# ANC

The Animal Neurology Center

MAY 2026

www.AnimalNeurology.com

# A word from the owner

For as long as veterinary medicine has embraced post-graduate education, the format has remained largely the same: conferences.

Big national meetings. Small regional gatherings. Conferences dedicated to a single topic, and others with multiple educational tracks to choose from. Some include wet labs. Most include parties. Some are hosted in beautiful remote destinations, while others fill familiar convention centers. Some are rooted in high-end science, while others lean heavily into vendor-driven marketing initiatives. Many attend for the sole opportunity to reconnect with old classmates or professors. New meaningful relationships are rare.

Despite the countless hours and dollars invested into continuing education, one thing has remained almost universal: you may take a few pearls home, but there is often little in the way of true new mastery, outcome measures, or continued support afterward. "I remember hearing something about that, let me check my proceedings"-and never do.

Why do we hold post-graduate education to such a dramatically lower standard than veterinary school itself?

In veterinary school, there are no isolated one-hour lectures disconnected from a broader curriculum. There are modules and syllabi. There are quizzes and examinations that reveal not only what you have learned, but where you still need to grow. There are classmates and mentors who continue to shape your development over time—not simply "best of luck" as you return to practice.

That vision became the foundation for the educational philosophy at the Animal Neurology Center. And this past month, that vision became reality. Lovingly referred to as "the conference challenger," the ANC was built around the belief that post-graduate veterinary education should not merely match veterinary school—it should surpass it, it has to!

Because practicing veterinarians already possess years of applied experience, real-world pattern recognition, emotional intelligence, and clinical judgment. The next stage of education should therefore be more immersive, more collaborative, more practical, and more committed to continued growth than anything that came before it.

This month, veterinary neurologists traveled from across the country—and even from Guatemala—with expectations of becoming "more." Not simply through exposure to advanced surgical techniques or expert-level lectures, but by practicing the way we truly practice: working through cases from beginning to end, making decisions in real time, discussing complications, interpreting imaging, planning procedures, and refining techniques side by side.

Attendees have already begun implementing these skills in practice and are now sharing post-operative imaging and outcomes with our team as they continue to grow; The ultimate measure of success.

Perhaps even more meaningful than the technical advancement were the collegial friendships that emerged during the course. Conversations did not end when attendees boarded flights home. Emails continue to move back and forth. Cases continue to be shared. Input continues to be exchanged. Growth continues.

It truly takes a village to practice high-level medicine, and with this first course, we built one together. I could not be more proud.

If you are not a neurosurgeon...GOOD-More is coming! Future educational experiences are already in development for general practitioners, urgent care veterinarians, radiologists, and neurologists later this year. The goal remains the same: immersive, meaningful education rooted in collaboration, accountability, and continued mentorship.

This is only the beginning.

Fred

**Fred Wininger, VMD, MS, DACVIM (Neurology)**
Owner / Neurologist / Neurosurgeon

One thing that has always mattered to us at the Animal Neurology Center was creating a space that feels uniquely *St. Louis*.
As we continue building out our exam room murals, we want them to reflect the city we love: its pets, its people, and the incredible bond between them.

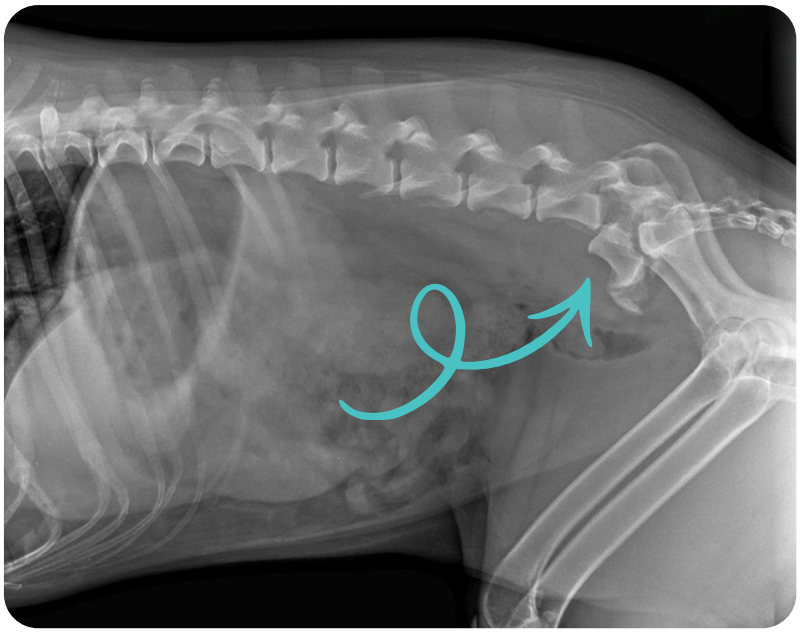
**Have an idea for a mural?**
Maybe a favorite St. Louis Cardinals moment with your dog?
A city landmark? Or maybe a photo of your favorite ANC patient that captures what this community means to you?
Send it our way—we'd love your input as we bring a little more St. Louis flair to the ANC.
📸 Submit ideas/photos here!

# Featured Case of the Month: Ripley

Ripley belongs to our friend and colleague, Dr. Kerschbaum of Arkansas—a veterinarian who is, in many ways, the definition of a hands-on practitioner. Her skillset ranges from routine general practice to orthopedic surgery, and outside the clinic she and her husband spend a tremendous amount of time outdoors with their dogs exploring trails, rivers, and backcountry terrain.

Last November, one of those adventures took a dramatic turn.
Ripley and her housemate spotted an armadillo while out hiking, and as tends to happen in these situations, both dogs immediately gave chase. Unfortunately, the armadillo disappeared over the edge of a cliff and the dogs followed right behind it.

To Dr. Kerschbaum's horror, both dogs ended up injured at the bottom of the embankment. Ripley sustained severe trauma to her lower back, fracturing her lumbar spine near the level of the pelvis and tail. Determined to help her, Dr. Kerschbaum began reaching out through colleagues and professional networks and eventually found her way to the Animal Neurology Center through a Facebook group appropriately called "Bad Ass Docs."

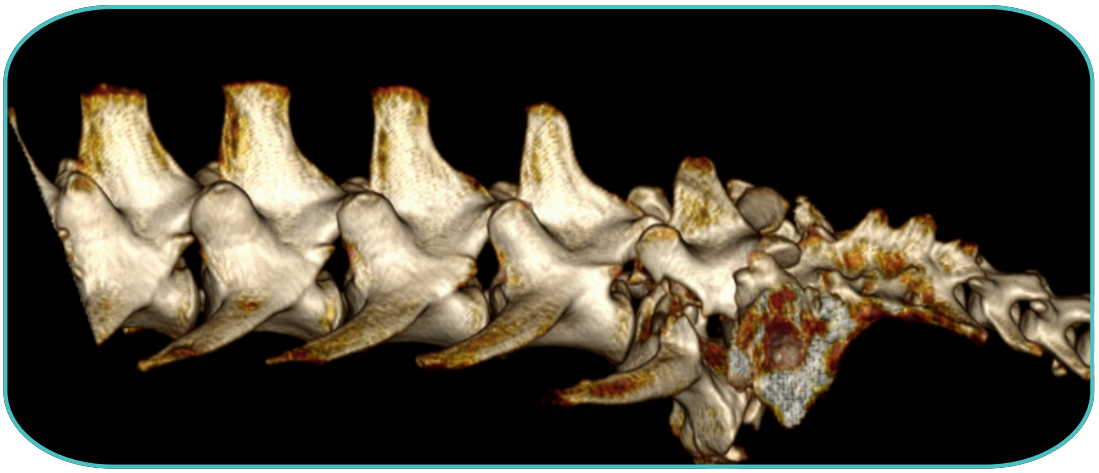


**Scan or click here to watch more of Ripley's story!**

# Featured Case of the Month: Ripley

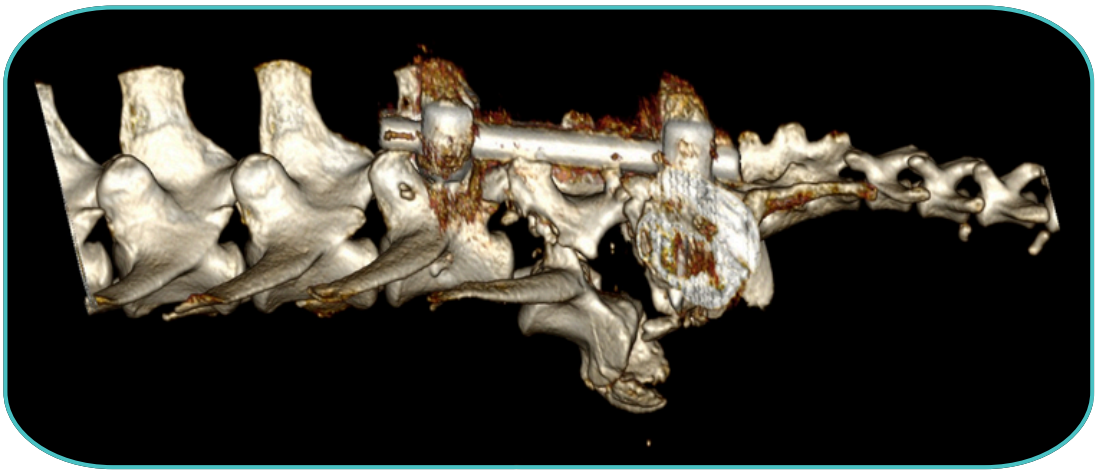
When Ripley arrived at the ANC, there was reason for cautious optimism. Despite the magnitude of the injury, she had retained motor function and deep pain sensation. She was unable to stand comfortably, but this appeared to be driven primarily by severe instability and pain rather than complete neurologic loss.

CT imaging revealed one of the most severe L7 fractures we have encountered. The vertebral body had essentially separated from the dorsal components of the spine, leaving the spine and pelvis connected largely by surrounding soft tissues and musculature. From a biomechanical standpoint, the challenge was not only realigning the fracture, but finding a way to maintain enough stability for healing to occur.



Dr. Kerschbaum believed it was worth trying.

While she returned home to repair her other dog's fractured leg, we proceeded with surgical stabilization using a combination of screws and polyaxial screw-rod fixation systems from our partners at Artemedics.



# Featured Case of the Month: Ripley

The post-operative imaging was encouraging. Alignment had been restored, but the construct itself was spanning a tremendous amount of instability with only a relatively small amount of titanium support across the fracture gap. Cases like this carry understandable concern during the recovery phase because healing depends not only on the surgery, but also on meticulous aftercare and controlled rehabilitation.

Fortunately, Ripley had an ideal recovery partner in Dr. Kerschbaum.



*Watch more of Ripley's Story Here*

Over the following weeks and months, Ripley steadily improved, eventually returning to an active outdoor lifestyle. Watching her now move through rivers, trails, and brush, it is difficult to appreciate the extent of the injury she sustained only months earlier.

Cases like Ripley's are rewarding not simply because of the technical aspects of surgery, but because they highlight what can happen when determined owners, referring veterinarians, and specialists work together toward the same goal.

We are incredibly proud to have played a role in helping Ripley and her family get back to doing what they love most.

**A Note From Ripley's Mom (and fellow veterinarian)!**

"She steadily improved weekly, and now 5 months later she can run, swim, fetch and romp around with her bigger brother. She is happy and has a completely normal gait and QOL. As a veterinarian myself, I am so impressed with Dr. Wininger's specialty skills. His clinic is state of the art, his staff is extremely caring and friendly and I just thank God that someone recommended ANC to me. I will gladly refer any of my patients that need a neurology specialist to Dr. Wininger. I send him videos often of how she is doing because I am just so happy and so impressed and I want him to see his work in motion!"
Sincerely, Melanie Kerschbaum, DVM

# 🤝 Industry Partners

**Precision Through Innovation: The Karl Storz VITOM Exoscope at The ANC**

In neurosurgery, millimeters matter. The difference between a good outcome and a great outcome often comes down to visualization — how clearly a surgeon can see delicate anatomy, differentiate critical structures, and work with precision in confined spaces. At the Animal Neurology Center, innovation is not just about adopting new technology for its own sake. It is about identifying tools that genuinely improve patient care, surgical safety, and surgeon performance. One of the technologies that has transformed the way we perform surgery is the Karl Storz VITOM Exoscope.

Historically, neurosurgeons have relied on surgical loupes — magnifying lenses mounted to glasses with a small headlight positioned above them. While these systems represented a major advancement for decades, they come with limitations. Traditional loupes generally provide only 2–5x magnification with modest illumination. Surgeons often spend hours bent forward with their neck flexed while straining through small optics under intense concentration.

The physical toll of this posture is real. After years of performing surgery, many surgeons experience chronic neck and back pain. Dr. Fred Wininger often jokes that his patients are not the only ones with cervical disc disease — he is more than willing to show visitors the C6-7 disc changes on his own MRI.

Approximately a decade ago, Dr. Wininger adopted the novel use of the Karl Storz exoscope system in veterinary neurosurgery. The transition fundamentally changed the way surgery could be performed.

Unlike traditional loupes, the VITOM exoscope provides dramatically enhanced magnification — approaching approximately 27x zoom — combined with exceptional illumination and image clarity. More importantly, the system allows surgeons to operate while standing upright and viewing a large high-definition monitor rather than hunching directly over the surgical field. This ergonomic advantage reduces physical strain while simultaneously improving visualization of intricate neurologic structures.

The benefits extend well beyond surgeon comfort. Enhanced visualization contributes to more accurate and efficient procedures, minimizes unnecessary tissue manipulation, and improves overall surgical precision. At ANC, we believe these advances contribute meaningfully to patient outcomes. In many cases, our cervical spinal surgery patients are able to return home one to three days sooner than what was historically expected without this technology.

# 🤝 Industry Partners

The exoscope has also transformed the educational environment within our operating room. Traditional surgical magnification systems allow only the surgeon to truly appreciate the operative field.

In contrast, the VITOM system projects the procedure onto high-definition monitors, enabling residents, interns, students, technicians, and visiting surgeons to see exactly what the primary surgeon sees in real time. This aligns perfectly with one of ANC's core values: "Education at Every Level."

In fact, the VITOM exoscope was one of the major draws of our recent veterinary neurosurgical workshop. Surgeons from around the country joined us not only to learn advanced spinal stabilization techniques, but also for the opportunity to train directly with Dr. Wininger on the practical implementation of exoscopic surgery in veterinary medicine. For many attendees, seeing the system integrated into real-world neurosurgical workflows fundamentally changed how they envisioned the future of surgical magnification in their own practices.

At ANC, we are proud to partner with organizations like Karl Storz that share our commitment to innovation, education, and advancing the standards of veterinary specialty care. Technologies like the VITOM exoscope are more than just impressive equipment — they are tools that help us perform safer, more precise surgeries while improving the experience for both patients and surgeons alike.

STORZ
KARL STORZ — ENDOSKOPE


**"The partnership between Karl Storz Veterinary Endoscopy and Dr. Wininger has been a tremendous success over the years. The impact he's made in the St. Louis veterinary community is undeniable, and his commitment to advancing care aligns perfectly with what we strive to deliver every day.**

**The launch of this new course is an exciting step forward—creating more opportunities to train animal neurologists on our products.**
**Dr. Wininger does an amazing job with his fellow instructors teaching clinicians how the Storz VITOM provides better illumination, higher magnification, and is ergonomically advantageous compared to loupes and operating microscopes.**

**Seeing the ANC team bring this vision to life through their hard work and dedication has been truly impressive, and we're proud to be part of what's next."**

**-Brent Holmes,**
**Heartland Karl Storz Veterinary Endoscopy America**

**Learn more about Karl Storz:** www.KarlStorz.com

# 🎓 From the CE Lecture Hall: The ANC's Veterinary Neurosurgical Workshop

The inaugural Veterinary Neurosurgery Workshop at the Animal Neurology Center was more than a continuing education course—it was a glimpse into the future of surgical training. Developed by Amanda Taylor ("AT") and Fred Wininger, the workshop centered on three technologies rapidly changing the landscape of veterinary neurosurgery: patient-specific 3D printed surgical guides, the Artemedics polyaxial rod-screw fixation system, and the Karl Storz VITOM exoscope for advanced surgical magnification and illumination.

None of these technologies are entirely new to veterinary surgery. Both instructors have taught these techniques nationally, and many attendees arrived with prior exposure to at least some aspect of the technology. What made this workshop different was the philosophy behind it: real-world application from beginning to end.

Rather than simply watching lectures or practicing isolated techniques, participants walked through the entire surgical workflow exactly as it occurs in clinical practice. Attendees learned how to acquire advanced imaging, convert imaging data into usable digital files, create and print patient-specific surgical guides, and ultimately implant these technologies into cadaver specimens using modern stabilization systems and advanced visualization tools.

# 🎓 From the CE Lecture Hall: The ANC's Veterinary Neurosurgical Workshop

Along the way, the course emphasized the practical details often omitted from traditional instruction—the small troubleshooting steps, workflow efficiencies, and "tips and tricks" that only emerge through repeated real-world experience. The result was an immersive environment where technology stopped feeling theoretical and became immediately practical.
The workshop also highlighted what has become a defining philosophy of the ANC: education should mirror reality. Advanced learning is no longer about sitting in a lecture hall passively absorbing information. The future belongs to applied education—where clinicians leave not only understanding a concept, but capable of implementing it in their own hospitals the following week.

Of course, no great St. Louis experience would be complete without some local flavor. Between long hours of surgical planning, printing, and hands-on training, attendees gathered for a St. Louis Cardinals game, strengthening the camaraderie and collaboration that make workshops like this special.

By the end of the weekend, one thing became clear: the Animal Neurology Center is building something different. Not simply another continuing education venue, but a new model for advanced veterinary learning—one where innovation, practicality, collaboration, and real clinical experience intersect. The next evolution of applied advanced education has arrived.

> "This type of course is so unique and necessary for the surgical education of neurologists out in private practice."

**--Dr. Annalis Cigarroa, course attendee**

# Superlatives!

At the Animal Neurology Center, we are incredibly proud of the work we do during the day — advanced imaging, complex neurosurgeries, and cutting-edge procedures that help pets with neurologic disease live better lives.

But the real magic often happens at night.

Long after the appointments end and the surgeries are finished, our overnight technicians Jamie and Casi take over, providing the one-on-one care that makes all the difference for our patients. Recovering from neurologic disease can be frightening and uncomfortable, and overnight care is about far more than monitoring. It is about keeping patients safe, comfortable, calm, and loved through the quiet hours of the night.


Recently, our morning team has come in to find our resident dogs and cats have been awarded for their good patient behavior. It's just another reminder that technicians aren't driven by the medicine or the money, it's a calling to heal and to care with compassion, kindness and a bit of fun.

**At ANC, "Your pets are our pets" is more than a phrase. It is the standard by which we care for every patient entrusted to us.**



Patient of the Night
Pickle
cutie patootie


Patient of the Night
Eugene II
such a sweet
older guy


Patient of the Night
Hugo
he is insanely
sweet & beautiful


Patient of the Day
Mando
the sweetest
& Most perfect
patient
BEST BOY


Patient of the Day
TAWNEY
Such a sweet,
cuddly girl
& such a cute
face!
BEST
BFLP


Awarded to:
Heidi
Sweetest & Cutest


Awarded to
Otis
Brave & Cute

# Team Spotlight: Honorary Member Dr. Kaitlin Walker

This month we're celebrating honorary ANC team member Kaitlin Walker (soon to be Wininger), who officially graduated from her doctoral program in Certified Registered Nurse Anesthesia, an immersive 3-year training in how to keep people safe at their most vulnerable.

Prior to her studies in Columbia, SC, Kaitlin served as a charge nurse in a high-level ICU in Charlotte—meaning she somehow voluntarily chose one of the most stressful professions imaginable and decided to level up from there.

Now she's heading to Barnes-Jewish Hospital to begin her career as a nurse anesthetist, and we're thrilled to indoctrinate her to the midwest.

Kaitlin has already become part of the extended ANC ecosystem, especially when it comes to our fancy Mindray anesthesia equipment. It's been genuinely fascinating comparing the worlds of human and veterinary medicine—discovering we're not that different after all.

We're incredibly proud of her accomplishment, and excited to add her expertise to the ANC. She brings with her Kona, her 9 years young heart dog.

Welcome to St. Louis, Dr. Walker!

# Education & Events Calendar

## Upcoming ANC Events

RSVP & SUBSCRIBE TO OUR EVENT CALENDAR!

- **Wednesday, June 24, 2026, 6:30 PM -** Veterinary Team Trivia Night! Bring your team and join us for a night of fun! | Register Here
- **Thursday, July 9, 2026, 6:30 PM –** Perioperative Management of the Brachycephalic Patient | Speaker: Dr. Jill Luther | Register Here

## WHERE YOU'LL FIND ANC DOCTORS SPEAKING

• **May 29, 2026 – Fetch by DVM 360-Nashville, TN** Dr. Wininger speaks on a variety of neurologic topics.

• **June 11-14, 2026 – ACVIM Forum-Seattle, WA** Dr. Wininger will present a keynote lecture on Artificial Intelligence and its impact on Veterinary MRI.

• **June 18, 2026 – MoVMA Southwest meeting-Springfield, MO** Join Dr. Wininger and MoVMA at Prima's Mexican Kitchen for dinner and seizure emergency CE! Register HERE.

- **June 23, 2026 – MoVMA East Central meeting-Hermann, MO** Join Dr. Wininger and MoVMA at The Tin Mill Restaurant for dinner and seizure emergency CE. Register HERE.
- **June 27 - July 4, 2026 – International Veterinary Seminars- FIJI (YES FIJI)!!!** Dr. Wininger speaks on all things neurology in between Mai Tais and Scuba dives- Don't miss it! More info and registration HERE.
- **August 4-6, 2026 –ACVIM Neurosurgery Course - Las Vegas, NV** More info and registration available HERE.