



# NETWORK NEWS

SPAY/USA...Saving Lives By Preventing Unwanted Litters!  
www.spayusa.org

Winter 2002

## 13 Hints For Increasing Speed Of A Surgery Clinic

by Scott M. Ruth, DVM

**A**n effective spay/neuter clinic performs a maximum number of surgeries in the limited amount of time actually available for surgery. It is significant that not all of the time in a working day is allocated for surgery. Patients must be checked in, records must be started and maintained throughout the day, patients must be discharged to their owners following surgery, the facility must be cleaned and maintained, and (depending on local laws) staff may be required to take midday breaks. Thus, increasing the number of surgeries the clinic can perform each day requires both minimizing the time spent performing non-surgical duties and maximizing the rate at which the surgeon performs each procedure.

During the past decade, I have identified 13 methods of increasing the rate at which a Spay/Neuter Clinic might perform its function. Some of these are surgical techniques and some are management principles.

**1 Rapid patient check-in.** Any routine or procedure involving movement of clients through the facility, paperwork, and handling patients that can be shortened should be, as long as patient care is

not compromised. It is most desirable to get all animals checked in before surgery starts, without allowing interruptions during surgery time.

**2 Staff available to prepare animals for surgery.** All procedures that do not require the veterinarian to perform must be performed by lay or licensed staff (depending on state and local laws) so the surgeon is concentrating on performing surgeries and minimizing delays between animals.

**3 Tilt surgery table.** A gentle incline on the surgery table that raises the hind legs above the head helps the intestine to stay out of the way of the surgeon while searching for the uterus. Because this step makes locating and retrieving the uterus faster and easier, much time is saved on many of the surgeries.

**4 Adequate anesthesia.** Anesthesia relaxes the patient's body wall muscles so the incision is more easily shifted over the abdominal organs. This allows the surgeon to view and manipulate the



photo courtesy of NSAL America

organs more easily. Surgery becomes easier, faster and safer for the patient.

**5 Position of incision.** For dog spays, this varies depending on the age of the patient. Properly placing the incision makes surgery faster and easier by allowing the organs to be manipulated more easily.

**6 Small incision.** A small incision is faster to close than a larger one and is less uncomfortable for the patient. Leaving more body wall intact also allows for less abdominal organ migration into the incision, minimizing interference with manipulation of the uterus and ovaries.

*cont'd on page 3*

### INSIDE THIS ISSUE

National Feral Cat Day ..... 3  
Conference Announcement..... 5  
News From Washington State ..... 6

Stamp Out News Flash .....6  
News From Costa Rica.....7  
The Pet Surplus Book Review .....8



## 13 Hints For Speed

*cont'd from cover*

### 7 Cut out subcutaneous tissue (fatty tissue between skin and muscle layer).

This simple maneuver allows better visualization of the linea alba (central band of tough tissue between the body wall muscles) so the surgeon can make a better positioned, less bloody incision.

### 8 Spay Hook.

This instrument allows the surgeon to reach into the abdomen and find the uterus without making a large incision.

### 9 Rupture the suspensory ligament.

This common maneuver is avoided by some surgeons because they believe there will be excessive bleeding. This is generally not the case, but the maneuver has a significant advantage because it allows the surgeon to get the ovary out of the abdomen much more easily.

### 10 Rochester-Carmalt Forceps.

This clamp securely holds the ovarian blood vessels so they can be cut before being tied off. This clears the surgeon's view of the vessels and makes the work easier and much faster.

### 11 Body wall suture pattern.

The surgeon can incorporate subcutaneous tissue with body wall (working from each end of the incision toward the middle) and finish with a cruciate stitch in the middle. This allows visualization until the surgeon is ready to close the last part of the body wall incision.

### 12 Skin suture pattern.

Sutures are buried under the skin surface and close a large length of incision with each suture.

### 13 Records have minimal variation.

Medical records typically must show details regarding anesthesia and surgery.

Because surgeries of each type are done nearly identically, records can be designed so that information that is common to all surgeries is preprinted. Variable maneuvers are described in a blank space or a list of possibilities that can be circled or have check boxes. The goal is to minimize writing in each patient's record, saving staff time for patient care.

The time that is saved by each of these maneuvers is small, but overall savings in time can be quite substantial. ☼

## Grant from The Kenneth A. Scott Charitable Trust, a KeyBank Trust

SPAY/USA has received word of a generous grant from The Kenneth A. Scott Charitable Trust, a Keybank Trust, to be used for the production and distribution of our quarterly newsletter for the next four issues! We thank the committee for their concrete support, and appreciate their kind words.



FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

CONTACT: Ledia Nichols  
202.667.5650, Ext. 110

## Alley Cats to be Honored in Autumn

October 16<sup>th</sup> Declared National Feral Cat Day

Washington, DC: Alley Cat Allies (ACA) today proclaimed October 16, 2001, to be the 1st Annual National Feral Cat Day. This day will mark ACA's official 11th anniversary. The goal for honoring National Feral Cat Day is to educate more people about reducing feral cat populations with a humane program called Trap-Neuter-Return (TNR).

In honor of National Feral Cat Day, ACA is conducting the Feral Foto & TNR Tales photo and essay contest to obtain real-life TNR success stories and to raise awareness of the feral cat as a special member of the community.

Grand prize winner for the Feral Foto contest will receive a Kodak digital camera, and the winner of the TNR Tales essay contest will receive a desktop printer. Winning entries will be featured in nationwide ACA publications and on ACA's website: [www.alleycat.org](http://www.alleycat.org).

Winners will be chosen during April 2002, by a panel of judges headed by the feral cat and proud of it! Orwell T. Cat of the comic strip, *Farley*. Winners will be announced May 1, 2002.

ACA encourages organizations across the U.S. to participate in National Feral Cat Day from now through October 16 by distributing information about the contest, providing a day of low-cost or free veterinary services for feral cats, passing out ACA literature, or simply talking about TNR to people who care. A poster commemorating the day, drawn by Farley caricaturist, Phil Frank, is available from ACA for public display. Many groups, including ACA, have already announced plans for events ranging from walk-a-thons to local "spay days" for feral cats.

Alley Cat Allies offers educational materials and advice to organizations, individuals, and municipalities working to reduce feral cat populations through humane, nonlethal methods.

\*\*\*

1801 Belmont Road NW, Suite 201 • Washington, DC 20006  
Tel: 202.667.5650 • Fax: 202.667.5640 • [www.alleycat.org](http://www.alleycat.org)