

Orange County veterinarian saves local dog's life

By ANNA FARR

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It was a cold, snowy Saturday morning in Crestline when 13-and-a-half-year-old terrier mix Spock fell and broke his jaw. Spock's pet parents were terrified and rushed him to the vet where he was referred to Dr. Kyle Walker of Veterinary Surgery Specialists of Tustin.

Luckily, the surgical center was able to get Spock in the next day where he was then seen by Dr. Walker.

Because Spock is elderly, has a heart murmur, has poor bone quality and has Cushing's Disease, his case was a bit challenging for Dr. Walker. However, his early love of animals and interest in specializing in small animal surgery led Dr. Walker to jump at the challenge.

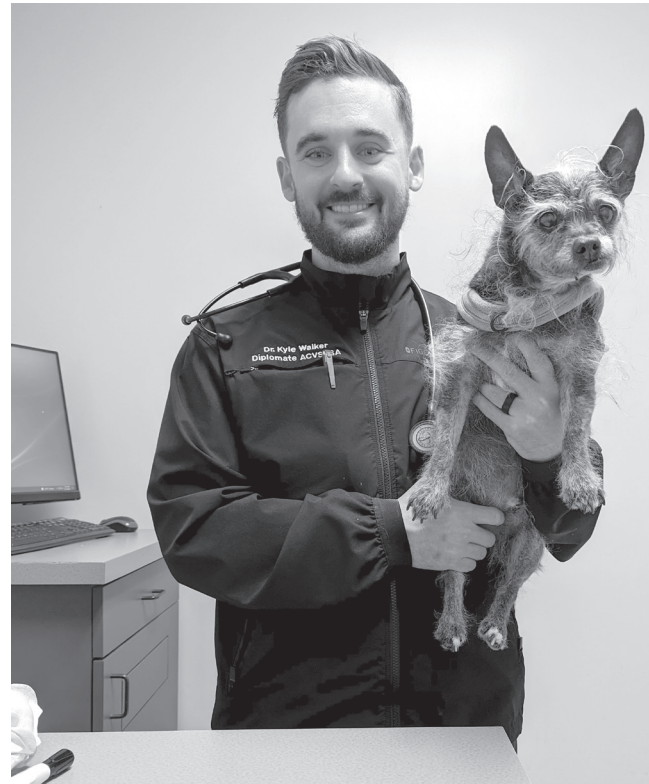
"Spock's surgery presented some unique challenges," Dr. Walker said. "With his pre-existing dental disease and age, the bone quality of the mandible was not normal. This impacted implant choice and can impact bone healing. Spock also had two separate injuries – a right mandibular fracture and a mandibular symphyseal separation – which required a plate, screws and a pin to repair. Despite all of this, his surgery was successful and I was happy with the repair."

The surgery itself took Dr. Walker about an hour and a half and recovery included soft foods and rest.

As for whether Dr. Walker has done surgeries like this before in dogs and in cats, he said, "Jaw fractures are fairly common in dogs, usually related to trauma, but ultimately carry a good prognosis."

For now, Spock is recovering at home and, thanks to Dr. Walker, has been given a new "leash" on life.

Anna Farr is a student in Tracy Marinaro's sixth-grade class at Mary Putnam Henck Intermediate School. Spock is one of the classroom mascots.



Dr. Kyle Walker performed successful surgery on Spock after he fell and broke his jaw.