

THE ENVIRONMENT

# The environment is the #1 thing on youth's minds in Bermuda!



by Mackinnon Eldridge

The environment is an important part of life in Bermuda. According to Youth News polls, the most important issue of the day is the environment.

To gather more information, we spoke to the Minister of Environment, The Honorable D. Neletha Butterfield, JP, MP. First of all, I have to say how easy-going and responsive the Minister was to our interview. I, for one, really enjoyed the experience. The Minister has done so much for our community, it is not surprising that she is where she is today. We will have more on the Minister in Up Close and Personal on YouthNews.com.

Minister Butterfield explained that youth are very important to the improvement of our environment. There are many ways that youth can get involved. One activity she mentioned was to bring students from various schools on turtle tagging trips. Fortunately, the turtle tagging has been very successful, as she mentioned that turtles are often recaptured.

When asked about clean energy sources, such as hydro, wind, and solar power, she told us that she strongly supports the plans, but it will likely be in the future. For those of us who wish to reduce air pollution as well as saving gas, we asked if she supports the use of environment-friendly vehicles. Again she gives support, but was unable to comment further as this issue falls under the Ministry of Transportation.

Many may wonder what could be the biggest threat to Bermuda's environment. The Minister revealed it wasn't littering, sewage, or car exhaust, but over-development. Understandably, preserving the little



Catherine Campbell (left) and MacKinnon Eldridge (right) with the Minister of Environment, The Honorable D. Neletha Butterfield, JP, MP.

land and ocean we have left has become a big priority. According to the World Wildlife Fund, 30% of the natural world has been destroyed since the 1970's, so looking after our land is important.

We asked the Minister about the rumour that our sewage system is causing dangerous spills. She let us know that this is completely untrue. In fact, steps are being taken to improve our already successful sewage system. The sewage is pumped far out at sea and released in amounts that allow it to dilute completely, without any damage to the ecosystem.

Recycling is being entirely reviewed with plans to build a new recycling factory. This factory will accept additional materials to be recycled in Bermuda.

We again, would like to thank the Minister for responding to the youth of Bermuda.



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## DID YOU KNOW?

The Malaysian government decided to solve their disease-carrying mosquito problem by spraying infested areas with DDT. This worked, but the cockroaches then devoured the dead mosquitos. This was followed by the region's gecko lizards consuming the roaches. The geckos did not die from the residual poison (surprisingly), but their central nervous systems were greatly affected, causing the lizards to slow down. Moving up the food chain, the cats ate the slow-moving lizards and started to die off in large quantities. Of course, fewer cats means more rats, and the country's rat population soared. As a result, the World Health Organization was forced to step in and ban the DDT. In an effort to restore the ecological balance, they flew in plane loads of cats to kill the rats.

# Pets



By Ben Collis

## A Day at the Vet

I think I would like to be a vet. I was very lucky, therefore, to spend a morning with Dr. Neil Burnie, at Endsmeet Animal Hospital.

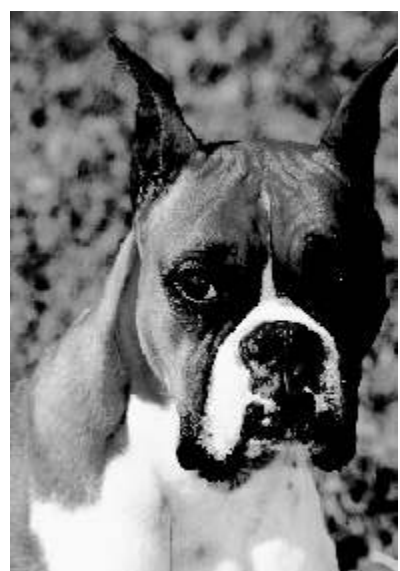
When I arrived at Endsmeet, Dr. Burnie had just finished x-raying a large boxer dog. He explained that the dog was suffering from arthritis in his joints and might be a candidate for a new surgical procedure, which he has been learning, under the guidance of Boston veterinarian Nick Trout. I asked Dr. Burnie if he might be interested in specializing in this treatment. He replied that specializing allows a vet to spend most days on challenging surgeries, but he prefers his current mixed practice, where he has an opportunity to really get to know both his patients and their families.

Next up was a hysterectomy on a German shepherd. I helped shave her leg; she was then anaesthetized and moved to the operating room. While Dr. Burnie scrubbed his hands, his nurse Jes told me to sit down on the floor if I felt faint: "Just don't fall on the dog!" I'm pleased to say, that I didn't faint. In fact, I watched the entire operation, Dr. Burnie explaining each step of the process.

According to Dr. Burnie, surgery is the favourite activity of all four of the Endsmeet vets and is shared, with each vet having one morning a week. Approximately six hours a day are devoted to office appointments, which are also shared amongst the vets. Each vet is on call one night in three and about 70% of the calls are dealt with over the phone.

I asked Dr. Burnie about the most exotic animal he has ever treated and he mentioned the Aquarium's alligator, and its otters, one of which bit right through his finger once. He's removed a tumor from a gerbil and treated a fractured leg in a guinea pig. However, the best has to be removing a fishhook from a 35ft whale shark. As thanks, he went for a ride on its back!

It was at this point that two Malayan Mouse Deer arrived



from the Aquarium for teeth filing and tests. They are high-strung and delicate little herbivores and one of them suffered respiratory collapse and died under anesthetic. Dr. Burnie emphasized that it is always important to consider whether the cost outweighs the benefit, when deciding what procedures should be performed on exotic animals. If an animal is otherwise healthy, there is much to be said for limiting care to what is necessary for preventative health. Unfortunately, with zoo animals, more tests are often undertaken for the sake of research.

Before leaving I asked Dr. Burnie for his views on two current issues the ban on certain dog breeds and the feral chicken problem. On the first point, he said he was disappointed in the ban, as irresponsible dog ownership is the problem, not the dog. In response to the second question, he said chickens can out-produce any predator and could end up being a reservoir for avian flu, should an infected bird arrive in Bermuda. It would be wise to cull their numbers before it becomes imperative.

My morning was over too quickly, but I left Endsmeet with plenty to think about. I discovered that there's more math involved in veterinary medicine than I hoped from measuring angles for the re-alignment of joints to measuring medication, but no two days are alike.

