Puppy Love

Dr. Kelli Ferris wages a crusade against animal neglect and abuse
Animal control officers in Wilson County saw signs of problems in a dog breeder’s backyard: dozens of thin animals with matted fur.

On their next visit, they brought a sworn animal cruelty investigator: Dr. Kelli Ferris, an NC State veterinarian who’s worked on 15 major puppy mill and animal hoarding cases in North Carolina, some involving hundreds of animals. On this property, Ferris counted a total of 235 dogs of a wide range of breeds, from boxers and German shepherds to Chihuahuas and Scottish terriers. In examining the animals, she saw signs of fire ant bites, flea and tick infestations, intestinal parasites and dental decay so severe it had eroded the jawbones of some dogs. Mother dogs were in poor body condition, and all of the puppies were underweight for their ages.

Based on the findings that day, the owner agreed to transfer the dogs to approved rescue groups during the following week. Meanwhile, Ferris helped pull together a rescue team that included veterinarians, trained volunteers and several dozen veterinary students who had just started their fall semester classes at NC State. They organized an emergency shelter at the county fairgrounds, the only space large enough to house so many animals.

However, when it was time to begin removing the animals, officers found that the breeder had moved all of them to other locations. After legal prodding, 180 of the animals were returned for evaluation and treatment.

By the time veterinary students Melissa Fleischman and Selena Lusk arrived at the fairgrounds on a Saturday morning, about 60 animals were on site, with some on the way to local veterinary hospitals for additional care. They checked each dog’s temperature, pulse and respiration rates, then assisted with physical examinations, working with veterinarians. Finally, they held animals as photos were taken to use as evidence in court. The breeder was later charged with 13 felony counts of animal cruelty, and the case is pending. “I appreciated the fact that Dr. Ferris was so willing to get students involved so that it could be an educational experience for us,” says Fleischmann, who is president of the Veterinary Student Public Health Corps.

It wasn’t the first time that Fleischman had seen a large-scale animal cruelty investigation; she worked as an animal shelter technician in Orange County for a time. And she’s likely to see more during her veterinary career, particularly if she specializes in emergency or shelter medicine.

Animal Hoarding Increasing

“Puppy mill operations have been around for years, but animal hoarding seems to be on the increase in North Carolina,” Ferris says. “My colleagues nationally report that it’s increasing as well.”

Sometimes, investigations involve a breeding operation. That was what Ferris encountered in her first case in 1982 for the American Spaniel Club. When a member died, 80 dogs were found on her property. “All you would see were the beautiful dogs at the show, but here were 60 dogs matted to the skin in a hay barn with no running water.”
Ferris has seen a hoarder whose house was overflowing with black cats as well as a hoarder who had animals ranging from pocket pets to livestock.

“The advent of no-kill sheltering gives someone who is hoarding animals a way to try to gain respectability,” Ferris says. “Instead of being ‘the crazy cat lady,’ someone can position themselves as a shelter with a Web page and nonprofit status.”

However, many hoarders with large numbers of animals live in conditions that are unsafe for humans and animals. In the course of investigations, Ferris has endured ammonia fumes from decaying animal waste piled on the floor. She documents the conditions of both animals and their living spaces, using clinical terms and descriptions that she can use in court.

Ferris recalls a conversation with a man accused of animal hoarding who had recently moved to North Carolina. “He suggested that people were unfriendly to him because he was a Yankee,” Ferris recalls. “I said to him, ‘Maybe it’s not that people don’t like you because you’re a Yankee. Maybe it’s that you’re covered in urine and feces.’”

“He said to me, ‘Your reality is different from my reality but that doesn’t make it wrong.’ I said, ‘Well, it makes it illegal.’”

All but the most severe animal cruelty cases are misdemeanors. Jail time is typically suspended unless there’s another offense. Some counties have stricter penalties than the state, but animal advocates are trying to change that.

**Some Animals Difficult to Place**

Ferris’ goal is to relieve animal suffering. But once a rescued dog or cat is nursed back to health, the problems aren’t over. Some have never been around people, which makes them difficult to place.

“That’s what stood out to me as we were working with the dogs at the fairgrounds,” says Lusk, one of the student veterinary volunteers. “We had golden retrievers who would lie down and cower when we approached them, and that’s unusual for such a friendly breed.”

Gigi, a French bulldog that Ferris adopted, is a good example of the challenges of adoption. She was among seven purebred dogs abandoned in southern Wake County. Her long toenails had grown into the pads of her feet, and she was unfamiliar with a leash, signs of a caged animal.

Ferris knew that Gigi would require skilled care. She needed medication and a special diet for her allergies, which had caused hair loss, and a $1,200 surgery for respiratory problems. “Most people don’t adopt a dog because they want to take on a project,” Ferris says. “They’re not looking for an animal that’s afraid of its shadow or soils constantly.”

Fortunately, Gigi was a social dog. These days, she enjoys human company. She also likes wild deer who come looking for peaches in the yard, as well as the cat, who doesn’t return Gigi’s affection. In less than a year, her weight has risen from 9.5 pounds to a healthy 19.5.

In addition to her animal cruelty investigation work, part of Ferris’ extension and outreach responsibilities as an assistant clinical professor, she is active in emergency planning and disaster recovery work, which require some of the same logistical and networking skills needed to set up a rescue operation. Her involvement in North Carolina began in 1999, when Hurricane Floyd and severe flooding stranded animals across the state.

Does the challenge of helping during disasters and animal cruelty investigations ever become overwhelming for Ferris?

“What keeps me from compassion fatigue is that I’m not involved unless we’re able to take some positive action,” she says. “Usually, I’m really excited to arrive and get started doing something to care for animals and alleviate their suffering.”
Hunger and Homelessness Awareness
Students in a hunger and homelessness social work class are collecting new and gently used outer wear, such as coats, scarves and gloves, as part of a clothing drive for local nonprofit organizations. Items may be dropped off in Room 202-A of the 1911 Building through the end of the week. For more information, contact Susie Barnes at susie_barnes@ncsu.edu.

International Education Week
NC State is celebrating International Education Week, Nov. 16-20, with more than 20 special events, including lectures, panel presentations, information sessions and cultural events. The week, sponsored by the U.S. Department of State and Department of Education, promotes global education and exchange programs.

For more information on events, visit http://ncsu.edu/oia/InternationalEducationWeek.html or contact Chantell Lapan at chantell_lapan@ncsu.edu.

Rolleo Timbersports
Cheer on NC State’s timbersports students during Rolleo competition on Saturday at the Schenck Memorial Forest in Raleigh. Rolleo, sponsored by the Forestry Club, begins at 8 a.m. with technical competition in dendrology, timber volume estimation and pole classification, among other events. Physical events, such as crosscut sawing, underhand log chopping, log rolling and pole felling, begin at 10:30 a.m. NC State will compete against three collegiate teams. Spectators may buy meals or pay $20 for lunch, and a Rolleo T-shirt. For more information, contact Logan Scarboro, club president, at discarbo@ncsu.edu or Graham Ford, vice president, at gaford@ncsu.edu.

Native American Heritage Month
Students in the Native American Student Association and American Indian Science and Engineering Society are taking part in the American Indian Heritage Celebration from 11 a.m. to 4 p.m. on Saturday at the North Carolina Museum of History. For details, visit http://ncmuseumofhistory.org.

On Monday, learn about tribal pageants with a screening of Miss Navajo: Beauty Queen or Tribal Princess, at 6:30 p.m. in the Witherspoon Student Center’s Sankofa Room. April Locklear, a former Miss Lumbee, Miss Indian North Carolina and Miss Indian World, will share her personal insight following the film, which is sponsored by the Native American Student Association, the Women’s Center and Multicultural Student Affairs.

The Gregg Museum’s exhibition of Native American art donated by Drs. Norman and Gilda Greenberg continues through Dec. 19 in the Talley Student Center.

Winhower Submissions and Open Mic
Winhower, the university’s visual and literary magazine, is accepting prose, poetry, essays, art, design and music for its 2010 edition, which includes a music compilation disc. Tuesday, Dec. 1, is the deadline for book submissions. To learn more and see recent submissions, visit http://ncsu.edu/winhower.

Winhower’s third annual Open Mic Night begins at 7 p.m. on Sunday, Nov. 22, in the Caldwell Hall lounge. Interested? Send an e-mail to editor@winhower.ncsu.edu.

Christmas Trees, Wreaths and Garland
Alpha Zeta is selling Christmas trees, wreaths and garland to deck the halls. All orders are due before Thanksgiving break. For more information, contact Jesse Scott at jmscott@ncsu.edu.

Holiday Wolfline Service
Wolfline night bus service ends Tuesday, Nov. 24, at 10 p.m. Faculty and staff will have limited service on Wednesday, Nov. 25. Route 5 (Carter-Finley) will run every 30 minutes, Route 7 (Wolflink Shuttle) every 20 minutes and Route 8 (Southeast Loop) every 36 minutes. Regular Wolfline service resumes Monday, Nov. 30. Rolleo shuttle bus service will be provided from the Centennial Campus storage lots to campus residence halls on Sunday, Nov. 29. Service will begin at the Capability RS/P lot at 5 p.m. and run continuously until 9 p.m. with service approximately every half-hour. Questions? Call 515-3424 or contact Kim Paylor, Wolfline transit manager, at kim_paylor@ncsu.edu.

Thanksgiving Parking
To protect vehicles left on campus during the Thanksgiving holiday, Transportation and Campus Police invite those who park in RS, P, RE and RW areas to move their vehicles to the west lot off Sullivan Drive. Vehicles can be moved to the west lot beginning at 1 p.m. on Tuesday, Nov. 24. Officers recommend parking close to Varsity Drive for visibility and proximity to the Campus Police office, which is staffed during university closures.

Vehicles should be moved back to regular parking by 7 a.m. on Monday, Nov. 30. Those who must leave campus earlier can make special arrangements by e-mailing David Gregory, parking services manager, at david_gregory@ncsu.edu.

Encore Trip To Paris
Members of the Encore lifelong learning program have openings for their 2010 springtime in Paris trip from April 24 to May 3. The trip is open to those 50 and older. Monday, Nov. 30, is the deadline to register. For more information, call Joan Hardman-Cobb, Encore special programs coordinator, at 513-2049.

Kwanzaa Celebration
The Magic of African Rhythm, also known as the Shabu family, will be featured during the university Kwanzaa Celebration at 6:30 p.m. on Tuesday, Dec. 1, in the Witherspoon Student Center campus cinema. The program will feature traditional Kwanzaa rituals, dance and food. The celebration is free and open to all students, faculty and the general public. This event is sponsored by the Department of Multicultural Student Affairs. For more information, call 515-3125.

Faculty and Staff Notes
Beichner Named Prof of the Year
Physics professor Robert Beichner has been named North Carolina Professor of the Year by the Carnegie Foundation for the Advancement of Teaching and the Council for Advancement and Support of Education. Beichner has long been regarded as an expert not only in his field, but also as a teacher and a mentor with an ability to influence the lives and careers of his students and colleagues on campus.

Potts Honored with Leader Award
Lt. Rick Potts with Campus Police received the Servant Leader Award from the Department of Greek Life. Potts was recognized for building partnerships with fraternities and sororities.

Team Wins Again for Food Processing
Faculty members and graduate students in the Department of Food, Bioprocessing and Nutrition Sciences have been honored a second time for developing a food processing technology. The team won a 2009 Superior Efforts in Technology Transfer Award from the U.S. Department of Agriculture’s Agricultural Research Service (ARS) for a novel continuous flow
microwave heating process to produce large containers of aseptic, shelf-stable vegetable and fruit purees. Yamco of Snow Hill, N.C., uses the process for sweet potato puree. Earlier this year, the Institute of Food Technologists honored the team with an Industrial Achievement Award.

Service Recognition Reception Nov. 24
NC State employees are invited to the 35th Annual Service Recognition Reception at 2 p.m. on Tuesday, Nov. 24, in Stewart Theatre. Employees with 20, 25, 30, 35 and 40 years of service will be recognized during an awards ceremony, which will be followed by a reception in the Talley Student Center Ballroom.

Mobile Mammogram Unit on Campus
Friday is the deadline to register for a limited number of appointments with a mobile mammography unit that will visit Centennial Campus next month. NC State employees, Centennial affiliates and their family members are eligible. Preregistration is required. The mobile coach will be parked on Main Campus Drive at Venture Courtyard on Monday, Dec. 7. Rex Hospital accepts all major medical plans and will handle the filing process. For more information or to register, contact Sue Cross at sue_cross@ncsu.edu or call 515-7036.

Faculty/Staff Ticket Discounts
Take advantage of reduced prices for men's basketball tickets during Faculty/Staff Appreciation Days. Attend a nonconference game for $10 or an ACC contest for $15 on these home dates:
> Northwestern: 7 p.m., Tuesday, Dec. 1
> Elon: 7 p.m., Thursday, Dec. 17
> Virginia Tech: 9 p.m., Wed., Feb. 10
> Maryland: 9 p.m., Wednesday, Feb. 17
Purchase tickets online at http://www.gopack.com/promo, using STAFF as the promotional code. Or avoid the service fee by paying in person with cash at the ticket office (university ID required).

Shared Leave Requests
Leaves donations will be accepted through Tuesday, Dec. 1, for the following individuals who have applied to receive shared leave:
> Shirley Avery, College of Physical and Mechanical Sciences
> Sharon Patton, Environmental Health and Safety
> Ivette Harnett, College of Veterinary Medicine
Those who wish to donate leave should complete Form SL-2, Authorization to Donate Leave. Donation forms must be completed and signed by the donor and department leave coordinator before being forwarded to Stacey Davis, HR Benefits, Box 7215. Questions? Contact the leave administration unit at 515-2151.

W-2 Smackdown Standings Updated
You can help NC State make tax time greener. To save paper and time, sign up for an electronic W-2 earnings form. In response to security concerns from employees, now only the last four digits of your social security number are required. And yes, the IRS will accept a copy of the form from your home printer.

To see where your unit ranks in the standings, visit the payroll page. Each Friday through Dec. 18, payroll will update the standings. Units with the highest percentages will be recognized. Questions? Send an e-mail to hr.payroll@ncsu.edu or call Joanie Aitken at 513-3548.

In Memoriam
Dr. Paul Bredenberg
An informal gathering for family, friends, and acquaintances of Dr. Paul Bredenberg, professor emeritus of philosophy, will be held today from 5 to 7 p.m. in the Whitaker Glen Building B Atrium at 501 E. Whitaker Mill Rd. in Raleigh.

Bredenberg died Sunday, Nov. 15, at 86. He had lived in Raleigh since 1950, where he raised a family, taught philosophy for 36 years and spearheaded a youth tennis program that fostered an entire generation of Raleigh tennis players. He was known as a champion of civil rights in North Carolina.

He is survived by his wife of 62 years, Gladys; his brother, Willard; sons Alfred and Jeffrey, and six grandchildren. In lieu of flowers, donations may be sent to ACLU Wake County Chapter or Unitarian Universalist Fellowship in Raleigh.

Dr. Robert Hambourger
Dr. Robert Hambourger, who retired this spring from the Department of Philosophy and Religion, died Sunday, Nov. 15. He was 65. Hambourger was a faculty member for 27 years.

He is survived by three children, Elizabeth, Michael and Timothy; a brother, Paul; two grandchildren and his wife of 37 years, Linda, along with many other relatives, in-laws and friends. Visitation and funeral mass have taken place.

The family has requested that in lieu of flowers donations be made to the Leukemia and Lymphoma Society of Wake County on behalf of Cindy Sears.

Hear NC State’s all-female vocal group, Ladies in Red, rock the house in a special performance at 7:30 p.m. on Friday in Stewart Theatre.

The a capella group brings musical fusion and excitement to the stage, performing a mix of styles from ballads to rock. Check the NC State online calendar for more information.
NC State exceeded its fundraising goal, contributing $542,000 to the State Employees Combined Campaign that supports charitable organizations across the state.

“We were able to surpass our goal because of the extraordinary generosity of our faculty and staff,” Chancellor Jim Woodward said. “We know that this is a difficult time for many people in our community, and our donations to the combined campaign help meet that need.”

NC State led the state’s large universities in employee participation, said Alan Taylor, SECC university campaign manager. “NC State has the highest participation rate by a margin of 10 percent,” Taylor said. “That’s a big deal.”

Nearly 100 more NC State employees contributed this year, another significant increase. “It’s not a trend we expect to see in a year when universities have experienced layoffs,” Taylor said.

The university relies on a host of volunteers to take the lead and find ways to motivate co-workers.

In Athletics, Jim White, associate athletic director for public relations and administration, takes on the challenge of reaching 183 people housed in multiple locations.

White, a volunteer for 12 years, works in a mention of the campaign at the first all-staff meeting in August and at every staff and coaches’ meeting during the campaign. After the kickoff in September, each person gets a letter from athletic director Lee Fowler and those who have contributed before receive a copy of last year’s pledge form to make it easier for them. “Once people begin giving, they usually want to keep their track record going,” White said. If a time-pressured coach wants to renew last year’s contributions, White will even complete the forms.

“We’re trying to make it as painless as possible from a paperwork standpoint,” he said.

During the campaign, White’s co-workers receive creative e-mail reminders, usually photos with brief captions and updates. One year, he enlisted a few of his favorite movie characters to make the case, including Dirty Harry, who invited them to make his day – and someone else’s – by giving to the combined campaign.

White has also featured photos and videos of disaster survivors and an assortment of staff members who have donated. At crunch time, with a week and a few hundred dollars to go, he sent a Carter-Finley scoreboard picture showing time left in the fourth quarter to reach the goal.

“We have fun with it,” White said. He knows he’s succeeded when others remind him of the campaign. “I’ll be walking down the hall and hear, ‘I’ve got that pledge form ready,’” he said with a chuckle. “Sometimes I’m really just getting a drink of water, but they probably thought I was going to ask.”

The College of Management takes a businesslike approach. This year, Dean Ira Weiss made meeting the college’s goal a top priority. To raise awareness, staff members Yolanda Sanders, Kathy Ford and Tuesday Cross organized a luncheon to promote the combined campaign and invited faculty and staff from their departments.

“We couldn’t meet our goal without the support from the top and the cooperation of everyone involved,” said unit coordinator Andy Nowel, senior academic advisor and curriculum coordinator. “In the years I’ve been doing this, the best thing is the camaraderie of the people involved.”

That spirit helped NC State put the combined campaign over the top in a year when many charities are struggling, said Dr. Phil Westerman, campaign chair and professor of biological and agricultural engineering. “We know that our faculty and staff receive requests for donations from many groups, and we’re grateful they responded to the combined campaign.” Contributions were up by more than $20,000 from 2008.

Team captains, unit coordinators and those from units with the highest participation will be honored at a celebration on Dec. 15, Westerman said.
NC State and UNC at Chapel Hill have agreed to upgrade and operate financial and human resources systems in a collaboration that will increase efficiency and save money while improving the level of service to faculty and staff.

“This collaboration builds on our strong history of partnership, cooperation and trust,” said Marc Hoit, vice chancellor for information technology at NC State. “In the long run, both universities are going to benefit strongly and bring down costs.”

NC State has used Oracle’s PeopleSoft for finance and HR for a decade and is upgrading to the latest version, while UNC is just starting to use those PeopleSoft components. The partnership aims to tap the most effective and efficient methods of sharing hardware, software, resources, business operations and vendor contracts. Both campuses are investing equal resources – equipment and staffing – to launch the joint project, which is scheduled to be up and running in 2013.

The idea grew from a previous collaboration by Hoit and Larry Conrad when they served in technology posts at separate Florida universities. Now they hold the same title – vice chancellor for information technology and chief information officer – at NC State and UNC, respectively. They discussed working together on a joint PeopleSoft project last year as the economic downturn hit and the opportunity for collaboration became even more compelling.

Conrad estimated undertaking the same work without NC State’s involvement would have required hiring an additional 60 to 70 employees. The joint effort will require about 30 to 40 new hires.

“By working together, we can leverage the knowledge and skills of employees on both campuses in a way that’s more efficient and significantly reduces the personnel expenses required to get the job done,” he said.

Hoit cited advantages in business continuity if either campus experienced a technology emergency.

“Since we will share development, common systems and distribution across both campuses we can have a significant improvement in our disaster recovery ability at no additional cost,” he said.

The joint work also will increase the technology purchasing power of both universities.

Joining Conrad and Hoit in leading the partnership are the top financial and human resources administrators on both campuses who will guide teams dedicated to developing common business processes and using the same tools and third-party applications.

Four task committees are exploring the collaboration possibilities for the technical infrastructure, the chart of accounts and the overall human resources and financial systems.

One example of the collaboration being considered is early implementation of PeopleSoft’s eProcurement module, which includes a commodity tracking system that may help support efforts to negotiate better prices. UNC plans to begin this work next month. NC State already uses eProcurement, and that experience will help the UNC team implement the project.