



PRESIDENT'S CORNER: Picnic Time!

By Barbara Hansen

Summer is drawing to an end. Vacations are over. School is beginning. And as September arrives, it's the traditional time for Greyhound Welfare's Annual Picnic. The annual picnic is a time for volunteers and adopters along with their greyhounds to celebrate another year of greyhound camaraderie. This year's picnic will be on Saturday, September 17, 2016 at the Cabin John Regional Park Group Picnic Shelter. Volunteers are working on games, raffles and silent auctions. The picnic shelter and surrounding grounds will provide ample room for attendees to bring their own picnic lunch, blankets, chairs, and of course their greyhound(s).

Greyhound Welfare's first annual picnic was held in 2003 at Caderock Recreation Center, Potomac MD. Subsequent years the annual picnic has been held on a Saturday or Sunday at Caderock as well as Circle D Farms in Woodbine MD, Howard County Fair Grounds in West Friendship MD, Bluemont Park in Arlington VA, Damascus Regional Park in Damascus MD and Black Hill Regional Park in Boyds MD. And for those picnics that were held on a Sunday, the volunteers planned for a TV to be available so die-hard Redskin fans could watch the Sunday afternoon game!



Greyhound Welfare's Annual Picnics have been as big as vendors, caterers, guest speakers, and up to 200 attendees with their greyhounds to as small as a simple bring your own picnic lunch with 50 attendees and their greyhounds. Sometimes the weather has been challenging (pouring rain, cold, windy) but most of the time the weather has been a perfect Fall day - clear skies, crisp clean air, sunny.

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SAVE THE DATE

Our Very Own Greyhound Welfare Picnic

Saturday, September 17th at the Cabin John Park Group Picnic Area, Rockville, MD

Plan to bring your greyhound to our annual picnic, bigger and better than ever!

Greyhounds Reach The Beach

October 6th through October 9th at Rehoboth and Dewey Beaches in DE

An annual gathering of hounds and humans with lots of events, presentations, and vendors. More information and registration available at www.grtb.org

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Many, many volunteers have been involved with the picnics. Reserving a location usually takes place 6 months before the event. The bigger picnics involved months of pre-planning, mailing picnic flyers to hundreds of adopters, ticket sales, orders for food, soliciting sponsor donations, and arranging for vendors and a guest speaker. The simpler picnics still involve many volunteers to arrange for games, raffles and silent auctions. All the work is a labor of love as they say. The aim is to have a fun afternoon for humans and greyhounds.

This year's Picnic will be a simple celebration of our greyhounds and the friendships we have made through our doggies. The Picnic is a bring your own picnic lunch & beverages (no alcohol), blankets, chairs and of course all the creature comforts for your greyhounds (water, treats, blanket). Our greyhounds will have the opportunity to play games as well as contests for various categories (such as oldest and youngest greyhound). There will be prizes and of course plenty of petting and treats. Our volunteers are also working on raffles and silent auction items.

Here are some photos of last year's Picnic. The weather last year was perfect - hint: let's all put in an order for the same for this year's picnic on Saturday September 17, 2016! So mark your calendar and join your fellow greyhound lovers this year to continue Greyhound Welfare's Annual Picnic tradition.



OSTEOSARCOMA

By Jane Shivnan

It is something we all dread – a snapped bone, a yelp of pain, an X-ray with the tragic news that a beloved greyhound has the distinctive tumor of osteosarcoma. It often means making quick decisions about your greyhound's future with the help of your vet and family. Learning more about this disease, its prognosis and possible treatments, may help you if you ever have to make those decisions.

What is osteosarcoma?

Osteosarcoma is a primary bone cancer, meaning that it develops from cells in the bone, rather than traveling to the bone from another tumor site (bone metastases). In humans it is a rare cancer (about 1,000 new cases a year) and occurs most often in children and young adolescents. It is much more common in dogs, with about 10,000 new cases each year affecting mostly middle-aged dogs. Osteosarcoma can affect any bone but most tumors occur in a limb and are called appendicular osteosarcoma. In a 2007 survey of 747 retired racing greyhounds, osteosarcoma was the most common reported cancer and accounted for 25% of the reported deaths.

What causes osteosarcoma?

A number of theories have been investigated over time. The strongest evidence suggests that genetic factors account for much of the risk. A large study of Scottish Deerhounds (Phillips et al., 2007) showed that almost 70% of the cause was inherited (genetic). Extensive gene mapping in three breeds (greyhounds, Rottweilers, and Irish wolfhounds) revealed strong evidence for inherited risk in racing greyhounds (Karlsson et al., 2013). Interestingly, non-racing greys (American Kennel Club registered) are a subpopulation with very low rates of osteosarcoma and do not seem to have the same genetic markers. Environmental factors thought to contribute to the risk for osteosarcoma in dogs include rapid growth and metallic implants used to fix naturally occurring fractures. Male dogs have been reported to have 20-50% greater risk, which is believed to be hormonal.

How is osteosarcoma diagnosed?

Osteosarcoma can present with lameness, localized swelling, or a sudden fracture and acute pain. The most common locations in a greyhound are proximal humerus (shoulder), distal femur (thigh), proximal tibia (below the knee), and proximal femur (near the hip joint). Hip pain in a greyhound may be due to arthritis, strain or osteosarcoma and should not be presumed to be hip dysplasia, which is extremely rare in greyhounds. Diagnosis is based on clinical symptoms and X-rays. In most cases the X-ray is sufficient to make the diagnosis.

Although we often think of bones as hard white structures, they are actually in constant repair and renewal, and have a rich blood supply (think of bone marrow). Unfortunately this makes it very likely that cancer cells from the tumor will have already traveled via the bloodstream to other sites, most often the lung. Lung X-rays will be used to look for this spread (metastases, also called metastatic dis-

ease), and other imaging studies (such as CT or MRI) may be recommended. Lung metastases are large enough to be visible in less than 10% of newly diagnosed osteosarcoma. If lung metastases are large enough to be visible on X-ray, the prognosis is very poor. Alkaline phosphatase (ALP) levels may also be checked in a blood test, as higher levels suggest a worse prognosis.

Dr. C. Guillermo Couto, internationally recognized as a greyhound veterinary expert, has published and researched many greyhound health issues. Couto Veterinary Consultants (CVC) provides consultation and second opinions by e-mail, with follow up by telephone or videoconferencing, as needed (<http://www.coutovetconsultants.com/>). If X-rays are not conclusive it may be helpful to consult Dr. Couto.

What is the standard treatment for appendicular osteosarcoma?

Amputation of the affected limb provides immediate pain relief, and should be followed by chemotherapy to prevent or slow metastatic disease. Aminocaproic Acid (Amicar) is an anti-bleeding agent that should be used as part of the amputation surgery. The most commonly used chemotherapy agent is now carboplatin, with four to six doses usually given. A small study published in 2012 showed that a single subcutaneous (through a needle under the skin) continuous infusion of carboplatin over three to seven days after limb amputation had the same survival benefit as the standard administration of weekly intravenous (into a vein) doses. In the past cisplatin was often used, as it was cheaper (although it had more side effects), but carboplatin is no longer patented and its price is now competitive with cisplatin. Some vets like to use an alternating chemotherapy program of Carboplatin and Doxorubicin. The Greyhound Health Initiative, founded by Dr. Couto (<http://www.greyhoundhealthinitiative.org>), can provide some financial assistance for carboplatin and aminocaproic acid.

Most dogs recover quickly from surgery, tolerate chemotherapy well, and are able to return to normal activity faster than we would think. Life as a 3-legged greyhound...a tripod...is not so bad!

It is important to realize that amputation and chemotherapy do not cure canine osteosarcoma, however, only slow the spread of this aggressive cancer. Studies have shown that amputation and chemotherapy prolong survival by about a year. Some dogs will not live that long, and some dogs will live longer. In very rare cases, some greyhounds have survived a few years.

If amputation and chemotherapy is not possible, pain control with medications is essential. Not all greyhounds are good candidates for surgery, and if the disease is already visible in the lungs, chemotherapy is not likely to be helpful. Strong pain medications will be needed. Palliative radiation therapy to the tumor site (involving one to four weekly treatments) can also be used to reduce inflammation and pain. Palliative radiation and pain medications may provide some days or weeks of time, but planned euthanasia is the most humane outcome for our beloved animals when they are experiencing such a painful and aggressive disease. An osteosarcoma fracture will not heal, and is a

crisis requiring a relatively quick decision – to amputate and give chemotherapy, or to euthanize.

What other treatment options are available?

There is no current proven alternative to the standard treatment of amputation and chemotherapy, but there is ongoing research. Clinical trials are research studies investigating the safety and efficacy of new treatments, and often compare a new treatment against a standard treatment. Frequently the new treatment and monitoring tests are provided at no cost, and sometimes the standard treatment is also financially supported. The Veterinary Cancer Society website has helpful information about clinical trials and a searchable database (<http://www.vetcancersociety.org/pet-owners/clinical-trials/>).

Some examples of clinical trials available in our region are summarized below; contact the researchers for more information.

Clinical Trial: Clinical trial in dogs with newly diagnosed osteosarcoma.

Institution: Multiple sites, including Ohio State, University of Pennsylvania, and Virginia-Maryland Regional College of Veterinary Medicine.

Notes: Compares standard treatment with standard of care plus Rapamycin. Must be newly diagnosed with no prior treatment.

Contact Information:

Christina Mazcko
mazckoc@mail.nih.gov
1-301-402-8634

Clinical Trial: Clinical trial using immunotherapy for dogs with osteosarcoma.

Institution: University of Pennsylvania

Notes: Upcoming trial investigating a HER2-targeting bacterial vaccine after standard treatment.

Contact Information:

Nicola Mason
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1-215-898-3996

Martha Maloney Huss
martham@upenn.edu
1-215-898-6289

Clinical Trial: Phenotypic characterization of peripheral blood monocytes in canine osteosarcoma.

Institution: North Carolina State University

Notes: Collecting blood samples for study; no visit required.

Contact Information:

Lyndy Harden
lbharden@ncsu.edu
1-919-513-6384

How do I decide what to do?

The long-term prognosis for dogs with osteosarcoma remains very poor. Standard treatment with limb amputation and chemotherapy can provide months of pain-free quality of life, and for a few dogs, may provide a couple of years. Sometimes standard treatment is not possible, and euthanasia is the best and most humane option. Unfortunately, greyhounds with lung metastases already visible on X-rays, with elevated alkaline phosphatase levels at diagnosis, or young greyhounds (who are likely to have more aggressive disease), may not be good candidates for amputation and chemotherapy. There are no right or wrong answers. If you ever have to make these decisions, consider options with your vet, and consider getting consultation or advice from Couto Veterinary Consultants. Reach out to family and friends, the Greyhound Welfare community, and online greyhound communities, for support.

Resources

Couto Veterinary Consultants
www.coutovetconsultants.com
Consultation and second opinions

Greyhound Health Initiative
www.greyhoundhealthinitiative.org
Education and resources for sighthound owners and vets, including free carboplatin and Amicar

Greytalk Osteosarcoma thread
<http://forum.greytalk.com/index.php/topic/305786-osteotthread-part-8/?p=5667884>
Online community of greyhound lovers

National Canine Cancer Foundation
www.wearethecure.org
General information about cancers in dogs, including osteosarcoma

Tripawds www.tripawds.com
Online community for three-legged pet blogs and resources

Veterinary Cancer Society
www.vetcancersociety.org
Information about animal cancers, veterinary oncology, and clinical trials

References

Karlsson, E.K., et al. (2013). Genome-wide analyses implicate 33 loci in heritable dog osteosarcoma, including regulatory variants near CDKN2A/B. *Genome Biology*, 14, R132.

Lord, L.K., et al. (2007). Results of a web-based health survey of retired racing greyhounds. *Journal of Veterinary Internal Medicine*, 21, 1243-1250.

Phillips, J.C., et al. (2007). Heritability and segregation analysis of osteosarcoma in the Scottish deerhound. *Genomics*, 90(3), 354-363.

Simcock, J.O., et al. (2012). Evaluation of a single subcutaneous infusion of carboplatin as adjuvant chemotherapy for dogs with osteosarcoma: 17 cases (2006–2010). *Journal of the American Veterinary Medical Association*, 241(5), 608-614.

DOGFISH HEAD FUNDRAISER

On Tuesday, August 16, the Dogfish Head Ale House in Fairfax, VA hosted an "Eating Out for Greyhound Welfare" evening. 15% of the day's proceeds were donated to Greyhound Welfare. The silent auction and 50/50 raffle were also a huge success! Kudos to organizers Lucy Kon, Barbara Schmidt, and Susan Ziobro, and to all of you who came out to support Greyhound Welfare.



GREYHOUNDS ON VACATION

Telli's nap on a chilly morning in Maine.



This is Kalamata "Kala" Olive (f.k.a. To Me), owners the Bender family, on vacation in Dewey Beach. It was Kala's first time and she LOVED it!!

This is a picture of Nikko (below) on her way to Dewey Beach with friends of ours who were babysitting her while we were on vacation. -Cameron and Amanda McCurry



Here are two photos of Kalin during our trip to Grapehounds in New York in late July. The photo with the blue background (right) was taken by Axell Photography of Maine who was taking portraits at the Grapehounds event.

The second photo (below) is of Kalin relaxing at a cabin on Cincinnatus Lake which is about an hour east of Ithaca, NY.



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The Skinny on Greyhound Welfare is a publication of Greyhound Welfare, Inc. Greyhound Welfare is a placement group for retired racing greyhounds. The group makes placements in the metropolitan Washington D.C area (Maryland, Virginia and DC). Greyhound Welfare is a 100% foster home group, which means that all our greyhounds live in real homes until they are placed. This helps us teach the dogs about their new world, and learn more about the individual dogs. Knowing our dogs well helps us greatly with our placement success.

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To submit story and photo ideas, please send an email to newsletter@greyhoundwelfare.org.

To inquire about adopting a retired racing greyhound or volunteering with Greyhound Welfare, please visit our website at www.greyhoundwelfare.org.

