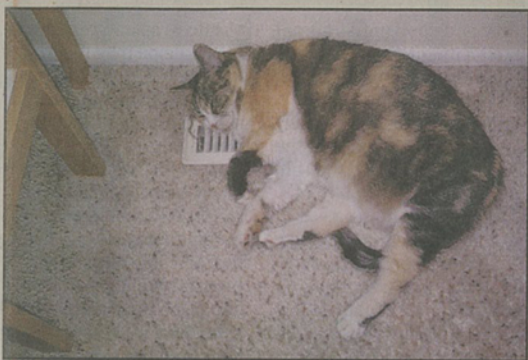


# COMPANIONS

Spotlighting pets  
in our community

## Pet spotlight



Andrea Deyden | Courtesy photo

**This is Simone.** An energy audit revealed why our house is so cold. We adopted Simone from the Boulder Valley Animal Shelter in 2002 and she's been hogging the heat ever since.



Deb and Bill Gravelle | Courtesy photo

**Izzy.** We met Izzy at the Boulder Humane Society two years ago and haven't looked back. She's the sweetest, despite her first year of life spent tied up outside in Kansas. Snow, water, balls, squeaky toys, puppies — she loves them all. Izzy has amazing energy and zest for life!



Lisa Atallah | Courtesy photo

**This is Luna,** an 11-year-old golden retriever who lives in Louisville. She is happy as long as she is with me! And I can say the same.



Jonathan and Brenda Love Bennett | Courtesy photo

**Nenemoosha,** aka "Nina," is a 3-year-old, single, female Landseer Newfoundland. She likes cuddling with her guardians' personal items, shopping at McGuckin's, retrieving the Daily Camera, finding peanut butter in her Kong toy, and wading in Silver Lake Ditch.



Marjery Lambert | Courtesy photo

**Our Portuguese water dog, Leao,** fetching the Daily Camera. We live in Gold Hill up a long, steep driveway. Even in the dead of winter, Leao goes down to the road and brings up the Daily Camera.



Courtesy photo

**Cindy Lee,** president of the Wags and Menace Foundation, observes a dog's dental cleaning at the Humane Society of Boulder Valley's Veterinary Clinic. The foundation provided financial support to buy new dental equipment for the shelter's veterinary clinic.

## Cherish those choppers

### Dental care is critical for your pet's health

By Gail Rapport, DVM  
Humane Society  
of Boulder valley

Out of all the members of your family, it isn't hard to guess who has the worst dental hygiene: your pets. They don't brush or floss their teeth, and this can go on for years. If you want to show your kids what will happen to their teeth if they fail to brush regularly, just look at your pet's teeth — and smell his breath.

A full 85 percent of pets have periodontal disease by age 3 years.

Periodontal disease is disease around the outside of the tooth. Our (human) dentist reminds us that if we do not regularly brush away plaque on our teeth, it will become tartar (or calculus — that gritty material your dental hygienist scrapes away).

When tartar builds up it begins to affect the gums and you will notice redness. As the disease advances, it damages the ligaments and finally the actual bone around the tooth can begin to deteriorate. Bacteria in the mouth can travel through the bloodstream leading to infection in the heart, liver, kidney or other organs.

Gingivitis is reversible. Bone loss, once it starts, is not.

It is important to become comfortable handling your pet's mouth. Lift the lip and look at the teeth, especially the back teeth. Open the mouth and look at the inside of the teeth and at the tongue.

If you have pets of different ages, compare what you see inside.

Here are some things to think about regarding your pet's dental health:

#### Regular professional cleaning

For people and pets, regular professional dental cleaning is important for good dental health. Home dental care is never perfect and periodically tartar must be removed and teeth polished and disinfected. The professional cleaning performed at the veterinarian's office is similar to what a person receives at their dentist's office:

Visible tartar is removed. More delicate tartar deposits are removed from the gum line.

Periodontal sockets are probed and measured to assess disease.

Tartar is scraped from below the gum line until the roots are smooth.

Tooth enamel is polished to remove any unevenness left by tartar removal.

The mouth is disinfected and sometimes treated with fluoride sealer or plaque repellent.

A dental chart is completed, noting any abnormalities on a dog's 42 teeth, or cat's 30 teeth.

It is important to note that a "non-anesthetic" teeth cleaning is not comparable to the above service. It is not possible to perform the "six step" cleaning in a pet without general anesthesia.

Cosmetic cleanings do not address periodontal disease where it occurs: under the gum line.

#### Home Care Products

Home dental care is an important part of your pet's overall health and well-being. Good home hygiene may delay the age at which your vet-

erinarian will recommend full cleanings, and may increase the time between cleanings.

#### Toothpaste and Brushing

Brushing is the gold standard for home care. The bristles can reach between teeth and under gums to pick out tiny deposits of food. Pet toothbrushes are designed to conform to your pet's mouth, and are typically softer than a human toothbrush. Pet toothpaste is not harmful if swallowed, and comes in flavors such as poultry, seafood or malt. Studies show that brushing three times a week is adequate to maintain healthy teeth and gums but daily brushing is needed to control gingivitis.

#### Do's and Don'ts of Brushing Your Pet's Teeth

Do start with just a few teeth followed by a reward and gradually build up to doing a larger part of the mouth, or all at one sitting.

Don't use human toothpaste on your pet.

Do start with a toothbrush without any paste to introduce your pet to the process.

Don't attempt to clean the inner surface of your pet's teeth.

Do try to perform dental home care daily.

Don't perform dental home care immediately after a professional dentistry as your pet's gums may be tender.

Don't consider dental home care as an alternative to professional cleaning if your pet has more advanced dental disease.

#### Dental Rinses, Wipes, and Pads

For pets that don't tolerate brushing, you can try wipes or pads. And if this is stressful for either of you, there are dental rinses available. These products remove plaque deposits on the surface, but lack the ability to pick particles out of the gum socket. These are the next best thing to brushing.

#### Dental Treats

For many people, brushing regularly is simply never going to happen. Fortunately, all is not lost. A proper dental chew can reduce plaque by up to 69 percent. There are many good products available for dogs and cats. Chewing provides abrasion, which helps remove plaque and tartar. In many cases, your pet will need to eat about one chew daily to achieve benefit.

#### Dental Diets

It is a common misconception that feeding a dry pet food will protect teeth from dental disease. Most cats, and many dogs, do not actually chew their kibble; it is swallowed whole and has no effect on the teeth. There are special dry food diets for both dogs and cats available at your veterinary clinic, which are designed with a larger kibble to actually "scrub" the teeth as the pet chews. Veterinarians typically do not recommend making this a primary diet, but suggest adding a few kibbles to each meal or using them as rewards/treats to supplement other methods.

Gail Rapport, DVM is one of five full-time veterinarians for the Humane Society of Boulder Valley's full-service public veterinary clinic. The clinic is located at 2323 55th Street in Boulder. Info: [www.boulderhumane.org](http://www.boulderhumane.org)

We have received so many submissions for the Pet Spotlight that we are temporarily not accepting new photos. We'll let you know when we are. Thank you.

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