

## Local vets help Aurora-bound ?Underground? pups



By Brock Weir

Aside from the residents who are working on the ground in Labrador to make the ?Underground Puppy Railroad? a reality, Aurorans here at home are doing their bit to improve the lives of the dogs.

Doug LeGallais and his team at LeGallais Veterinary Hospital on Wellington Street East have teamed up to provide some initial support for dogs that find a home locally.

They were connected to Mr. Baker and Ms. Dionne by mutual acquaintance Patrice Barker. Dr. LeGallais said he did not hesitate to get into action.

?The problem is the dogs are dying of starvation,? he said. ?They're out in the cold, especially in the temperatures they have up north. They don't have the spay and neuter programs they have down here, so these pups continue to be born and they're neglected and it just breaks your heart.?

Scoundrel, who got her checkup on Friday with proud new owner local dentist Dr. Drew Baker, was not the first of these northern dogs that have come through his office. Moon hailed from the Hudson's Bay region of Ontario and Dr. Doug said he came through his door a year ago with a long-standing client who adopted Moon online.

?Moon was just a beautiful dog and I think people are always afraid of what their temperament is going to be like because of the life they have had,? says Dr. LeGallais. ?They haven't had much socialization, obviously, and people are always worried about how their temperament is going to be to bring them into a family situation.

?I don't have firsthand knowledge of how bad it is up there, but I can just imagine what these dogs have to do just to survive. Veterinarians do get up there periodically to do spays and neuters, but it is just not enough to try and control the pet population. The last thing you need is them breeding new puppies and I do believe there was some abuse going on.

?We're going to give the people who adopt these dogs a leg up and try to help them out on the initial cost of owning these dogs.?