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Pandemics and Parvo Puppies

Every problem is an opportunity in disguise. – *John Adams*

The past year has certainly presented a fair share of problems, not least of which has been a pandemic. The Covid problem has made many of us more acutely aware of viruses and vaccines. We know more about virology, variants, virus mutations, and vaccine efficacy than we did just a short time ago, perhaps more from necessity than choice.

“Pandemic fatigue” is real. A desire for a return to normalcy is at the top of many wish-lists. But before we mentally move on to more pleasant thoughts, it’s worthwhile to consider some take-aways from the last 12 months. For those of us with pets, the ever-present virus and vaccine conversation is an opportunity to remind us of the responsibility and obligation we owe our pets to protect them from deadly disease.

(continued inside)

Pandemics and Parvo Puppies

By Mike Stoll, Executive Director

Pets can't choose to vaccinate or not. We choose for them. The evidence is overwhelming that vaccinations save countless pets from suffering and death. And yet, evidence also points to a number of pet owners who simply do not vaccinate their pets.

The core vaccines, DH2PP for dogs and FVRCP for cats, have been proven highly effective in protecting pets against common viruses, some of which can be deadly. The first "P" in DH2PP represents canine parvovirus, which is highly contagious and causes the devastating gastrointestinal disease in dogs commonly known as parvo. The good news is that the core canine vaccine is so effective against parvovirus that the disease should be a rarity. The bad news is it's not rare because too many dogs remain unvaccinated.

Simply put, parvo can be fatal, particularly for puppies. The parvovirus is especially challenging because it's resistant to heat, cold, humidity and drying and can survive in an environment for months, even years. It's transmitted through direct dog-to-dog contact and contact with contaminated feces. Parvo can also be spread to other environments by dogs, people, or objects that have come in contact with the virus.

Puppies, like toddlers, explore their world through taste and smell and can easily come in contact with infected feces or



contaminated objects. If you've watched a dog pile of playing puppies it's easy to comprehend the ease with which disease can be transmitted among a litter after one pup has become infected.

Newborn puppies receive some initial disease protection from mom's colostrum during the first day or two of nursing. Maternal antibodies passed from mom provide passive immunity that protect pups from diseases against which the mom was protected. As maternal antibodies gradually fade over the first couple months of life, puppies become more susceptible to illness. That's when vaccinations are necessary to provide longer-term immunity.

Unfortunately, if the mother was never vaccinated, and also never exposed to a particular disease like parvo, her maternal antibodies could be insufficient to provide passive immunity to protect the pups against early disease exposure. That's what happened with Xandir and his littermates.

In April of last year, a litter of six fluffy husky puppies was surrendered to the HSPS animal shelter. The owner of the husky mom was living in a travel trailer at a local campground because she had no permanent home. Sharing a crowded trailer space with an adult dog and six puppies had simply become too overwhelming. During the surrender interview, shelter staff learned that the mama dog had never been vaccinated. Staff also learned that the pups, now weaned, were recently given access to outdoors and allowed to explore a portion of the campground environment.

Every animal entering the shelter is given a thorough examination, from the end of nose to tip of tail; temperature and weight are recorded, vital signs checked, and any abnormalities noted. Because the mama dog was unvaccinated, and because



the incidence of parvo is on the rise locally, the puppies were proactively tested for parvo at intake, even though no symptoms were present. They all tested negative. But that changed quickly.

Parvovirus has an incubation period of several days or more, during which the virus may not begin active shedding, and infected animals may actually test negative. Once clinical signs of parvovirus do appear, including persistent vomiting and severe diarrhea, the result can be rapid dehydration and damage to the intestines and immune system. Within two days of intake the husky pups began to exhibit clinical signs of parvo. The retest came back positive for every puppy. The pups were immediately put under veterinary care with an aggressive treatment regimen.

All incoming puppies are kept in isolation when they enter the shelter to monitor their health and protect them from unnecessary exposure. Once a disease like parvo is detected, puppies enter strict "lockdown" isolation. Shelter staff treating parvo pups completely gown-up, including booties, gloves and hair covers that are disposed of after each use. Nothing leaves the isolation room except in a large trash bag that is immediately placed in the dumpster to avoid contamination in other parts of the shelter. Bedding is thrown out rather than washed to avoid contamination of the laundry area. To further avoid cross-contamination, only one experienced staff person is assigned daily parvo duty.

There is no drug to kill parvovirus once a dog is infected. The virus causes destruction in the intestinal tract and to some blood cells, and that becomes the focus of treatment. The attending veterinarian prescribed subcutaneous fluids multiple times daily to combat dehydration, along with antibiotics to treat secondary bacterial infections, probiotics to support the gastrointestinal tract, and caloric and nutrition boosters. Each parvo pup required more than one hour of staff time per day for cleaning and treatment. For a litter of sick puppies, it was an exhausting day's work, even after the two most critical pups were transferred out of the shelter to fulltime veterinary care.

Despite aggressive treatment, of the six husky pups only Xandir survived. Two of the pups died four days after treatment began, the other three passed two days later. Xandir was placed with a veterinarian so that he could be kept under 24-hour care because of some of the damage caused by the virus. It was touch-and-go for Xandir and recovery was not guaranteed. But by mid-June he had stabilized and was ready to enter foster care with Nick and his "Parvo Posse."

Back in 2016 Nick adopted a parvo puppy from HSPS named Barley that has since grown to be a handsome, healthy five-year old. Two years later Nick adopted Roxie, a young rescue dog from Texas that had just had a brush with parvo and lost all but one of her puppies to the virus. Nick's previous experience with parvo pups made his home a perfect place for Xandir to continue his recovery.

Nick hoped everything was going to be normal with Xandir, just as it had been for Barley. He soon realized that might not

be the case. Xandir was underweight from his battle with the disease, and he struggled to put on weight because of lasting gastrointestinal issues from his illness. He also exhibited what Nick called a "funky gait" with his back legs. "You could tell" Nick said, "the parvovirus had quite an impact on his little body." But Nick also noticed Xandir had the character of a survivor with a strong will and determination that led him to believe "he was going to pull through this" and be all right.

Initially concerned how the "posse" would react to Xandir, Nick's worries were quickly allayed. Roxie immediately began nurturing him in her motherly way, and Barley became like a big brother that played ever so gently with the new little kid. As Xandir became stronger, he also became more playful. Nick observed, "there was the occasional romp when the three of them were chasing each other in the yard and one of them would roll Xandir. I would jump out of my chair and start running to scoop him up. But Xandir got right back up and chased after them like nothing happened." In November of last year Nick adopted Xandir and officially made him part of the pack he'd already joined.

Xandir may always have GI tract problems, and Nick has to be very careful with what he eats. He has managed to gain some weight but is a bit "lanky and awkward, like a skinny teenager." Even so, he loves to run and goes on long walks every day. Xandir still has a funny gait with his back legs, but Nick says "it adds a little swagger to his walk...and he has a zest for life that all of us are happy to share in."

Xandir's recovery and continued transformation from a parvo puppy to an awesome dog is something that definitely warrants celebration. At the same time, it's impossible not to wonder about his littermates and how many other awesome dogs were lost to a disease that could readily be prevented.

And Xandir's litter was not an isolated event last year. In November an unvaccinated mama dog being treated for parvo at a local veterinary hospital died. All five of her puppies were exhibiting signs of parvo, too. The owner could not afford the cost of treating the pups, so they were all transferred to the HSPS shelter for treatment. Despite veterinary intervention and dedicated care,





have an opportunity to make a difference, to help all pet owners understand the importance of vaccinations. The choice is ours, not our pets. The best gift we can choose to give future puppies is to vaccinate our dogs now to protect them and limit the presence and spread of parvovirus.

Thank-you to Nick for adopting Xandir and sharing the parvo posse's story. A huge thank-you to shelter staff and local veterinarians for their dedication to saving parvo pups, and a big thumbs-up and thanks to all our foster families that help get shelter animals back on the road to recovery and adoption.

three of the five pups died within a week. Thankfully the others survived, and both are now family members in new homes.

Since 2010 over 1,000 puppies have temporarily called the HSPS shelter home. The shelter has encountered parvo pups nearly every year during that time and lost a total nineteen to the disease. Many more have survived to become adopted family members. The cost in dollars to treat parvo puppies can range from hundreds to over one-thousand for each pup. By comparison, the cost of canine vaccinations is almost nothing, and the protection is priceless. But it's the emotional cost – for pet owners, attending veterinarians, shelter kennel and support staff that's in some respects even more costly. It can be devastating to watch a young defenseless puppy pass away when all the caregivers have worked so hard to save its life.

Clearly, the parvovirus remains an ever-present, and increasing, danger to our local puppy population. Losing puppies to parvo is a devastating experience for everyone involved. As people who care about the quality of life for the pets in our community, we



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VISIT US AT THE HSPS BARK PARK

Did You Know?

The Humane Society of Pagosa Springs offers a free local dog park open to the general public on the grounds of our animal shelter. Come enjoy amazing views of the San Juan Mountain Range at the only dog park in Pagosa Springs!

Registration:

All visitors must register at the front desk prior to using the park for the first time. Registration is free and easy!

Location:

465 Cloman Blvd
Pagosa Springs, CO 81147

Dog Park Summer Hours:

Open 7 days a week from 10am to 6pm

For Questions or More Information:

Call 970-731-4771
Visit HSPSBarkPark.org

The Bark Park is maintained by donations so your support is greatly appreciated!

No act of generosity is too small to make a difference and donations are tax deductible to the full extent of the law. Donate online at HSPSBarkPark.org.



In Honor Of

Alexandra Davis from *Sandra and Darin Dillon*
Bear (dog) from *Cody and Liz Diekroeger*
beloved dogs Daisy, Ginger, and Dixie from *Charlotte and Mark Westby*
Cameron Olson from *Ceil and Fred Reese*
Carole Shewbridge & Rose Dippel from *Tim Dippel*
Cecile Helvey from *Steve Lenz*
Cher Logsdon from *Elizabeth Hairston*
Clare Skaggs from *Winifred Plager*
Darcy Cat Adopted 6-20-10 from *Sarah Walker*
Diego and Sam from *Nancy Mae Tellian*
Ellen & Roland Seylar from *Wesley and Tricia Arrighetti*
Ester (Sam) Williams from *Jeff and Melanie Bulick*
Evelyn Tennyson from *William and Nancy Crouse*
Front Line Workers of Pagosa Springs, CO
from *David and LuAnn Martinez*
Gale Kohlhagen from *Jocelyne Tufts*
Gracie from *Robert and Linda Burke*
Hanna (dog) from *Will Dunbar and Nancy Cole*
HSPS President and wonderful niece Lauren Zak from *Arlene Don*
Jasper, big-hearted talking Rez dog from *Michael and Cindy Halverson*
Kim Kett from *Robert and Marilyn Mumby*
Kristen and Tyler Albers from *Thomas and Mary McConnell*
Lily Bell Leeper from *Marcia Leeper*
Maggie (dog) from *Tom and Gayle Broadbent*
Maise Casias from *Irvin and Andrea Casias*
Marge & Don Jones from *Marge & Don Jones*
Mary Ann Sayre from *Sandi Aitken*
Maurine Marshall from *Phyllis Smallwood*
Mike, Sylvia & Danny Galaty from *Scott and Cynthia Galabota*
Nadi, Luna & Bentley, beloved pets of Michelle & Steve Nickel
from *Lisa Moran*
Phil Rosenstein from *Deborah and Ronald Parker*
Rags and Zach Davis for Christmas from *Richard Ress*
Remy from *Nancy and Richard Yeomans*
Ruckus from *LuAnn Baker*
Sushi from *Christine and Duane Lietzke*

In Loving Memory Of

Abby, beloved dog from *Aaron and Leila Wilson*
Allan Rosenberg from *Nancy and Richard Yeomans*
Ashley & Oscar from *John and Helen Richardson*
Baby Doll, beloved cat from *Brigid McCarthy*
Belle, beloved pitbull from *Gerald Shoaf and Claire Harrison*
Bella, beloved dog of Kristine Rubish from *Betty Clouse*
Bella, beloved dog of Pam & Bob Norris from *Donna Cole*
Bennie, beloved dog from *Daphne White*
Benny Lohman from *David and Carolyn Piirto*
Bo, bella & Bailee, beloved dogs from *Aubrie Limebrook*
Bodie (dog) from *Cynda Green*
Boss, our beautiful boy and best mouser ever from *Jeff and Jan Hester*
Brody, beloved dog from *Ted and Kathy Fink*
Buster "Brown", beloved dog from *Norris and Cindi Tidwell*
Cadbury, beloved dog from *Karen and Bob LeCour*
Cassie, beloved dog from *Bill & Pat Curtiss*
Cassie, beloved dog of Jack & Claudia Rosenbaum from *Nita Niece*
Chanel Mikenas, beloved cat from *Robert and Connie Mikenas*
Cheyene, beloved dog from *Ventura and Sharon Armenta*
Clare Skaggs from *The Skaggs Family & Christina Easterling*
Cocoa, beloved dog from *Jo Ann Stockwill*
Chris Olivarez from *Bonni Pszola and John DeMarco*
Connie Martin from *Grace Hutchinson*
Daisy, beloved cat from *Sandra Butcher*
Daphne, beloved dog of Stephanie Pham, from *Nancy & Joe Drake*
Darcy, beloved dog of Don & Barbara Rosner from *Mary Ann & Bill Sayre*
Dillon, beloved dog of Catherine Rosul from *Jeff and Jan Hester*
DJ, beloved dog from *Janice Lee*
Dolly, beloved dog from *Jane Sims*
Eddie, beloved dog from *Lisa Burnson and Kevin Brown*
Ed Lane from *Ethel Lane*

Ed and Ginny Kaumeyer from *Linda Kaumeyer*
Ellie & Tootie, beloved dogs from *Kay and Dale Harris*
Emma, our Poodle from *William and Cathleen Belanger*
Gabby Geiger from *David Geiger*
Ginger, beloved dog from *Barbara Munro*
Ginny & Eddie Kaumeyer from *Cheryl Kaumeyer-Wethey*
Grommet, beloved dog of Tracy & Rick Allen from *Robert and Thelma Smith*
Halle, dearly departed from *Gary and Susan Rawlinson*
Hallie from *Patricia and James Porter*
Henri, beloved dog from *Beverly Sondag*
Jack Trendler from *Bruce and Karen Swaim*
Jackie McGuire from *Ronald and Judith Taufen*
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Judy, beloved daughter of Beverly Worthman from *Martha Wolcheski*
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Levi, beloved dog from *Donald and Alice Stidham*
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Lukas, beloved dog from *Carl and Elizabeth Fischer*
Mac, beloved dog from *Rod and Lou Ann Marler*
Maddie, beloved dog from *Karen Littlejohn*
Madison from *Aleia O'Reilly*
Mamie Lynch from *Barbara Rosner*
Maya, beloved cat from *Linda and Harvey Peel*
Max, beloved dog of Kathy OToole and EC Antony from *Joan Ward*
Miss Kitty, beloved kitten from *Beverly Pierce*
Mittens, beloved cat from *Thomas and Linda Sauer*
Mosby, beloved dog of Gale Kohlhagen from *Jocelyne Tufts*
my dear friend Connie Martin from *Karla Robinson*
Nancy Cusack from *Anna Cusack*
Nancy Trout from *Jim & Dagmar Huffman*
Nikki, beloved dog from *Phil and Pat Evans*
our pets from *Elizabeth and Bennie Garcia*
Pebbles, beloved cat from *Krista Jacobsen*
Petunia, beloved dog from *Nanette and Keith Serkes*
Phantom, beloved dog from *Richard and Camille Fulton*
Rufus from *The Modern Firm*
Shatzie, beloved dog from *Elizabeth and Vossa Leach*
Sheba, beloved dog from *Gregory Foss*
Sir Ramsey James, beloved cat of Will and Helen James from *Teresa James*
Sophie, beloved dog from *Jaye Duncan*
Stormy and Misty (dogs) from *Jeannie and Dave Donahoo*
Sugar, beloved dog from *Steve and Beverly Sutterfield*
Sweet Pea, beloved cat from *Terri Ranken*
Trek from *LuAnn Baker*
Trudy, Midnite, and Skinny Tellian from *Nancy Mae Tellian*
Ty & Pinto, beloved dogs of Kim & Art Dilione from *Nita Niece*
Warren Bowland from *Carla Hawley-Bowland*
WICKET, our Corgi Boy from *Olin and Sharon Garrison*
Winter and Gracie from *Therese Pocrnick*

Memorial Bricks

"Stevie Kitty, AKA "Bad Cat" A Hoosier with a Colorado spirit"
from *Pennie and Lee Nisley*
"In memory of Rocky Richter - Nov. 2020 He loved Pagosa!"
from *Krista Ritcher and Randy Richter*
"Gunner Klinkenborg, August 2, 2005 – October 15, 2020, Our Beloved Lab"
from *Jeannette Klinkenborg*
"Dolphin 2000-2020/ Jim, Waynette/ Julia & Liam Nell" from *Waynette Nell*
"In loving memory of beloved Laser" from *Marlena Crandall*
"In loving memory of Connie Martin. Her love for animals was limitless.
Rest in peace, dear friend" from *Paula Miller*
"Tony & Frankie, Brothers Forever" from *Leah and James Baxter*
"In memory of Connie Martin whose love for her friends and dogs will
forever live in our hearts" from *Alice Woodall*
"Googles, Monroe, Reggie, Keets, & Fiesty, beloved cats"
from *Robert Kozlowski*
"Shyboy 3/14/2008 – 3/21/2021 Forever in our hearts" from *Sherri Trujillo*
"Shyboy, Beloved Pit bull of the Trujillos" from *Sherri Trujillo*



Humane Society of Pagosa Springs

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Animal Shelter

465 Cloman Boulevard, Pagosa Springs, CO 81147
Mon-Sat 10 A.M. to 5 P.M., Sun 10 A.M. to 4 P.M.
Open to the public by appointment only
(970) 731-4771 | sheltermanager@humanesociety.biz

Humane Society Thrift Store

279 Pagosa Street, Pagosa Springs, CO 81147
Mon-Sat 9:00 A.M. to 5 P.M.
(970) 264-6424 | hsthriftstore@humanesociety.biz

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[Virtual] 27th Annual Auction for the Animals & Pet Fashion Show

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Tune in from the comfort of your home - from anywhere in the world - and enjoy an evening of virtual entertainment featuring a silent auction and our 2nd annual pet fashion show where cats, dogs, birds, donkeys and more will strut their stuff in support of HSPS!

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Preview auction items starting June 24 | Bidding starts June 28 and ends July 5

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