

# Cape acupuncturist offers relief to pets with problems

By KAREN McLAUGHLIN  
For The Capital

Angie Crookenden was worried about her golden retriever, Kelsey.

The dog was panting and constantly chewing on his paws. Sometimes he would bite and scratch itchy skin areas until they became raw.

That was almost two years ago, before Mrs. Crookenden, of Severna Park, tried a different approach with Kelsey — acupuncture. Now, the 7-year-old retriever has stopped chewing on his paws and seems happier.

"He seems more relaxed the rest of the day, like how I would feel after a good massage," Mrs. Crookenden said.

Licensed acupuncturist Lydia Wainwright, of Cape St. Claire, performs acupuncture on animals, including dogs, cats and horses.

"I can treat any chronic condition, including skin conditions, allergies, back pain, and help for (female dogs) who aren't milking properly when they have puppies," she said.

Ms. Wainwright has treated a dog that had nerve damage in his leg and cats who have had kidney failure. She can even help animals who have a history of abuse.

After earning an undergraduate degree in social sciences from Kansas State University, Lydia Wainwright came to Maryland in 2000. Although she had considered veterinary school, she decided to follow an interest in acupuncture by studying at the Tai Sophia Institute in Laurel.

There, after finishing her training in human acupuncture, she completed a certification course that qualifies her to treat dogs, cats, horses, ferrets, rabbits and birds. Although Ms. Wainwright hasn't treated any ferrets, rabbits or birds yet, she loves treating the other animals that need her help.

"I was looking for something that treated the whole animal," she said. "It's just the right niche for me."

Ms. Wainwright thinks of herself as an acupuncturist who treats animals, as opposed to a veterinarian who performs acupuncture. She works out of a separate entrance of her home,

## CAPE ST. CLAIRE

wanted a calmer environment.

Ms. Wainwright also owns a toy poodle, Happy, and two cats, a Himalayan named Sophie and a tortoiseshell named Gwendolyn. They are curious about visiting clients, but are very accustomed to seeing dogs and cats come and go.

Ms. Wainwright, a self acknowledged "horse person," travels to treat her equine clients. She is a competitive rider and, although she doesn't currently own her own horse, she rides about three times a week at a farm in Davidsonville. That gives her a special perspective on horses' problems.

"My horse knowledge is extensive," she said. "Sometimes I will watch a person ride and see if the issues are caused by riding," she said.

Although Ms. Wainwright can treat a mare who is having difficulty "taking" or conceiving, most of the problems she sees in horses include chronic lameness and unexplained conditions.

"Horses are so prone to hurting themselves," she said.

Acupuncture stimulates various points in the body by inserting very fine needles. By doing this, the therapist strives to unclog any blockage of energy or "qi" that can cause various problems.

Although many humans are fearful of needles, Ms. Wainwright said that most animals love it and feel relaxed. Dogs receive treatment while lying on a foam pad on the floor. Clients who are concerned that their dogs may try to take off can hold their pooches on a leash.

"She was very reassuring and gentle with (Kelsey)," said Mrs. Crookenden.

Cats sit on a towel on an adapted windowsill so they can enjoy looking out the window at the birds outside, while Ms. Wainwright is putting in the needles.

Once the needles are inserted, animals reach a meditative-like state and their breathing slows. Some put their head down. Horses,



Although she doesn't usually make house calls, licensed acupuncturist Lydia Wainwright treats Kelsey at his owner's home in Severna Park.

## NEIGHBORHOODS

### ACTOR

(Continued from Page B2)

"What we tell him is, 'Stay calm in rehearsal, give thanks to God for your gifts and do your very best,'" she said.

It seems Noah's done exactly that.

"I love working with Noah," said Mr. Ramont. "He's a real pro, he takes notes and incorporates them beautifully — I was watching him tonight and he was so alive in the final scene, that he made the snowfall real, with all the wonder that only the young can have."

There's one other quality that's made working with

Noah a joy. "He's also got a wonderful sense of humor which is very important to me," said Mr. Ramont. "I can make him laugh and he can make me laugh. What more can a director ask for?"

*Donna L. Cole is a freelance writer living in Annapolis.*

### NEEDLES

(Continued from Page B2)

which receive treatment while standing, will sometimes look behind them. As they get more comfortable, a horse's lower lip might droop or he might drop his head and relax.

Then, the needles stay in for an indefinite period of time and Ms. Wainwright says that it really depends on the animal. When the needles have been in long enough, she said, the animal's behavior changes. They become more energetic and aware of their surroundings. Dogs often shake, as they do when flicking water off their coat.

"When I treat a person, I tell them how long the needles are in. With animals, they tell me," Ms. Wainwright said.

When Angie Crookenden looked into acupuncture for Kelsey, she felt she had tried everything else without success. Through repeated veterinary visits, Kelsey had been on various medications that offered only temporary relief. Some medications gave him unpleasant side effects. Steroids made him uncharacteristically aggressive, and antihistamines made him sleepy.

So, she began bringing her dog to Ms. Wainwright once a week for about five or six weeks. On Kelsey's first visit, Mrs. Crookenden was a little nervous about how he might react to the treatments, but she was pleasantly surprised.

"On his first treatment ... he stretched his legs out and laid there," she said. "Then his



Courtesy photo

A golden retriever named Kelsey receives an acupuncture treatment to alleviate his allergies. His owner, Angie Crookenden of Severna Park, says he enjoys his treatments.

breathing got slower, deeper. He was obviously really relaxing."

As Kelsey received treatments about every two weeks, his owner saw a big difference. He was obviously more relaxed—and enjoying the treatments.

"When he saw (Ms. Wainwright) he'd fall over for her," Mrs. Crookenden said. "Then he would sit up and look around when he was done."

Mrs. Crookenden's son Addison, 5, and daughter Hadley, 3, were concerned at first that the dog was in pain. But after watching the treatment and asking Ms. Wainwright questions, they became satisfied that the dog was OK.

Mrs. Crookenden said her husband was also skeptical at first, until she suggested he watch the dog go through a treatment.

"He was surprised how com-

fortable Kelsey was. Then he became an advocate," she said.

Now she said he refers to the dog's treatments as "going to the spa."

Treatments cost \$65 for the first visit and \$50 for each subsequent visit. Most animals feel relief of their symptoms within four or five visits, and as they improve, are able to come less often.

Kelsey still receives occasional treatments to maintain the effects and his overall health. To Angie Crookenden it has made a big difference.

"He's more relaxed," Mrs. Crookenden said. "He used to pace and pant and itch. This relieves a lot of that. I am a fan. I tell people to try it out."

*For more information, contact Lydia Wainwright at 443-474-3631.*

*Karen McLaughlin is a freelance writer in Severn.*