

The LAKER

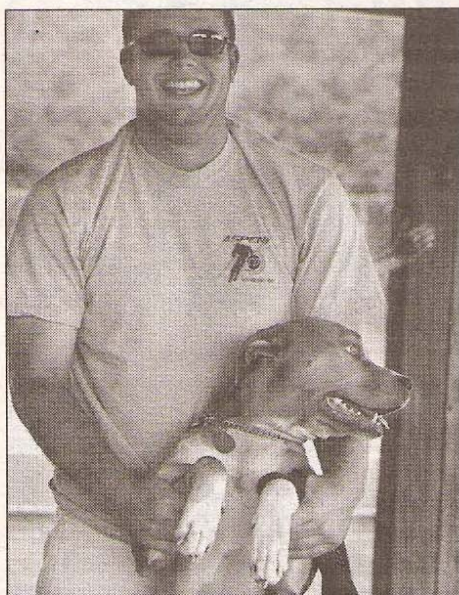


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It's Not Wednesday Until You Read The Laker!

April 19, 2006

YOUR PETS



Biscuit aka 'Stinky'

David Kamm, of Northdale, holds Biscuit during a Gaither High School girl's tennis match Thursday at North Lakes Park and Recreations Center. Biscuit has made it to most of the home games. The girls have nicknamed the dog "Stinky." Staff photo by Keith Carson.

Human medicine can spare cats from once-fatal condition

By Marcia Stone
Special to The Laker

Rudy is a black male cat with green eyes and is 12 years old. She was brought to the Florida Veterinary Specialists & Cancer Treatment Center, a 24-hour critical care facility, by her human mother, Michelle Turner of Westchase. The vets determined that Rudy

has a formerly fatal disease called Hyperthyroidism that now has a "feline friendly" cure. Human medicine has crossed over into veterinary medicine and risky surgery is no longer necessary.

Hyperthyroidism occurs when a cat's thyroid gland develops a tumor that causes an overproduction of thyroid hormone. This condition over-stimulates many organ systems and can cause changes in behavior, eating habits, fever, rapid heartbeat, shedding diarrhea and even death.

But now, death is a less likely outcome because of advances in veterinary medicine at Florida Veterinary Specialists.

A safer, more effective way to cure Hyperthyroidism is available and is called Radioiodine. "Hyperthyroidism is one of the most common diseases in older cats," according to Dr. Erick Mears at Florida Veterinary Specialists in Tampa. Radioiodine treatment (a single injection) can completely cure hyperthyroidism by destroying only the thyroid tumor. The treatment has been available for humans for about 50 years. As for cat owners, "People don't know about Radioiodine because it's not readily available," according to Dr. Mears. In fact, Florida Veterinary Specialists is the only specialty hospital in Tampa Bay that uses it.

Former methods of treating hyperthyroidism are risky or inconvenient. They include surgery or daily pilling. Surgery risks removing healthy glands, but not necessarily removing the entire problematic tumor. Multiple surgeries are often required. This was not an option for Kim Mahoney, who owns seven cats.

"For me, it was an issue of getting it done once. Plus, I don't want my cats on anesthesia after a certain age, especially if they have other issues." Another old-school method includes pilling. That option merely manages the disease

and causes major side effects. Dr. Mears has treated more than 2,000 cats with Radioiodine and says there are many advantages to the procedure including improving the relationship between the cat and their owner.

Florida Veterinary Specialists' state-of-the-art facility is designed and equipped to provide emergency, specialty and critical care for pets.

Florida Veterinary Specialists and Cancer Treatment Center is located at 3000 Busch Lake Boulevard in Tampa off Busch Boulevard between Dale Mabry and Florida Avenue.

Emergency service is available 24 hours a day. Check out www.fvs.com or call 813-933-8944 for more information.