



Creature Comfort

Holistic Veterinary Center

Puppy Kisses and Kitty Purrs to You This Valentine's Day!

February 1, 2017

Greetings!

The new year has started off with a bang - or should we say expressive barks?! Read about how Dr. Jenny Taylor spoke at FurCon in San Jose and spread the word about holistic veterinary medicine. Hear Dr. Christie Johnson's insights about caring for kitties who experience osteoarthritis. And find out how partnering with Creature Comfort helps long-time client Sandra Brim care for her "fur children." Also, we are continuing our dental special for Dental Awareness Month - read the details about savings below. In our monthly e-newsletters, we share information about pet care, what's new at Creature Comfort along with our health recommendations and philosophy. Enjoy!

Does Your Cat Have Osteoarthritis?

By Dr. Christie Johnson

Cats can develop joint changes that cause pain and inflammation like we see in humans, dogs and other species. The terms *arthritis*, *osteoarthritis*, and *degenerative joint disease* (DJD), are often used interchangeably, and each indicates an inflammation of the joints.



Dr. Christie Johnson with Grizzelda

This inflammation and the subsequent joint changes seen on radiographs, or X-rays, can arise from hereditary defects, injury or infection, yet most commonly are seen as a result of degeneration as part of the aging process. Large joints, such as the shoulder, elbow, hip, and ankle are the most frequently affected in cats, as well as the spine. Overweight cats tend to be especially prone to arthritis, as excess weight places a greater strain on joints.

Signs of osteoarthritis in cats can vary. If you are persistently seeing a few of the following behaviors, it would be wise to set up a veterinary appointment at Creature Comfort:

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Quick Links

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Creature Comforter of the Month: Ana!



Ana Ruiz

Help us recognize Ana Ruiz, chosen by her peers to be Creature Comforter of the Month! According to Creature Comfort staff, Ana has infectious positivity and is always willing to step up when asked. Thank you, Ana!

**Anniversary
Congrats: One Year**

- Decreased willingness to run or climb stairs
- Decreased willingness and ability to jump up and down (especially from previously frequented areas)
- Increased irritability or aggression
- Decreased interaction with family (spending more time alone)
- Reduced hunting or outdoor exploration
- Reduced grooming or over-grooming a painful joint
- Nail overgrowth
- Noticeable lameness (limp or stiffness)
- Abnormal posture
- Muscle loss (thin legs, protruding spine)
- Changes in toileting habits
- Changes in eating habits

Your cat's veterinarian may be able to diagnose osteoarthritis based on reported signs and veterinary exam findings. Radiographs are useful to confirm suspected cases and document severity of joint changes.

If your cat has been diagnosed with osteoarthritis, here are some ways you can modify your home to help your cat:

- Ensure there are secure hiding places
- Place stairs or ramps to elevated areas
- Use litter boxes with easy access (low sides or cutout sections)
- Horizontal or inclined scratching posts instead of vertical
- Raised food and water bowls
- Padded, comfortable bedding in easy-to-reach, draft-free areas
- Heated bedding or "igloo bed"
- Nonslip flooring (i.e., runner rugs, bath mats, yoga mats)

If your kitty does have arthritis, she may enjoy gentle massage or a warm compress. Incorporate regular brushing and periodic nail trimming into your routine (seeking professional help if it causes discomfort). Short, gentle play is usually helpful.

Therapies we use for osteoarthritis in our feline friends include:

- Acupuncture
- Cold laser (<http://www.k-laser.com/pet-owners>)
- Chiropractic adjustment
- Pulsed electromagnetic field therapy (<http://www.assisianimalhealth.com/>)
- High quality nutrition
- Careful weight control
- Exercise, rehabilitation
- Herbal anti-inflammatories

for Alex!



Alex Lufting



Anniversary pin

Congratulations to Alexandria Lufting for completing one year of working at Creature Comfort!

To commemorate the occasion, Alex received a special pin.

Congratulations to Sara Murray!



Sarah Murray

Vet Nurse Sara Murray recently tied the knot with her fiance Matt. We Creature Comforters showered her in style!

Noteworthy

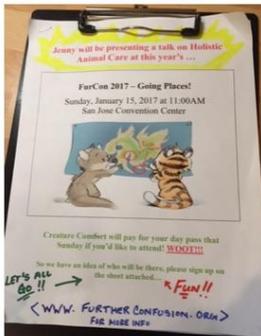
This is a friendly reminder that starting this month, our rates will increase as

- Adequan injections
- Nutritional supplement containing glucosamine and/or chondroitin
- Omega 3 fatty acids
- Herbal therapies
- Prescription medications

For questions and concerns, reach out to your veterinarian. An in-person appointment will help your vet better confirm if your kitty has osteoarthritis and more quickly determine what will make her more comfortable.

Creature Comfort Goes to FurCon!

by Betsy Aaron



Creature Comforters went to FurCon 2017 where vet nurse Steph Falvo managed convention operations (top left, shown center), Dr. Taylor spoke about holistic veterinary medicine (top right), and Office Managers Osadhi Reu and Mondia Doty (second row, right) stepped into the animal world by trying on fur accessories. Receptionist Nalima Singh (bottom left) befriended a unicorn, and then with Osadhi Reu (center photo) other animal friends. Mondia Doty had a chance to discover life with a tail (bottom right). Other attendees (not pictured) were Ana Ruiz and Diana Mojica.

Creature Comfort was well-represented at the [Further Confusion Convention](#) - a.k.a. FurCon - in mid January thanks to Steph Falvo, our vet nurse who also

follows:

(Holistic) Exam Fee:
\$85 to \$100

(Holistic) Recheck Exam Fee: \$75 to \$85

Acupuncture Fee:
\$100 to \$120

Nurse Visit Fee: \$24 to \$26

Chiropractic Fee:
\$55 to \$65 (added to regular exam fee)

Dr. Margaret Holiday will also be increasing her **chiropractic fees:** \$90 to \$100

Thank you again for your dedication and trust in us!

Pets of the Month!



Honey Bear Bridges



Opus Zuna

Congratulations to Honey Bear Bridges and Opus Zuna, winners of Pet of the Month for February.

Pet of the Month winners receive a \$25

volunteers at the convention.

FurCon, an annual event that takes place over Martin Luther King, Jr. weekend in San Jose, attracts about 3,500 attendees and celebrates all things anthropomorphic. "That is, anything that has some human-like characteristics. Think animals that walk upright, talk, and wear clothing," Steph said. It can also be humans dressed in animal fur suits.

The all-volunteer conference is full of art - paintings, drawings, writing and storytelling, gaming, and dance. "Then there are fur suits people can make or purchase from a fur suit maker, and all the little things in between like ears and tails," explained Steph.

Steph began volunteering at FurCon eight years ago after a friend told her the FurCon team was looking for help. She attended their staff meeting, and the rest is history. "The furry fandom is a very close community. If something happens to someone in the community, word travels fast and people band together to help out them and their family. It's the people and their pets that keep me doing this work, just like at Creature Comfort," said Steph. "It doesn't just stop at human beings. It goes for all the pets as well. It's a big family thing."

Using her multi-tasking and people skills gained through her work as a vet nurse, Steph now oversees FurCon operations - from logistics and finding volunteers to security and checking in panel speakers.

This year, Creature Comfort's Dr. Jenny Taylor spoke on a panel about the importance of holistic veterinary medicine.

"There are lots of pet owners who don't realize their pets can benefit from holistic veterinary medicine. I wanted to give them a chance to hear from the experts and ask questions about it. That's why I pitched the idea to speak there to Dr. Taylor," said Steph.

"Not only was it great to raise awareness about how pets can benefit just as much as people from holistic medicine," said Dr. Taylor, "it was fun to be surrounded by so many animal enthusiasts! I really enjoyed speaking."

A group of Creature Comfort staff, including Mondia Doty, Osadhi Reu, Ana Ruiz, Diana Mojica, and Nalima Singh, also trekked to San Jose to support Dr. Taylor, Steph, and FurCon - as well as The Nine Lives Foundation. "The Nine Lives Foundation is an all-cat no-kill shelter - the only one on the Peninsula - mainly for cats that are unadoptable or senior cats that would have been euthanized elsewhere. This year FurCon raised over \$20,000 for them, which was really cool,"

coupon for Creature Comfort, have their photo posted in our lobby, receive a bag of sea jerky (for dogs), sea flex (for cats), or a special treat (for bunnies) and appear in our monthly e-newsletter.

Next time you come into the clinic, ask our receptionists how you can enter your pet into our monthly drawing for Pet of the Month!

Clinic Hours

We are open

Monday-Friday:

9 a.m.-6 p.m.

Saturday:

9 a.m. - 5 p.m.

Sunday:

Closed

If you have an emergency with your pet any time we are closed, please call PETS animal ER in Berkeley at (510) 548-6684.

said Steph. Every year, FurCon organizers choose a charity suggested by its attendees to receive a large portion of the event's proceeds.

"This made it extra special for Creature Comfort to participate at FurCon," said Dr. Taylor. And Steph is excited for the plans that are already brewing for FurCon 2018.

An Interview with Sandra Brim: Caring for Trusty Pets *By Betsy Aaron*



Chevy Brim (left), Sand Brim with Bucky (center), and Gypsy Brim.

"It's a cliché, but they are like your children," Creature Comfort Client Sandra "Sand" Brim said about her pets. Sand has been around the block when it comes to her pets' care, and it hasn't been easy, especially as they have aged. "There's a very deep bond, and it's not the same bond you have with humans. It's clearly on a different level," she said.

Chevy, a female border collie, was 11 years old when Sand adopted her. A year later, health issues emerged. "She had a rare situation where she had kidney failure and she got pneumonia," she said. "We'd get her kidneys stable, and then the pneumonia would kick in. Then her eating would get thrown off, and her kidneys would get unstable again." Chevy went through a very difficult back and forth between these health issues.

"When I came to Creature Comfort, I felt they really cared...and Dr. Johnson was pretty wonderful when the time came to let Chevy go," Sand said. She took Sand through the process by helping her see what was in Chevy's best interest without getting her wrought up in emotion.

"She called me afterwards, which kind of surprised me in a nice way, to say how sorry she was. It was a lovely conversation, and I really appreciated it. Everybody went the extra mile," she said.

Bucky, Sand's 16-year-old dog, has had to limit his activity because of an injury - dysplasia in his right front leg. "He loved to herd sheep. He was always go-go-go, jumping and running. He was constantly breaking

toenails because he'd run through the house and slam into the wall," Sand chuckled. To help Sand with Bucky's injury, Dr. Johnson did research, recommended a specialist, and prescribed medication and physical therapy. She said having a doctor help her explore Bucky's options was very helpful.

Recently Bucky had pancreatitis. Sand had to nurse him through the night and was scared she would lose him. Even though she called last-minute, reception staff squeezed Bucky in to see Dr. Johnson. "It was great. To have staff really try to get you in and understand you're in a crisis is just beyond anything."

Sand recounted, "Dr. Johnson came in, and I was really just barely holding it together. Then she looked at me, gave this big smile and said, 'This is totally treatable,' and it was just like fireworks going off!"

Sand's newest surprise is Gypsy, a young feral cat who has now accepted Sand as her parent. Gypsy frequently visited Sand's yard. Over nine months, Sand left food for her, but Gypsy kept her distance until one day, she brushed her tail up against Sand's legs. Sand eventually coaxed her into a carrier and brought her to Creature Comfort, not knowing if she'd stay calm enough to be seen. Gypsy allowed Dr. Johnson to examine her. "This winter, I would say she has switched from being an outdoor cat who comes in occasionally to an indoor cat who goes out occasionally," Sand reported.

Sand said partnering with Creature Comfort is an important part of caring for her trusty pets. "I feel like everyone really gets it about animals. One reason I love it there is how compassionate the people are. At Creature Comfort, they share their dogs and cats with me. I really get that they know where I am with my pet family on a deep level," she said.

True Wellness Starts with a Healthy Mouth!

Save on your pet's dental care during February!

See our ad in February's *BayWoof* Magazine.



Creature Comfort

Holistic Veterinary Center

The Bay Area's Most Trusted Integrative Veterinary Clinic Since 2001

Jenny Taylor, DVM • Kirsten Williams, DVM • Christie Johnson, DVM
Ashley McCaughan, DVM • Bettina Herter, DVM • Margaret Holiday, DC

**Give Your Pet the Gift
of a Bright Smile and
Fresh Breath in 2017!**

**10% DISCOUNT
on All Dental Cleanings
for January & February!**

(anesthesia-free dentals offered for eligible pets!)



Creature Comfort Holistic Veterinary Center is proud to be the **"Face of Veterinary Care"** for 2017 in the January issue of Oakland Magazine

BEAST OF THE BAY WINNER EVERY YEAR SINCE 2009!



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2501 MacArthur Blvd., Oakland • 510-530-1373 • CreatureComfort.com

Creature Comfort Holistic Veterinary Center

2501 MacArthur Blvd.

Oakland, CA 94602

(510) 530-1373

creaturecomfortholistic@gmail.com

www.creaturecomfort.com

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