

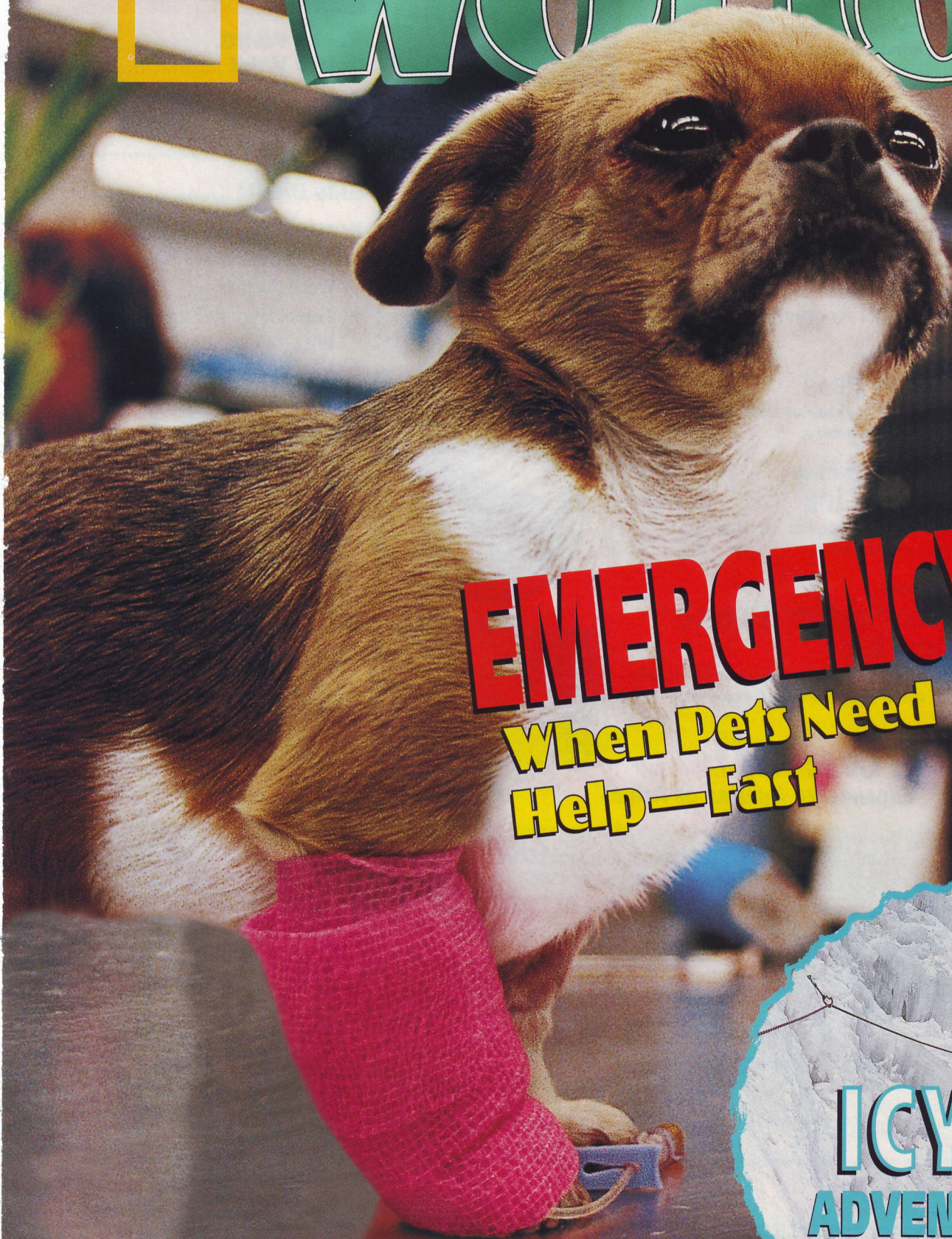
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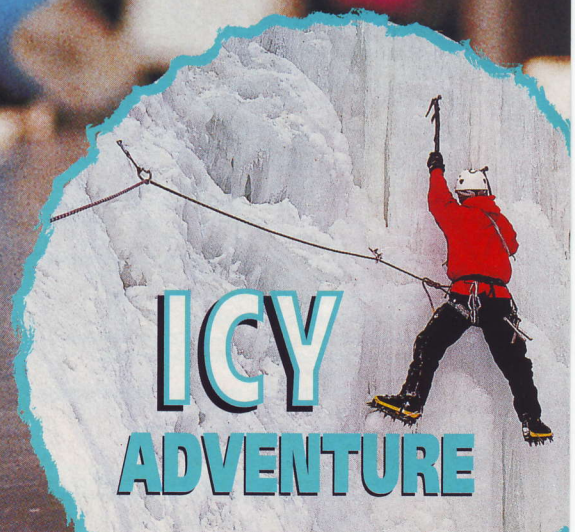
**world**

DECEMBER  
1998



**EMERGENCY!**

**When Pets Need  
Help—Fast**



**ICY  
ADVENTURE**



# Saving Lives in the **Animal ER**

Expert vets and  
high-tech methods  
help sick pets survive.

## Loving Arms

Christina Johnson, 13, of New York City, hugs her dog, Kiwi Coco Pop (left). After a car hit Kiwi, doctors pumped fluid into her veins through a tube inserted in her leg. The bandage holds the tube in place.



## Falling Feathers

Veterinarian Sarah Cutler listens as Dzung Nguyen describes his pet's symptoms (right). Victoria, a 1-year-old African gray parrot, was losing her feathers. Dzung feared she had a skin disease. But Victoria was only molting—a perfectly normal process. New feathers soon grew in to replace the old.







**K**IWI COCO POP lay silent and unmoving in the middle of Second Avenue in **New York, New York**. Christina Johnson, 13, of the city, had been walking Kiwi, a Pekingese/pug mix, when the dog yanked the leash away from her and darted into traffic. Three cars ran over Kiwi. Now her head was injured in two places, one eye was bleeding, and her whole body trembled.

"I kind of went panicky," admits Christina. She didn't know what to do next, but passersby did. One carried Kiwi to the sidewalk. Another suggested that Christina rush her dog uptown to the Animal Medical Center (AMC).

**O**PEN 24 HOURS a day, the AMC is a nine-story veterinary hospital that treats more than 65,000 animals a year. That's an average of more than 175 animals *a day*. The AMC is the largest teaching veterinary hospital in the world. Its excellent reputation has attracted pet owners from as far away as Russia. Most of AMC's patients, however, come from the New York area.

"Not a night goes by that we don't see a dog or cat that's been hit by a car," says veterinarian Linda Barton. Vets at the AMC also treat pets with diseases and pets that have fallen out of apartment windows—in one case from 46 stories high.

Some AMC patients come to the emergency room (ER) with preventable problems, all because

## What Hurts?

**A veterinarian examines a puppy at the Animal Medical Center in New York City. The hospital handles 18,000 emergency cases a year.**





their owners didn't know how to care for them properly. This is especially true of exotic, or undomesticated, pets such as ferrets, lizards, snakes, prairie dogs, monkeys, and many birds.

For example, iguanas normally eat fruit and leaves. "But people feed them dog food," says veterinarian Evelyn Ivey. "And that causes kidney failure." Dr. Ivey advises people to read books and join a bird or reptile club before buying an exotic pet. "Because," she says, "if people knew the work involved, most wouldn't get one."

Even wild animals are sometimes brought in off the streets to the AMC. Once someone rescued a baby swan with a broken foot. Doctors nursed the swan back to health and released it on a pond.

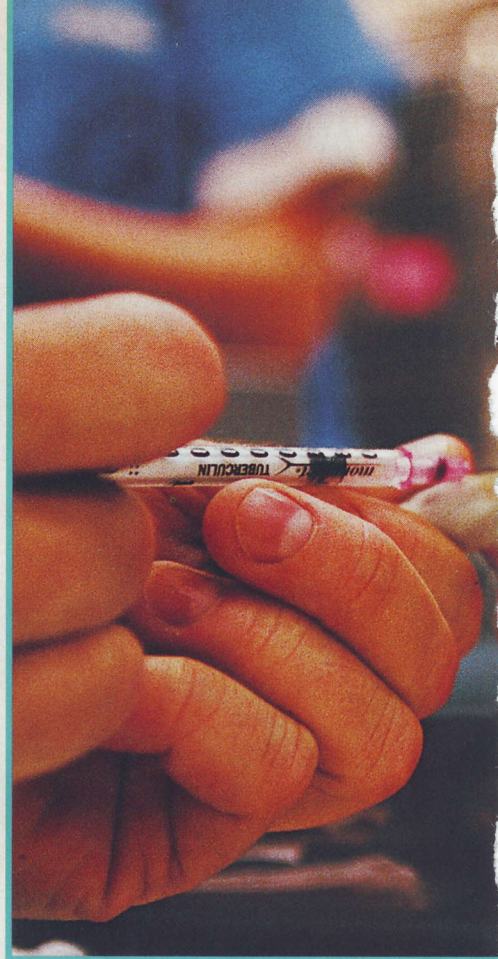
Except for rows of cages, the AMC looks like a hospital for people. When an emergency case arrives, the loudspeaker crackles, "Clinic aide, to the first floor *stat*" (which means *immediately*). An aide races outdoors, straps the creature onto a stretcher, shoves the stretcher into an open elevator, and punches the button for the second floor ER.

**C**HRISTINA TOOK the passerby's advice and, with her mother, rushed Kiwi Coco Pop to the AMC. "I was so scared," says Christina. "I was just crying."

(Continued on page 18)

## A Shot of Sugar

**A veterinarian gives Spike, a 12-ounce Chihuahua puppy, a dose of glucose (right). Earlier Spike foamed at the mouth and suffered a seizure when his blood sugar dropped. The shot saved his life.**



## Scalpel, Please

Veterinary surgeon Jason Fusco seals off blood vessels after operating on a retriever (left). The dog ate a cassette tape. In another operation, Dr. Fusco removed tinsel that a cat had swallowed.

## Sweet Dreams

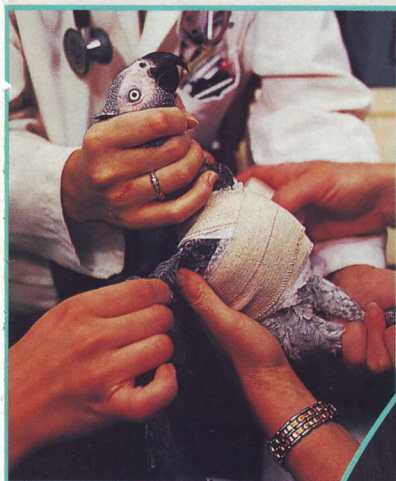
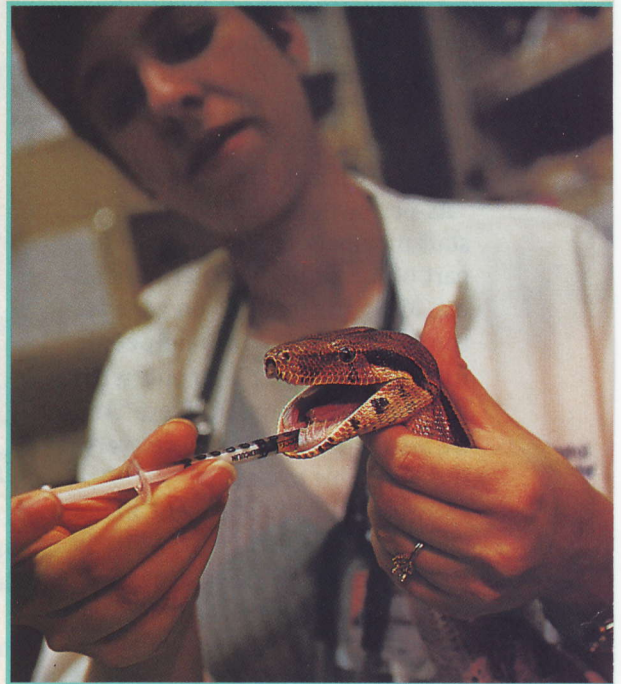
Ryoku, a green iguana, breathes anesthetic gas (above) that keeps him asleep during surgery. The doctor successfully removed a cyst from the base of his tail. She also prescribed a diet of vegetables.





## Open Wide and Say "Ssssssss"

Veterinarian Evelyn Ivey squirts medicine down a boa constrictor's throat (below). Most snake problems come from improper care. For instance, people often don't provide them with enough warmth.



## Bird Care

It takes three vets to bandage with care the injured breast of this parrot (left), named Remington Steele.

## Inside Story

Veterinarian Shannon Parsons (right) studies abdominal x-rays of a rabbit with bloody diarrhea. After diagnosing an intestinal infection, she prescribed medicine and fluids. Four days later Snowflake was fine.





(Continued from page 16)

In the ER a technician x-rayed Kiwi's head. A veterinary technician hooked her up to an intravenous pump (IV), which dripped fluids directly into her veins. A veterinarian checked her injuries.

The sickest animals must go to intensive care, where two technicians are always on duty. Animals are attached to high-tech equipment—artificial ventilators, EKG machines, IV alarms—that fills the room with beeps and buzzes.

As pet owners themselves, AMC staff members realize animals are part of the family. (A veterinarian's cat, Mandy, is pictured on page 16, top left.) "We try to help people understand what's wrong with their animal," says Dr. Ivey. "And we assure them that we'll do everything possible to save it."

Kiwi was lucky. She went home that same night. "The AMC is a great hospital," says Christina. Many happy pet owners agree.



### Blood Washer

A dialysis (dye-AL-uh-suhs) machine cleans this dog's blood (above). The treatment is given when an animal's kidneys stop working properly.

## Are You a Future Vet?



Jennifer Chaitman  
Veterinarian

"LOVING ANIMALS IS NOT enough to become a veterinarian," says Ann Hohenhaus, an animal cancer specialist at AMC. "You also must be an excellent student."

That's because vets need four years of college plus four years of veterinary school. Even after graduation, learning must continue. New diseases appear, along with new techniques and drugs to treat them. "You have to keep up," says Dr. Hohenhaus.

To help prepare for a career as a vet, you need experience handling animals. You can get it by joining 4-H or volunteering at a zoo, animal hospital, or shelter. It's also important to like science and to not mind getting dirty.

### Lucky Dog

Fully recovered, Kiwi Coco Pop cuddles with Christina (left). After Kiwi left the hospital, Christina pampered her for two weeks. She even built steps out of cardboard boxes so Kiwi wouldn't jump off the bed.

