

# More Than a

# Vet

BY DAYNA DUNTEMAN—Most people consider their pets irreplaceable members of the family. Along with such status comes an increased demand for better animal health and quality of life, Visa balance be damned. Veterinarians are responding by specializing in areas of medicine paralleling those of human medicine and by using virtually the same medications, techniques and equipment as M.D.s. They're also making pet health care more convenient than ever before. Below, find out about five local specialty vets—and one pet psychic.

## **Alan Fudge, D.V.M., A.B.V.P.-Avian**

—One of few local veterinarians board-certified in avian practice, Dr. Alan Fudge opened the Avian Medical Center of Sacramento in Citrus Heights in 1982, the first clinic in California dedicated to treating only birds and exotic pets.

The clinic's name has since been changed to The Bird Doctor, and more changes are on the way. In April, Fudge will begin full-time operation of a state-of-the-art mobile clinic. Fudge says he decided to specialize in birds because he'd heard of too many vets turning patients away saying, "Every bird I ever treated, died." He believed bird owners needed better news. And the news can be good provided people receive the right education. Depending on the breed, birds can live up to 10, 20—even 60 to 80—years, but many only live half that long because of poor nutrition. Because it is illegal for birds to be caught in the wild and imported, Fudge is seeing fewer infections than he used to, but more behavioral problems and trauma. "Birds get into trouble when people let them fly around the house," Fudge says.



Signe Beebe, D.V.M., C.V.A. and Barbara

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