

**Board of Directors**

**2003-2004**

**President**

Julie Shaw, R.V.T., CPDT  
shawjk@purdue.edu

**President - Elect**

Donna Dyer, C.V.T.  
donnadyer@earthlink.net

**Past - President**

Ginny Price, C.V.T.  
pricecvt@aol.com

**Treasurer**

Kim Clark, BS, R.V.T.  
kimclarkbsrvt@sbcglobal.net

**Recording Secretary**

Debbie Puppel, BS, R.V.T.  
dapuppel@aol.com

**Corresponding Secretary**

Tara Lang, BS, R.V.T.  
taralang@sbcglobal.net

**ACVB Liaison**

Andrew Luescher, DVM, PhD,  
DACVB  
luescher@vet.purdue.edu

**Members at Large**

Cassandra Vong, BS, L.V.T.  
Marcia Ritchie, L.V.T., CPDT

**Advisory Panel**

Dr. R.K. Anderson, DVM, DACVB  
Dr. Guy Hancock, DVM, MEd  
Dr. Wayne Hunthausen, DVM  
Dr. Karen Overall, VMD, PhD,  
DACVB

## President's Message

Welcome to our expanded edition of The Behavior Perspective and SVBT's annual Membership Drive.

Now is the time for all current members to renew your memberships. If you aren't a member yet, now is the time to join!

Veterinary technicians often contact me asking how they can become more active in animal behavior. My first response is always, "Become a SVBT member". Most of us received little to no education in animal behavior when we were students. SVBT is helping to provide opportunities to correct that deficit. The Society of Veterinary Behavior Technician's primary goals are to educate veterinary technicians and along with the American College of Veterinary Behaviorists, continue to develop and define the veterinary technician's role on the veterinary behavior team. Through SVBT you have a voice and you will be heard.

How often are you approached by clients with questions about their pet's behavior? The likely answer is daily. How many times have you assisted or known of an animal that was euthanized because of a behavior problem (too often a behavior problem that could have been prevented or treated)? I can honestly say that in my 16 years in private practice each case of euthanasia because of preventable behavior problems left an impact on me both personally and professionally. You now have the opportunity to make a difference in the lives of your patients and clients by becoming a SVBT member.

Recently our respected advisor, advocate and friend, Dr. R.K. Anderson tragically lost his wife, Winifred (see article on page 7). I once jokingly said to Dr. Anderson, "Every great man has a great woman behind him." To which Dr. Anderson eloquently replied, "Oh, Winifred has never been behind me, she's always been BESIDE me." Theirs was a relationship of mutual admiration and respect. Separately they were each outstanding people but together they were an extraordinary team. Our sincerest sympathy goes out to Dr. Anderson during this difficult time.

This is my last message as the president of SVBT. It is with the utmost confidence and respect that I pass the gavel to my colleague and friend Donna Dyer. I look forward to following Donna's leadership and direction through the next year. Her professionalism and candor will elevate SVBT to the next level.

As much as I've learned from and enjoyed my role as president of SVBT, I now look forward to taking an active role on our fund raising committee. I will educate myself on the grant writing process so as to obtain funding to promote the many projects SVBT is developing. Grab your leash and hang on – this is going to be an exciting year for the Society of Veterinary Behavior Technicians!



Julie Shaw, R.V.T., CPDT

## Editor's Bark

Amy Breton, CVT, VTS (ECC)

I hope you all enjoy this summer expanded edition of The Behavior Perspective. Recently I moved to a new house and with the move came new and wonderful pet behaviors that I hadn't seen before from my own pets. My dog, generally independent, followed my husband and me around looking anxious and lost for two consecutive weeks while my rabbit and bird seemed to be unaffected by the entire event. My bird was happy that the sun still rose and set and my rabbit was happy we hadn't forgotten to pack the hay.

My 13 year old diabetic cat turned into a "Miss Curiosity". Generally unaffected by life, she usually only follows sun spots around the room to get exercise. When we moved, she had more energy and excitement than I knew what to do with. Running from room to room she investigated the entire new house in 0.5 seconds flat. She became overly affectionate and overly vocal. She also began to urinate outside her litter box. I immediately went back to the basics regarding inappropriate urination. I realized I had only unpacked one out of her two litter boxes. I immediately unpacked the other (located in a box labeled tools and basement items...oops). I placed the second box upstairs and, presto, problem solved.

Inappropriate elimination can be a very serious problem. I have a new found empathy for owners who live with cats that eliminate outside of their box and I only experienced the problem for two days! A case history regarding this issue is featured in this quarter's newsletter.

I wish you all a great summer free of behavior problems from your own pets!

## Thank You to Our Sponsors

In this issue we honor our sponsors that have helped provide us with funding and other necessary support needed to keep SVBT growing as an organization.



Supporting The Veterinary Technician For Over 25 Years

NOVARTIS

PREMIER™



## Continuing Education Opportunities

**SEPTEMBER 4, 2004**

**Top Notch Obedience, "Both Ends of the Leash" - a full day of observing and teaching both people and dogs to communicate.**

**Poughkeepsie, NY**

*Patricia McConnell, PhD*

This seminar will benefit the homeless animals of the Dutchess County SPCA ([www.dcsPCA.org](http://www.dcsPCA.org))

**Contact:** 845-462-6297,  
[stolisiberians@cs.com](mailto:stolisiberians@cs.com)

**SEPTEMBER 11-12, 2004**

**Seminar-Upper Valley Humane Society Hanover, NH**

Saturday: Dog-Dog Aggression

Sunday: Half day seminar: Feline Ethology

*Patricia McConnell, PhD*

**Contact:** Robin 603-448-1878,  
[training@uvhs.org](mailto:training@uvhs.org)

**SEPTEMBER 29-OCTOBER 3, 2004**

**APDT 11<sup>th</sup> Annual Educational Conference and Trade Show Denver, CO**

[www.apdt.com](http://www.apdt.com)

**OCTOBER 6-10, 2004**

**5-day Wolf Behavior Seminar Wolf Park, Battle Ground, IN**

[www.wolfpark.org](http://www.wolfpark.org)

**OCTOBER 22-24, 2004**

**Open Paw Conference Los Angeles, CA**

Speakers include: Phil Arkow, Kelley Bollen, Ian Dunbar, Kelly Gorman, Trish King, Patricia McConnell, PhD, Jennifer Messer, DVM, Jill-Marie Yorey  
OPEN PAW is a non-profit organization dedicated to decreasing the suffering, surrender, abandonment, and euthanasia of unwanted cats and dogs.

More Details and Registration Info at [www.puppyworks.com](http://www.puppyworks.com)

**NOVEMBER 5-7, 2004**

**The Evolution and Natural History of Dogs**

**Wolf Park, Battle Ground, IN**

*Ray Coppinger*

[www.wolfpark.org](http://www.wolfpark.org)



## Annual Scientific Sessions in Behavior Philadelphia, PA July 24-28, 2004

Our annual business meeting and reception will be held on Monday, July 26, 2004 in the Georgian Room of the Westin Philadelphia, 99 South 17th Street, Philadelphia, PA 19103. Our business meeting will begin at 4:45 PM and last about one hour. After the business meeting concludes, our reception will begin. The SVBT reception is the highlight of the AVMA conference for many of us. It is the only chance we have all year to meet face to face. Come relax for an evening and get to know the technicians and veterinarians working in the field of behavioral medicine.

Our Annual Business Meeting that begins at 4:45 pm, will be your only opportunity to win one of the out-

standing training kits from Urban Puppy. See Volume 3 Issue 3 of The Behavior Perspective for a review of the Urban Puppy Toolkit

Please note that we are meeting at the *Westin Philadelphia* as our meeting follows the day-long scientific papers session given by the American Veterinary Society of Animal Behavior at the same hotel.

This year's schedule is a little different than in years past. Instead of having the technician behavior program run all day Saturday and Sunday, this year our program will run all day Saturday and Tuesday.

Remember that if you wish to attend the Sunday evening session presented by the American College of Veterinary

Behaviorists and/or the day-long Monday session presented by the American Society of Veterinary Animal Behavior, you have to register with them. There are separate charges for each of these sessions. Check out their web sites at [www.dacvb.org](http://www.dacvb.org) and [www.avma.org/avsab/](http://www.avma.org/avsab/).

### ATTEND TO WIN

The Urban Puppy company has generously offered to donate Urban Puppy Kits to be raffled off to SVBT members attending the annual business meeting on July 26, 2004 at the AVMA conference in Philadelphia, PA. Members must be present to win!

## Make Plans to attend the SVBT Annual Meeting Hope to See You There!

### Help Needed

SVBT State Representative committee is looking for people to represent their state for SVBT. **The following states are currently represented:** California, Colorado, Hawaii, Illinois, Indiana, Iowa, New York, Virginia, Ontario, Alberta, and Vancouver. We would like to fill unrepresented states. Having more than one representative in a state is also a possibility. Member responsibilities include:

- supplying SVBT brochures for distribution at state meetings
- reporting behavior news in their state
- submitting SVBT news releases supplied by the public relations committee to state newsletters
- sending updates about current events in your state that can be included in the quarterly newsletter.

Qualified candidates should be an active professional or student member, have an e-mail access as well as a desire to enrich human-animal interactions by promoting scientifically based techniques of training, management, and behavior modification. Please contact Debbie Puppel, State Representative Committee chair, at [dapuppel@aol.com](mailto:dapuppel@aol.com) if you are interested.

# Welcome New Members

Magdalene Amanatidis, R.V.T.	Highland	IN	Diane Cichy, L.V.T.	New York	NY
Linda Heald	Corona	AZ	Leah Tinkham	Hoosick Falls	NY
Melodie Bowling, R.V.T.N.	Vancouver	BC	Robyn Jacoby, L.V.T.	Hamburg	NY
Christy Hutson, BS R.V.T.	San Diego	CA	James Van Roo, L.V.T.	Rochester	NY
Susan Herbert, R.V.T.	Calgary AB	Canada	Deanna Herfel, R.V.T.	Gahanna	OH
Rianda Copeland	Littleton	CO	Rachel Hozak	Columbus	OH
Tessa Davis	Thornton	CO	Melissa Kay-Bower, R.V.T.	Mt. Gilead	OH
Megan Schey	Longmont	CO	Sara Paterchak, R.V.T.	Urbana	OH
Caley Offenhauser	Aurora	CO	Barbara Witman, CAHT	Collegeville	PA
Andrea Herman	Pinellas Park	FL	Emily Zins	Newport	RI
Patty Langasek	Bettendorf	IA	Lisa Houck, A.H.T.	Lexington	SC
Robin Cember	Skokie	CO	Barbara Fores, R.V.T.	Euless	TX
Sarah Webb	Highland Hts.	KY	Dean Ehrman	Tooele	UT
Michelle Welch	Dedham	MA	Trisha Moll, C.V.T.	Cambria	WI
Jillian Tapper-Spielman, L.V.T.	Clinton Township	MI	Patty Pasarilla	Sauk City	WI
Tai Salisbury, C.V.T.	Minneapolis	MN	Jodi Wolfram, C.V.T.	Ft. Atkinson	WI
Sherry Buffington, C.V.T.	Stockton	NJ	Robyn Davey	Denver	CO



## INTRODUCING the urban puppy toolkit!

**the ultimate & complete  
"how to" for all new puppy owners**

Jammed-packed with cutting edge practical information • A perfect enhancement for your puppy socialization programs, or a great stand-alone solution for owners not enrolled in class • Creatively organized in color-coded booklets, including: Socialization, Prevention, Games, Junior Obedience & House Training • Fun and appealing for all members of the family • Promotes total involvement each step of the way

*"The Urban Puppy Toolkit has quickly become an essential component for all our puppy visits. The information is so easy to use, we see an incredible difference in the dogs whose owners use the toolkit. It's made our jobs easier - our clients happier, in fact - none of our puppy clients go home without it!!!"*

*Tanya Zweers, RVT, Hospital Manager, Byron Animal Clinic*

A unique re-sale opportunity for SVBT Members. Save 10% off the *wholesale* price when you purchase the Urban Puppy Toolkit.



urbanpuppy.com

Contact your **PREMIER** representative (covering mainland USA) for details 800-933-5595  
Your Pets, Our Passion™

The SVBT board of directors and editorial staff would like to apologize to the Urban Puppy Company for the blurriness of their ad in the spring edition of The Behavior Perspective.

See Volume 3 Issue 3 of The Behavior Perspective for a review of the Urban Puppy Toolkit

SVBT members may purchase the Urban Puppy toolkit at a discounted rate through Premier Pet Products (mainland USA) 1-800-933-5595



## Ask The Expert

*This edition's expert is Dr. Suzanne Hetts. Dr. Hetts is a popular, award winning international speaker and author of **Pet Behavior Protocols**. She directed the Delta Society's Professional Standards for Dog Trainers project and she consults with major corporations in the pet industry. Her publications and videos are used in nationwide training programs for animal caretakers and pet owners. She has a Ph.D. in animal behavior from Colorado State University. She is certified by the Animal Behavior Society as an applied animal behaviorist and by CCPDT as a pet dog trainer.*

*For more information, visit the Animal Behavior Associates' website at [www.AnimalBehaviorAssociates.com](http://www.AnimalBehaviorAssociates.com) or call 303-932-9095.*

"I have a wonderful 3 year old cat who has lived daily with puppies and dogs for the last two years. He has always been amazingly friendly to all dogs and puppies he's met. I recently fostered a 3 pound chihuahua mix puppy and was completely caught off guard when our gregarious cat

attacked the puppy. These attacks were never "hit and runs". The puppy could be sitting quietly or simply walking across the floor when the attacks occurred. The cat "snuck up" on the puppy and attacked by wrapping all four feet around the puppy and biting multiple times around the puppy's face, head and neck area. He did not growl, he used all claws and did not inhibit his bite. The cat literally had to be pulled off the puppy. I hope to adopt a JRT puppy in a few months and I'm quite concerned for his safety." *Anonymous in Indiana*

*Dr. Hetts' response:*

I'd say it was most likely a predatory attack. The first concern is to keep any small puppy that comes into the house in the future safe from the cat. The response prevention becomes even more important and it will likely require multiple sessions for the cat to learn alternative, non-aggressive behavior in the presence of small puppies. I would almost describe it as a modified flooding technique.

If the cat is accustomed to a harness and leash, he could be anchored to a heavy object (e.g. leg of the couch), and the puppy put on the floor at a distance away, and "good things" offered to the cat until he can relax while watching the puppy from afar. Then the distance between the two would be decreased slightly and the session repeated.

## SVBT Annual Membership Drive — Reasons to Join the Society of Veterinary Behavior Technicians

This edition of The Behavior Perspective has been expanded to correspond with our annual membership drive. All memberships become due July 15th, 2004. The only exception is for those who just joined this May or June. New members and members wishing to renew their memberships may complete a registration form on line or print a registration form from the SVBT web site at [www.svbt.org](http://www.svbt.org).

As a member of the Society of Veterinary Behavior Technicians you will:

- Receive the latest information regarding updates in behavior medicine
- Have access to a network of peers in the field of behavior
- Be admitted to the "Members Only" area of the SVBT website
- Receive notification of job opportunities related to the field of animal behavior
- Increase the visibility and knowledge of technicians in the field of behavior
- Have the opportunity to become part of active discussions on the SVBT ListServ (Professional Memberships)
- Play an active role in obtaining specialty status from NAVTA
- Be eligible to receive SVBT sponsored scholarships to continuing education events
- Receive discounts to SVBT sponsored continuing education events
- Receive discounts on books and products related to animal behavior
- Increase your ability to assist owners strengthen their bond with their pets
- Receive SVBT's quarterly newsletter, The Behavior Perspective
- Receive a Discount on telecourses by Animal Behavior Associates, Inc. (see page 11)

## Book Review Reviewed by: Ginny Price, BA, CVT

The New Work of Dogs  
Written By Jon Katz  
2003 Random House, Inc: New York

*The New Work of Dogs* by Jon Katz could easily slip by unread since it was written to appeal to the general public. But don't be fooled, it is thought provoking. The book is twelve short stories that take the reader inside the lives of dog owners' and their relationships with their canine companions. The focus is on how the people depend on their dogs' to make them complete. Jon Katz feels that people bond to their dogs in the same way that they bond to their parents, this is known as the human attachment theory. The book is an eye opener. It shows the good, the bad and the ugly of canine-human relationships.

The setting is in upstate New York, which is where Mr. Katz lives. There is a large, lushly forested dog park in the neighborhood where many of the area residents go to socialize their dogs. The people in the book range from a lonely male lawyer to an eclectic group of newly divorced women to a young Afro-American teen living in the worst part of the neighborhood. The stories help us to see what people now expect dogs to be able to do. They expect an animal that can conform to any mood. They expect that the dog will somehow know when to snuggle and when to leave them alone. Katz points out that the typical dog owner wants a free spirited Labrador that is unspoiled by training. These untrained dogs are expected to know not to jump on strangers or pull us over.



The author has done his homework on this book. He has spoken to breeders, veterinarians, rescuers, trainers, behaviorists, psychiatrists, and, of course, dog owners and enthusiasts. There are references throughout the book that back up the text. Mr. Katz has blended a fun to read storybook with a sociology text

I think this is a great book for all of us who love dogs. It is good to be reminded that realistic expectations are at the heart of good relationships with

our dogs. It is also good to be reminded that sometimes we ask too much of them. It is important for us to see what our modern society has done to our human relationships. We used to depend on our relationships with our extended families for support. Today, we are just as likely to live miles and miles from our nearest relative. Katz writes that we are expecting our dogs to fill this void.

This book may be purchased online at [www.barnesandnoble.com](http://www.barnesandnoble.com)

### SVBT Members Attend Course

# DOGS!

22 SVBT members took advantage of the SVBT sponsored continuing education discount for Purdue University's 5-day course, DOGS! Principles and Techniques of Behavior Modification.

2004 SVBT Scholarship winner, Linda Campbell said, "The 2004 DOGS! Course surpassed my every expectation. It gave me an opportunity to put into practice many of the techniques I had only read about. I came away with an increased appreciation of how important the science of animal behavior is and a renewed commitment to my role of strengthening the animal-owner bond through training and education."

"I want to thank everyone at Purdue for providing such a wonderful environment for learning."

SVBT will again sponsor an essay scholarship contest for the 2005 course. Watch for details in the January 2005 edition of *The Behavior Perspective*.



*Note: I apologize if names do not correspond to photos – J. Shaw*  
Front Row L-R: Ellen Adams, Carolyn Balavich, Christy Pennisi  
Middle Row L-R: Jennifer Krack, Rayne Reinauer, Jennifer Toole, Linda Campbell, Tina Nishino, Shannon Trouba, Julie Shaw  
Back Row L-R: Carrie Cardasii, Sandra Holmes, Keely Harding, Amy Felner, Melba Atkinson, Elizabeth Van Dyke, Erica Gillum, Melissa Christian, Angela Bondy, *Not Pictured:* Robin Cember, Carol Ochiai, Callie Thomas, Debbie Puppel

## In Memory of Winifred Anderson Written by Donna Dyer, CVT

Most everyone with a special interest in animal behavior knows of Dr. Robert R. K. Anderson and his many contributions to the field of veterinary behavioral medicine. He is probably best known as co-inventor of the Gentle Leader Headcollar. His willingness to share his time and knowledge with those of us who are eager to learn all we can about animal behavior, is legendary. Dr. Anderson has been tireless in his promotion of veterinary behavioral medicine and the important role technicians play. He has been a strong advocate for the Society of Veterinary Behavior Technicians and acts in an advisory role to the SVBT Board of Directors.

On April 7, 2004, Dr. Anderson lost his beloved wife of 60 years, Winifred. Together they had three sons and four grandchildren. Traveling the world and experiencing new places and different cultures is one of the things that Dr. Anderson and Winifred enjoyed doing together. For twenty years, they spent their summers in South America where Dr. Anderson taught epidemiology as a visiting professor. Their summer adventures took them to all the countries of South American, but Peru held a special place in Winifred's heart. With three trips to the same location, Winifred was able to make good friends and the get to know the country's beauty and culture well. They explored the countries of Europe together as well as more exotic locations like the Galapagos Islands. In the mid 1980's they spent three months in Australia. This past winter Winifred and Dr Anderson traveled to Mexico for their forty-first time.

Winifred was indeed, a most intrepid traveler. Probably never more so than when Dr. Anderson decided to trade in his conservative sedan for a huge, 4 wheel-drive, red pick-up truck. The color was Win's idea, but it took some time for her, at five feet tall, to warm up to the idea of driving around in a vehicle she couldn't get in and out of without assistance. A custom-made step stool solved the problem and became one of the most important pieces of special equipment on this fancy truck. In the past year, Dr. Anderson and Win put 22,000 miles on the big red truck while criss-crossing the country in an attempt to visit all the veterinary schools and many of the veterinary conferences.

Winifred Anderson was a strong woman, the only person I knew who could train Dr. Anderson, but she had the gentlest of spirits. She will be greatly missed.

*Dear Members of the Society of Veterinary Behavior Technicians:*

*Thank you for the very beautiful bouquet of flowers you sent after Winifred's death to commemorate her life. Win enjoyed interacting with many of you in small personal groups as well as at your receptions during the AVMA meetings.*

*Win was a loving and much loved wife, mother and grandmother for me, for her children and for her grandchildren. She was my partner and inspiration for 60 years of marriage and traveled with me to meetings all over the U.S. and the world. Your flowers were a beautiful memorial gesture and we put them in the dining room of our condominium to share with our friends and neighbors.*

*I look forward to seeing many of you at the AVMA meeting in Philadelphia and further sharing memories of Win with you.*

*With appreciation for your sympathy,  
R.K. Anderson*



Winifred (Win) Anderson (left), Dr. Robert (R.K.) Anderson (middle) and Dr. Andrew Luescher (right) at the SVBT reception in 2003



## Walking the Cat?

*Reprinted with permission from "Pet Behavior One Piece at a Time", the free, monthly online newsletter written by the certified applied animal behaviorists at [www.AnimalBehaviorAssociates.com](http://www.AnimalBehaviorAssociates.com) - a nationally recognized resource on pet behavior for pet parents and pet professionals.*

Keeping your cat indoors can present challenges to providing her with a stimulating and enriching environment. Few indoor areas are as interesting to cats as the great outdoors.

However, letting cats roam freely outside (something we do NOT recommend) can put them at risk for injury and disease, fighting with other cats, eliminating in other people's gardens, and cause problems for wildlife. So how can you safely allow your cat outdoors and not create problems? One idea is to take your cat for a walk.

Thanks to our friend, colleague, and cat socializer extraordinaire, Dr. Marsha Heinke, for pointing us to a great product - [the leash walking jacket](#). This looks to be superior to any cat harness we've seen.

<http://www.hdw-inc.com/walkingjackets.htm>

You can acclimate your cat to wearing the walking jacket with some time and patience. Start by putting the jacket on your cat without fastening it. Just let it drape loosely around her body for a few minutes. Pair this experience with pleasant things like chasing a cat toy or eating a special tidbit.

Take the jacket off before your cat starts to struggle. Don't force her to wear it. After she gets used to the feel of the jacket and isn't bothered by it, buckle it loosely and repeat the positive associations. Gradually increase the time your cat wears the jacket. Check the fit to make sure she cannot get out of the jacket on her own.

Once your cat will wear the jacket, begin acclimating her to the leash and to walking with you. Start indoors by just allowing her to first drag the leash around, and then to walking with you. Entice her to move on the leash and jacket by getting her to chase a feather on the end of a string, or lay a trail of treats.

When your cat seems comfortable in the jacket and leash, take her outside. Most cats that haven't had a lot of experience outside will be fearful at first in the new environment. Start with very short trips, like around your back yard or front porch. If your cat gets frightened or tries to hide, just bring her back inside. You may need to start by

just sitting with your cat until the outdoors doesn't seem overwhelming.

Gradually try to lengthen the walks. How far you go and how long you and your cat are outside will depend on your cat's preferences. Some cats may enjoy a long walk around the block, while others may be happy just lying in the yard and wandering around the bushes.

Don't expect your cat walks to be like dog walks. Your cat may not want to walk beside you for some distance - she may prefer a casual stroll with lots of side trips to investigate the grass, bushes and other objects.

Some cautions if you do walk your cat. Beware of loose dogs and cats that could attack you and your cat. Even dogs on leash might attack your cat or badly frighten her. Try to avoid contacts with other animals, at least until you know how the animals will react to each other. Consider taking a can of [Direct Stop](#) with you to repel any unfriendly advances.

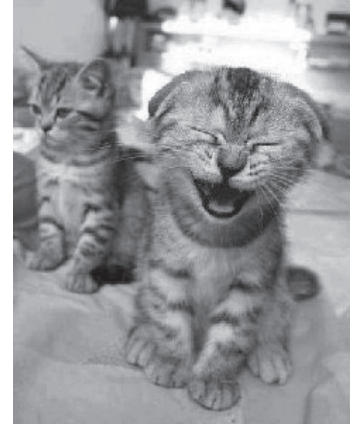
<http://www.animalbehaviorassociates.com/stop>

Be careful picking your cat up or trying to pet her if something's frightened her. She may redirect her defensive reaction onto you, or inadvertently injure you trying to get away. Consider taking a soft-sided cat carrier along on the walk so that you can get her home safely if she does become fearful or aggressive.

If you can't get your cat to accept a harness and leash or if it is just too risky to have her walking on the leash and harness, consider taking her out in her cat carrier secured to a small wagon, or in a cat stroller such as the [Kitty Walk Stroller](#), specially made for walking cats, puppies or small dogs. We think this is a great product and can't wait to get one for Buffett and the new puppy.

<http://www.drsfostersmith.com>

Cat walks are not for everyone, but with the high incidence of obesity in cats, we think they have great potential for some cats. You'll likely find these procedures are easier with 6 to 8 month old kittens as compared to adult cats.





# How to Keep Jack in the Box

Jenny M. O'Connor, CVT, University of Pennsylvania, Philadelphia

*Reprinted with permission from Veterinary Technician Journal Vol. 24 Number 3, March 2003.*

Jack, a 3-year-old neutered domestic shorthaired (DSH) cat, was presented to the University of Pennsylvania behavior service for urinating outside the litterbox in August 1999. Approximately 6 months earlier, he began urinating in the den, hallway, and dining room of his owners' home. He urinated on horizontal surfaces and preferred carpeted areas. The inappropriate elimination had been occurring approximately two times per month. The owners had actually witnessed Jack urinating in one of his alternative toilet areas at least once. Any evidence of elimination outside the litterbox disappeared while Jack was confined to a bathroom to limit damage to the carpeting. Jack's regular veterinarian had not been able to get him to stop the behavior. All treatments tried thus far failed to stop the behavior.

Jack had been a stray when the owners acquired him about 1.5 years earlier from a private rescue group. The other resident cats (listed in the order in which they were obtained) included Bianca, a 6.5-year-old spayed DSH; Bibs, a 5-year-old spayed DSH; and Penny, an 11-year-old spayed DSH. Jack was the newest addition to the family. They were all acquired as adults and kept exclusively indoors. The relationships among the four cats were neither stable nor cordial. Jack fought with Bibs and Bianca, and Penny primarily kept to herself. Jack was friendly and affectionate with humans.

The owners, a middle-aged married couple, had owned cats before this current group. They did not actively

play with their cats on a regular basis and lived in a suburban single home with a large yard. The neighborhood activity level was low, as was the incidence of stray cats.

The four cats had access to five litterboxes (four large and one medium-sized). All boxes were uncovered; two had liners. Four were located in the kitchen on the first floor, and one was located in a second-floor bathroom. The boxes were washed monthly. The owners used unscented clumping litter, plain clay litter, and sand in various boxes. The clay and sand were dumped and refilled daily, whereas the clumping litter was scooped six times daily.

Jack's physical examination, complete blood cell count, serum chemistry panel, and urinalysis (including sediment test) were all within normal limits. His veterinary record revealed three recent urinalyses and a thyroxine ( $T_4$ ) level that were all within normal limits and no preexisting or current medical problems.

According to clinic policy, all four cats were present for the appointment. Penny immediately perched on a windowsill and remained there for most of the visit. Jack and Bibs wandered around the room; Jack kept to the perimeter and attempted to block Bibs and Bianca from getting to the owners. Bibs stared aggressively at Jack. Bianca, the last to leave her carrier, was visibly anxious.

At the time of the appointment, Jack was being given buspirone (5 mg BID for approximately 3 weeks) as prescribed by his veterinarian in an attempt to deal with the problem. The owners had tried covering carpets with plastic and foil, placing litterboxes over soiled

areas, and blocking Jack's access to the living room. None of these techniques had successfully stopped the inappropriate urination.

## Diagnosis

Diagnosing a feline elimination disorder is a matter of exclusion. Jack's veterinarian had ruled out the most common medical causes that pose as elimination disorders, leaving two categories of behavior: inappropriate elimination and marking (using excrement to communicate). Cats eliminate in inappropriate places because they either prefer those places or have an aversion to the place designated for them. They may have an aversion to the location of the litterbox (e.g., next to a loud washing machine), to a flowery-scented litter, or to a litterbox that is cleaned only once a week. A cat with an aversion will look for a more suitable place to relieve itself. A cat that prefers soil to clay litter may use a large potted plant; another may prefer to use a corner of a specific room.

Jack's behavioral history indicated that factors such as cleanliness, litter variety, and number of boxes available had all been addressed by the owners, making aversions and preferences less likely to be the cause of Jack's urinating outside the litterbox. A diagnosis of marking was made because of the unstable social relationships among the cats. Cats sometimes begin marking as a sign of anxiety, especially in response to social conflict. Observing their behavior during the appointment revealed anxiety and aggression (both overt and covert) from Jack, Bibs, and Bianca. These observations were confirmed by the owners at the appointment and later in their logs.

(Continued from page 7)

**Treatment**

Jack’s treatment plan included both behavior modification and pharmacologic intervention. The owners were advised to continue giving buspirone at the current dose. They were advised that the medication may need to be changed in the future or that more than one cat may need to be medicated. They were asked to videotape the locations where the soiling had occurred to confirm that only one cat was the culprit. They were also asked to keep a daily log of aggressive events and housesoiling to provide additional insight and were given advice on how to appropriately clean urine-soiled areas both indoors and outdoors using enzymatic cleaners.

Most importantly, the owners were taught to recognize aggressive body language and were told to interrupt negative social interactions between the cats by calling the aggressor over to them. This not only interrupts an aggressive incident but may also teach a socially anxious cat to seek its owners when it becomes anxious. The owners were instructed to avoid using punishment because it would increase anxiety, intensify existing problems, and create new ones. Finally, it was recommended that both Bibs and Jack be isolated in separate rooms when the owners were not home or actively supervising them.

Because there were not enough spare rooms, the owners chose to isolate Jack.

**Follow-up and Results**

After 3 months, Jack’s house-soiling was reduced by 50% to about once per month. The owners’ logs revealed that Bibs was actively aggressive to both Jack and Bianca. Jack’s aggression toward Bibs was mostly defensive, and his aggression toward Bianca was redirected — a reaction to being attacked by Bibs. The owners were successful at anticipating and interrupting aggressive events. The prescribed treatment plan was modified to include 5 mg amitriptyline (approximately 1 mg/kg SID) for Jack; the buspirone was discontinued because of inefficacy (the inappropriate urination continued). It was agreed that Bibs, rather than Jack, would be isolated when unsupervised because she was the obvious aggressor.

The couple had separated, and the husband moved out of the house, adding more stress to the situation. Nevertheless, 9 months after the initial appointment, the incidence of urine marking had been reduced to less than once per month. The owner had removed most of the carpet and rugs because she could not effectively eliminate the urine odor. Jack was still receiving amitriptyline (5 mg SID), and

Bibs continued to be segregated from rest of the cats when she could not be watched.

One-and-a-half years after his diagnosis, Jack continued to receive amitriptyline at the same dose. His physical examination, complete blood cell count, and serum chemistry panel were within normal limits according to his regular veterinarian. Bibs was no longer separated from the others. The owner noted a decrease in overall aggression among all the cats, including Bibs, reporting only one actual fight since the last update. She also reported an increase in favorable interactions between Jack and herself and an increase in confidence and sociability in Bianca. At just over the two year mark, only one incident of housesoiling had occurred in 9 months time.

The owner has contacted the clinic every 3 months for refills of Jack’s medication. Jack has survived not only the loss of Penny, the oldest cat, and his owners’ divorce but also the introduction of another two cats into the household. All are doing well ... and using their litterboxes!

**Note:** I last contacted this client in April to refill Jack’s medication (amitriptyline 5mg SID) and received the update that “all the guys are doing great!”.

## New Board Members to be Inaugurated

Election results are complete and the following SVBT members will begin their terms during our annual meeting in July.

- President-Elect:* Cassandra Vong
- Treasurer:* Kim Reed-Clark
- Member-at-Large:* Linda Campbell
- Member-at-Large:* Amanda Miller

## Discount Offered for Behavior Telecourse by Animal Behavior Associates, Inc

**What if professional education in applied animal behavior was just a phone call away? Animal Behavior Associates, Inc., Drs. Suzanne Hetts and Dan Estep, announce three telecourses geared toward veterinary technicians and other pet professionals. All three courses are approved for CEU's by CCPDT, and the two Fundamentals course are approved by CACVT.**

Acquiring concentrated education in applied learning and canine behavior is not easy to come by. Our telecourses give you a solid foundation you can build on as you advance your education in animal behavior. Unlike attending a large conference, you'll have the opportunity to get all your questions answered, discuss the material with the instructors and other participants, and practice applying your new knowledge by completing practical homework assignments. Each class has over 20 pages of notes.

### **Here's what participants are saying:**

*"An informative and extremely convenient way of listening to the experts. The coursework covered is detailed, relevant and up to the minute, and Suzanne and Dan bring a real enthusiasm to the telecourse."*

— Pam Kundro, apprentice dog trainer

*"I think this type of class format is really cool. It provides easy access to solid behavioral information. Suzanne and Dan are exceptional at answering questions. Class members come away with a better understanding of how to explain things to their own clients."*

— Stefy Day, 3<sup>rd</sup> year Ohio State Veterinary Student

**Fundamentals of Animal Learning** – Modifying dog behavior requires a solid understanding of the basics of learning. If you've gotten stumped by variations between other authors' coverage of the subject, if you aren't sure how to apply what you know in your daily work or with your own dog, this course is just for you.

**Fundamentals of Canine Behavior** – The course will apply the science of ethology to dog behavior, and address confusing and often misunderstood topics such as drives, dominance, genetic effects on behavior, and many more. This course will help you become an educated consumer of information about dogs, and help you better communicate with dogs.

**Becoming a Great Dog Training Instructor** – Because dog training is a client-oriented service, you must know how to motivate people. You will learn classroom management skills, and how to flexibly adjust your teaching methods to accommodate a wide range of human learning styles. The skills you'll learn to deal with difficult people and unruly dogs can be applied to other situations in the veterinary practice.

For more complete course descriptions, course schedules, to view the course outlines, and to register, go to [www.AnimalBehaviorAssociates.com](http://www.AnimalBehaviorAssociates.com). From the home page, navigate to Services for Professionals, Telecourses. Questions? Contact us at 303-932-9095; [info@AnimalBehaviorAssociates.com](mailto:info@AnimalBehaviorAssociates.com).

**Special registration fees, available ONLY to SVBT members. Regular price for each 4 session telecourse is \$79. SVBT members can take \$10 off each course. Register for all three telecourses as a package, and pay only \$200 – a \$40 savings from the regular individual price. You MUST enter your SVBT membership number on the online registration form. Discount will be given when your order is processed (it won't show up on the shopping cart). Or register by phone (see above) or fax 303-932-2298.**



First Class  
Presort Mail  
U.S. Postage  
PAID  
Lafayette, IN  
Permit No. 221

**Editor:**

Amy Breton, CVT, VTS (ECC)  
55 Littleton Road, Unit 19E  
Ayer, MA 01432  
Phone: 978-772-4695  
Email: newfieldamy@hotmail.com

**Membership  
Information:**

[www.svbt.org](http://www.svbt.org)

**Become a Member or Renew**

**Your Membership Online at:**

**[www.svbt.org](http://www.svbt.org)**