Hospital start Sunday, February 27, 2011. The Puppy Class is for puppies eight weeks to five months. The Basic Training 101 Class is for dogs five months and older. The Basic Training 102 Class is an extension of what the team has learned in Basic Training 101.

You will begin to shape your puppy's/dog's behavior by using proven positive reinforcement methods. Avoid problems by learning about basic management, reinforcement, and how to



build a good relationship with your canine companion. Attention, sit, down, come, loose leash walking, and other basic skills are taught in this six week course. Homework sheets and clickers are included. Limited to four teams, pre-registration to this class is suggested.

For more information or to see a current class schedule, visit her website at: [www.k9gamesdogtraining.com](http://www.k9gamesdogtraining.com). To register for class, you can visit her website; contact her at 353-8005, or directly at the Falmouth Veterinary Hospital (207-781-4028).

## FVH Welcomes Dr. Tom Ahlers to our Practice!



**Dr. Ahlers** was born into a large family and raised in Dayton, Ohio. He graduated Magna Cum Laude with a BS in Biology in 1980 and received his DVM degree from the Ohio State University in 1984. He and his wife then promptly moved to Maine to raise their own family and to enjoy "The Way Life Should Be". He joined Dr. Jeff Smith at Forest Avenue Veterinary Hospital and they had a successful partnership for 24 years until they sold that practice in 2008. Now he is excited about his next big challenge which will be to keep up with Dr. Andrews (the "elder vet") and his younger colleagues.

In addition to 26 years of experience as a veterinarian and practice owner, Dr. Ahlers was past-president of the Downeast Veterinary Society and served as Treasurer of the Maine Veterinary Medical Association (MVMA). He is also past president and a long time board member for the Animal Emergency Clinic in Portland.

Dr. Ahlers' favorite veterinary challenges are complicated medical cases and any case that involves surgery or dentistry. He has also developed a true appreciation for what we call the "human-animal bond" and he still gets a kick out of the crazy stories that clients will share about what their pets do at home.

Dr Ahlers' three children are all well-adjusted adults so he has more time for his own pets and many hobbies including rehabbing houses, golf, tennis, boating, fishing, XC skiing, snowshoeing, or anything else that allows him to enjoy the Maine outdoors!

## Valentine's Day Tips

Valentine's Day can be as much fun for pets as it is for humans if dangerous foods, flora and other items are kept out of paws' reach. Each year ASPCA poison control experts see a rise in cases around February 14, many involving chocolate and lilies, a flower that's potentially fatal to cats. So please heed the following advice—don't leave the goodies lying around on Lover's Day.



### Pet-Safe Bouquets

Many pet owners are still unaware that all species of lily are potentially fatal to cats. When sending a floral arrangement, specify that it contain no lilies if the recipient has a cat—and when receiving an arrangement, sift through and remove all dangerous flora. If your pet is suffering from symptoms such as stomach upset, vomiting or diarrhea, he may have ingested an offending flower or plant.

### Forbidden Chocolate

Seasoned pet lovers know the potentially life-threatening dangers of chocolate, including bakers, semi sweet, milk and dark. In darker chocolates, methylxanthines—caffeine-like stimulants that affect gastrointestinal, neurologic and cardiac function—can cause vomiting, diarrhea, hyperactivity, seizures and an abnormally elevated heart rate. The high-fat content in lighter chocolates can potentially lead to a life-threatening inflammation of the pancreas. Go ahead and indulge, but don't leave chocolate out for chowhounds to find.

### Careful with Cocktails

Spilled wine, half a glass of champagne, some leftover liquor is nothing to cry over until a curious pet laps them up. Because animals are smaller than humans, a little bit of alcohol can do a lot of harm, causing vomiting, diarrhea, lack of coordination, central nervous system depression, tremors, difficulty breathing, metabolic disturbances and even coma. Potentially fatal respiratory failure can also occur if a large enough amount is ingested.

### Life Is Sweet

So don't let pets near treats sweetened with xylitol. If ingested, gum, candy and other treats that include this sweetener can result in a sudden drop in blood sugar known as hypoglycemia. This can cause your pet to suffer depression, loss of coordination and seizures.

### Every Rose Has Its Thorn

Don't let pets near roses or other thorny stemmed flowers. Biting, stepping on or swallowing their sharp, woody spines can cause serious infection if a puncture occurs. "It's all too easy for pets to step on thorns that fall to the ground as a flower arrangement is being created," says Dr. Louise Murray, Director of Medicine for the ASPCA's Bergh Memorial Animal Hospital. De-thorn your roses far away from pets.

### Jewelry

Sparkling gems are appealing to our four legged friends, too. Fido or Kitty's instincts may tempt them to taste the jewelry, causing stomach ailments and possible breathing difficulties. Don your new jewelry immediately, or place it safely away.

### Playing with Fire

It's nice to set your evening a-glow with candlelight, but put out the fire when you leave the room. Pawing kittens and nosy pooches can burn themselves or cause a fire by knocking over unattended candles.

### Wrap it Up

Gather up tape, ribbons, bows, wrapping paper, cellophane and balloons after presents have been opened—if swallowed, these long, stringy and "fun-to-chew" items can get lodged in your pet's throat or digestive tract, causing her to choke or vomit.



Please see *VALENTINE* on page 4

*Dental* from page 1

The bottom line? Regular dental care is important for your pet's health. Your pet will feel better and avoid illness in later years if his or her teeth are kept clean now.

Remember, brushing your pet's teeth or using other oral preventatives as a regular routine can play an important part of their everyday overall health.

**For more information on pet dental awareness ask your veterinarian  
Or visit: [www.petdental.com](http://www.petdental.com)**



**To celebrate dental awareness month, FVH is offering 10% off all dental services and products during January and February 2011!**

**If your pet has a dental during these months, you will receive a card that will entitle you to receive 20% off for 3 months on all dental products following the procedure!**

*VALENTINE* from page 3

### **Puppy love for puppy**

Pet experts recommend keeping pets content and out of trouble by presenting them with presents of their own. More than three quarters of all pet owners in America give gifts to their pets on special occasions -- and Valentine's Day should be no exception. From heart-shaped plush toys, to Valentine's Day bones and pink and white "puppy Popsicles", there are a variety of toys and treats from which to choose.

### **Or a day at the spa!**

Treating your pet to a comforting day at the salon is another gift idea. During the winter months, grooming is often neglected and, with the windows closed and the heaters on, low humidity can make your pet's skin and coat dry and scaly. A thorough grooming will leave your pet clean and comfortable from head to toe - and much nicer to be near. Top off your pet's new "do" with a pretty sweetheart or festive red denim-and-daisy collar - both with matching leads - and you'll both be ready for spring!

Do you want your pet featured in the Howler?

Send us pictures and your pet could be chosen to be on the front page like Teddy Collins is this month!

#### **Falmouth Veterinary Hospital**

174 US Route One

Falmouth, Maine 04105

**Phone:** 207.781.4028

**Fax:** 207.781.4074

[falmouthvet@maine.rr.com](mailto:falmouthvet@maine.rr.com)

*We will treat your pets with the same care and concern as we would our own."*