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# Weekly

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## Veterinary innovations

LOCAL ANIMAL DOCTORS USE  
EVOLVING TECHNIQUES  
AND TECHNOLOGIES TO CARE  
FOR THEIR PATIENTS

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Above, Adobe Animal Hospital's Matt Irons administers anesthesia to Rocky the German shepherd, who requires leg surgery after being hit by a car.



Top, Rocky's digital X-ray show his shattered femur, which is repaired (bottom) with a pin and plate.

A German shepherd named Rocky lay still on a metal examination table under anesthesia as he was being prepped for orthopedic surgery by two veterinary technicians.

The surgery for Rocky's broken femoral bone, costing about \$3,500, is being funded in part by the group German Shepherd Rescue, in part by a woman who just met Rocky a few days prior to the surgery, and in part by Adobe Animal Hospital in Los Altos.

"There's a lot of love for these animals," said David Roos, who founded Adobe in 1964.

Adobe Animal Hospital recently opened a brand-new, high-tech facility, which includes 15 exam rooms, two ultra-sound machines, five surgical tables, a three-station dental room and a 24-hour ICU. It is one of many veterinary-care providers in the area using medical techniques and treatments previously (continued on page 19)

Below, Adobe's Brennen Mckenzie performs a spay operation on a Portuguese water dog in one of the hospital's brand-new operating rooms.

# Veterinary **innovations**

**LOCAL ANIMAL DOCTORS USE EVOLVING TECHNIQUES AND TECHNOLOGIES TO CARE FOR THEIR PATIENTS**

photo essay by Veronica Weber  
story by Sally Schilling





Top, Mid-Peninsula Animal Hospital's Cynthia Easton applies an electrical current to acupuncture needles in Baer, a black Labrador retriever mix, while owner Leslie Tyler watches. Above, Chops, a beagle mix with hip dysplasia, receives laser treatment at Scout's House to reduce inflammation and pain. At right, Debbie Eldredge of Scout's House assists greyhound Sadie in the underwater treadmill, which allows for gentle exercise.



Vet tech Jennifer Salaiz administers Novocain to Pasha, a cat undergoing dental surgery, at Adobe Animal Hospital in Los Altos.



Baer, a dog with a spinal cord injury, receives acupuncture treatment.

As Clara waited by the pharmacy window with the Greens, she wagged her tail happily, despite having metal rods protruding from her hind leg.

In a dental room, one dog getting a teeth cleaning had a red inflatable blanket over him to keep him warm while he was under anesthesia.

But veterinary hospitals are not the only animal caregivers using special gadgets.

Scout's House uses an underwater treadmill to improve dogs' mobility. The center focuses on joint range, muscle atrophy, posture, reflexes and movement of the animals. Veterinarians refer their patients to Scout's House to complement other treatments.

"People consider pets to be a part of their family and feel they deserve the same standard of care," said Krista Niebaum, director of reha-

bilitation therapy.

Debbie Eldredge, canine rehabilitation therapist, stood in the clear water tank wearing thigh-high rubber boots while she assisted an old rescued racing greyhound named Sadie, who was wearing an orange doggie life jacket. The tank's floor is a treadmill conveyor belt that runs underwater.

The underwater treadmill is used to give dogs an exercise that is easy on their joints, Niebaum said.

The tank can be filled to different water levels in order to give dogs more or less buoyancy, depending on the size and strength of the dog, Niebaum said.

Dogs typically come in twice a week for six to 10 weeks. A one-hour session costs \$95 to \$105.

"We do things that look weird," (continued on next page 22)

## Innovations

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reserved for human patients.

Others — such as Scout's House, a rehabilitation center for animals, and Mid-Peninsula Animal Hospital, both in Menlo Park — use methods including underwater rehabilitative exercise and acupuncture.

Before Adobe got its movable hydraulic exam tables, the vets had to lift and carry the animals everywhere, said veterinarian Brian Maxwell as he hunched over, demonstrating the strain the vets' backs used to incur.

The new digital X-ray machines that Adobe uses are extremely convenient compared to the old slow-developing X-rays, said Summer Holmstrand-Irmiter, Adobe's practice manager. The images from X-rays pop up on a computer screen in just 5 seconds.

Maxwell gazed at an image on the screen of a dog's leg after an orthopedic surgery in which several metal rods were put into the leg to hold the bone in place.

The image was of a golden retriever named Clara, who sat out in the lobby with Jim and Joan Green, residents of San Mateo, who are temporarily fostering Clara.



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Top, Olivia looks out from Adobe Animal Hospital's new oxygen unit, which administers oxygen to animals with breathing problems while controlling humidity and temperature for comfort.

Above, Clara, a golden retriever with a fractured leg, waits with her foster parents, Jim and Joan Green, for a prescription at Adobe Animal Hospital.

**Innovations**

(continued from page 19)

but there is something special that we are focusing on," said Niebaum, pointing to a row of multicolored dog hurdles.

They also use trampolines, rubber balls and even little doggie ankle weights in their exercises.

Niebaum said her job is a lot like the problem-solving involved in pediatrics because the dogs cannot communicate what is wrong.

The idea of getting rehabilitation for your pet is relatively new in the vet world, she said.

"It's not in vets' thought process yet. The vet world is still getting there," she said. "Some people think that because we didn't use rehab for dogs before, and the dogs still recovered, we don't need it now."

Pet owners are increasingly interested in alternative medicines for their pets as well. That's why the Mid-Peninsula Animal Hospital in Menlo Park has a certified veterinary acupuncturist, Cynthia Easton said.

Easton said people are interested in alternative herbal medicines because they are much less expensive and generally have little or no side-effects.

"A lot of people like that it's a natural product. (The) idea is that it works more because it's not synthetic," Easton said.

People are also increasingly aware of what they are putting into their systems and are thus increasingly drawn to herbal medicines instead of pharmaceuticals, she added. Their preferences extend to their pets as well.

"People are interested in it because they want it for themselves, too," she said. ■

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**About the cover:**

Scout's House's Krista Niebaum applies an ice pack to the leg of a dog named Chop, who underwent surgery weeks ago. Scout's House is a Menlo Park rehabilitation center for pets.



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