

## Local vet uses alternative methods to treat pets

*Deborah Rose/Spectrum*

Dr. Anne Hermans of Bridgewater practices homeopathic methods on cats and dogs.

### **Anne Hermans uses remedies to arouse pets' healing ability**

*By Deborah Rose*

*STAFF WRITER*

Sherry Levesque of New Hartford drives more than an hour to bring her cat, Ginger, to a veterinarian in Bridgewater.

Mrs. Levesque said the drive is well worth it because she sees “wonderful” results in Ginger after she is treated by Dr. Anne Hermans, a certified veterinary homeopath.

Dr. Hermans, like other homeopaths, tries to heal acute and chronic diseases using remedies — made of plants, minerals and other natural products — that are non-invasive and don't work against symptoms, like conventional medicine, but rather with the patient's symptoms.

Homeopaths say the remedies act like a wakeup call arousing an animal's own healing ability.

Mrs. Levesque said Dr. Hermans' care also helped her former cat, Kelly, live an extra nine months after she had been diagnosed with kidney failure.

“Remedies did amazing things for her,” she said. “She just brightened up.

“It's all about the animal and doing what's best for the animal,” Mrs. Levesque said.

Dr. Hermans, 41, said she came across alternative methods of medicine when her first child was younger and had health issues.

She said “holistic and alternative paths healed” her daughter and were “really impressive.”

“Once I started studying [homeopathy] I became passionate about it,” Dr.

Hermans said, “and when I started using it, it helped my patients with acute and chronic problems.

“The responses to remedies were unlike what I'd seen before,” the vet said.

Dr. Hermans said she spends a lot of time talking with clients about their cat or dog when they visit her office.

Dogs can get cozy on the large dog bed on the floor, while cats are invited to roam around the doctor's office and make themselves comfortable on a mat that sits on a window sill looking out on the sprawling hills of Bridgewater and Roxbury.

Clients are asked questions about their animal's behavioral, eating, sleeping and playing habits.

“The pattern of [the animal's] response to the homeopathy remedy is how I assess the patient's response,” Dr. Hermans said.

After studying the habits and needs of the animal and how they can be addressed, Dr. Hermans figures out what remedies would best suit the pet.

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“Properly prescribed remedies can improve” the overall health of a patient, she explained.

Chris MacDonald of New Milford, who takes her two cats to Dr. Hermans, said while remedies work wonders, Dr. Hermans recognizes and “considers the whole picture and what every practitioner has to offer.”

The homeopathic vet recommends that clients take their pets to conventional veterinarians for diagnostic tests, blood work and vaccinations because she does not provide those services at her office.

Ms. MacDonald said she finds Dr. Hermans a “great educator and guide” whose care has provided a “positive effect” on her cats and helped her “work through issues.”

Ms. MacDonald said her cat, Pierre, has had good results from receiving remedies for asthma. Her other cat, Marry, is being treated for a cancer related to vaccinations.

The New Milford resident stressed, however, that it takes a strong commitment from the pet’s owner to pay attention to the animal’s patterns of behavior and relate them to the homeopathic vet.

Dr. Hermans, who graduated from Cornell University, has always had an interest in animals.

She said she first thought about veterinary school when she was 20, and after that spent a year living on her aunt’s sheep farm in Massachusetts while working as a veterinarian technician at various animal hospitals.

Dr. Hermans moved to the West Coast and practiced conventional medicine for cats and dogs for five years, but she eventually made her way back to Bridgewater — her family’s hometown — in 1995.

Since then, she worked three years at the emergency vet clinic in Danbury and then opened her homeopathic practice in January 2000.

Dr. Hermans’ clientele has “been building steadily,” mostly through word of mouth, she said.

One of her first patients was her dog, Ike, who died in 2001. She said “homeopathy gave him three years he didn’t have” prior to the alternative medicine.

“I really love this work,” she said. “It’s very rewarding and interesting.”

“I learn from all of my patients,” Dr. Hermans related, “and I expect to keep learning.”

*Dr. Hermans sees clients by appointment. For more information, visit [www.vethomeopath.com](http://www.vethomeopath.com) or call Dr. Hermans at (860) 210-1847.*