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## A Lion's Tail Saved

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## *A Lion's Tail Saved*

On Sunday, May 25, 1997 an unusual emergency case came to New Bolton Center's Widener Hospital. Leeds, an eight-year-old, 900 pound male lion was brought in with a severely lacerated tail by his owner, Ms. Kay Rosaire Mowery of Clementon, NJ. The lion, a performer with his owner and her fourteen other tigers and lions, was in danger of losing his tail as it had lost both its bony integrity and the major blood vessel carrying blood to the tip. The laceration cut the

tail bone in half and all that remained was skin and a small amount of muscle on the upper side of the tail. Dr. William Donawick, Mark Whittier and Lila Griswold Allam Professor of Surgery, was called to the hospital by Dr. Eric Parente, assistant professor of sports medicine, "...because of his expertise in vascular surgery." Dr. Lin Klein, Professor Emeritus in Anesthesia, was asked to participate in the surgery because of her experience and interest in anesthesia of

exotic animals.

Dr. Donawick felt there were two options: 1) remove the tail beyond the site of injury or 2) attempt repair of the damaged tail. The owner was adamant about saving the tail as she felt strongly that loss of it would hamper the lion's ability to continue performing in her show. Dr. Donawick, assisted by Drs. Barbara Dallop and Dana King, residents in surgery, took on the challenge. Mary Crotau, OR nurse, Diane Hurly, anesthesiology technician, and several fourth year veterinarian students were present to assist.

After the laceration was thoroughly cleaned, Dr. Donawick removed the damaged muscle tissue, damaged vertebra and part of each of the adjacent vertebrae. Once this was accomplished the tail was shorter and two healthy bones were in contact. Holes were drilled in the remaining adjacent bones and wires were placed to approximate bone and provide bony stability. Shortening the tail brought the cut ends of the coccygeal artery close enough together to repair it by arterial anastomosis. The skin and muscle tissues that remained were closed over the artery. The tail was bandaged lightly and the lion discharged. Two off site visits were made after the surgery.

Leeds' tail healed and he has gone back to performing. The lion and his other large cat friends are wintering in Sarasota, Florida and will return to their New Jersey home next spring. 🏠



*Dr. Donawick and his sedated patient after successful surgery.*



*The wound.*

### *Scholarships*

**Pandora Davis, V'99**, has been awarded a scholarship by the Barnstable County Agricultural Society, Inc. of East Falmouth, MA.

**Lisa Barnett, V'98**, is the recipient of the Dr. Ginnie Lieblein Memorial Scholarship. The Class of 1947 Scholarships were presented to **Benjamin Spitz, V'99, John Eccher, V'99, Kathryn McPherson, V'99, and Heather Galano, V'99.**