

Calendar from page C3

impatiens, marigolds and more. The event is presented by the Agriculture Greenhouse Classes at Oakland Schools Garden Center. Call (248)960-5454 for more details.

HERB PLANT & CRAFT SALE

The Dearborn Herb Study Association will hold an herb plant and craft sale from 10 a.m. to 4 p.m. May 11, rain or shine, at McFadden-Ross Museum, 915 South Brady, in Dearborn. Fresh baked herb bread, herbal vinegars, seasonings and mustards, herbal crafts, herb plants, and scented geraniums, annuals and perennials will be available. For

more information, call (313)665-3000.

CACTUS AND SUCCULENTS

The Michigan Cactus and Succulent Society will have a workshop on "Making Tufa (stone) Planters" featuring expert John Moe on Sunday May 19 at 2 p.m. at 5601 Coomer Road in West Bloomfield. Guests are welcome. Admission is free.

—compiled by Lana Mini

Start early to find good vacation spot – for Fido

Ah, the warm weather returns. Birds chirping in the late morning. Frogs croaking in the late evening.

ABOUT ANIMALS



BRAD DAVIS

Tigers chomping in the late innings. All winter we wait for spring and summer, surviving freezing winds and snow up to our hips for the few months when the earth reawakens with the best of nature. Life improves dramatically because the weather beckons us to enjoy all our area has to offer.

How do we greet the onset of great weather?

We go on vacation and leave town, of course.

Seemingly half of every neighborhood will depart soon on an annual trip. Some will drive down to a park with numerous rickety undulating rail rides, with nausea thrown in at no additional cost. Some go to visit relatives, spending valuable time off from work lying on an inflatable mattress, wondering all night why anyone would ever leave home. Others would rather fly off to a city, seeing sights they've never seen, losing luggage they'll

never see again.

Want about pets? Dogs definitely could care less about roller coasters, if you can't put your head out the window, what's the use? When visiting relatives, few things say, "I'm a great house guest" than arriving with a huge dog, all hyped up from a 12-hour car ride. (Nervous energy + drool = FUN!)

For most people, boarding is the answer.

Boarding won't give your pet the thrills you'll be getting in Toronto or Chicago, but having your dog well taken care of by someone you trust takes some of the worry out of your journey.

Some regular boarders at my clinic spend as much time with us as they spend at home, and become part of the family. When they stay in a place where they get attention, the time spent in the facility can be pleasant. It can't be perfect without Mom and Dad, but still it's pleasant.

Finding the right facility for your pet can be difficult. Many places board, but where should you trust with your friend?

Being a vet, and being full of myself, I would first suggest you ask your vet. Most will have a handle on what facilities do a good job at taking care of boarding animals.

Most clinics also offer boarding. Staying at the clinic stands out when your pet has a medical condition, such as epilepsy, or diabetes, and medical care might be needed. Just having a vet there to take care of any problem that might arise

in any animal can give you some real peace of mind.

When you call a boarding facility, find out their requirements regarding vaccines and lab testing. I know, if your little Fluffy has fallen behind with vaccines, getting them caught up adds another item to the already long pre-vacation "to-do" list. Still, if your pet isn't required to be current on vaccines and stool samples, that means no one else in the facility will be required to be current, and that might not be the environment you want.

Ask to tour the boarding areas. Most places enjoy having people look at their facilities. Remember, we're not talking about the Ritz-Carlton here. We just need a comfortable, clean area where your critter will be well maintained.

Ask questions. You can't ask too many questions about where your pet will be boarding. I've had a person not board at my clinic because we don't have anyone in the hospital overnight, and they wanted someone watching their dog all night long. They would have been horribly disappointed if they hadn't asked, and together we found a facility that, although being much more expensive, supplied them that extra level of service they were looking for.

You might want to take food from home to the boarding facility. Changes in location and routine can stress a dog, and holding the number of changes to a minimum, by making sure they have their own food, can be a great idea.

Another good idea would be to reserve early. Call as early as you know your plans. We already have some Christmas bookings. I guarantee, on the Friday of Memorial Day weekend, someone will call looking for boarding for their rottweiler.

Cats can be boarded, but often do very well at home, with someone coming in to take care of them a few times a day (unless there are medical concerns, of course). Dogs usually do better without boarders, as they like having interaction, not sitting around all day.

Yes, boarding takes the animal out of their home, and yes, sometimes they will stress out, but by finding the right facility, and the right situation for you, your pet can do great, and leave you with one less thing to worry about on your trip.

As I say when a boarding animal arrives at my clinic, "Welcome to Club Vet Med."

Take Home Message: Boarding your pet can give you peace of mind, especially if you're careful about where you pick. Remember, the better the facility, the less they will mind answering questions.

Dr. Brad Davis is the Medical Director for the VCA of Garden City, 2085 Inkster Road, Garden City, 48135. Write him there with questions and comments. He is also one of the hosts of the nationally syndicated radio show Animal Talk. Visit the web site at www.AnimalTalkRadio.com. You can send E-mail questions or comments to DrBrad@animaltalkradio.com.

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