

DIRECTOR'S UPDATE



I hope you're all enjoying this holiday season! In the U.S. our Thanksgiving is just behind us and though our Canadian friends celebrated theirs two months ago, we all still have a lot to be thankful for. Together we raised \$10,000 for canine cancer research through several campaigns and several private contributions. These funds will be presented to Dr. Nicola Mason to assist with her ongoing cancer research at the University of Pennsylvania School of Veterinary Medicine. You may already be familiar with her work if you've heard of the Canine Osteosarcoma Vaccine. If not, we have an update in this issue of this very promising procedure.

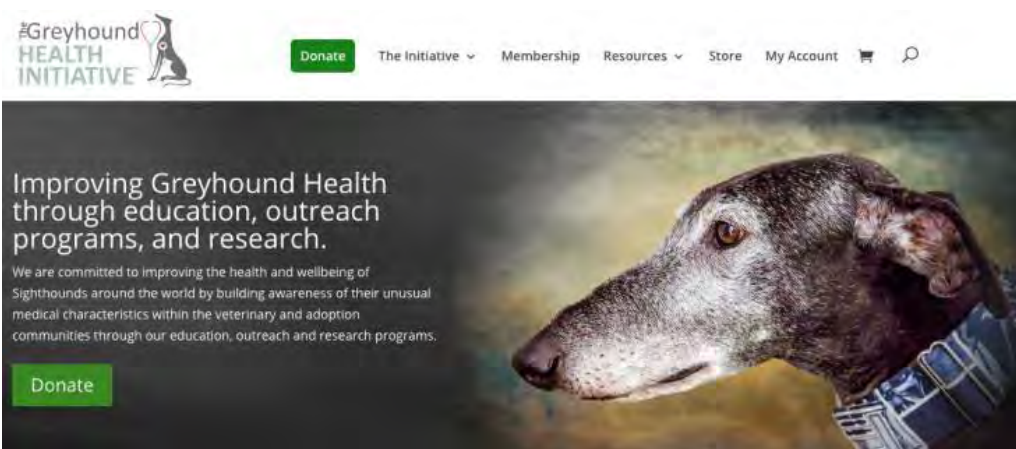
As the Associate Professor of Medicine and Pathobiology, Dr. Mason has several studies going at any given moment and her lab, through innovative clinical trials in canine cancer patients, is working in concert with clinical oncologists to evaluate the safety and efficacy of both active immunization and passive adoptive transfer of genetically modified T cells in the treatment of spontaneously occurring cancer. That's a mouthful! In simple terms, this is the cutting edge of [human and animal] cancer research and we are proud to support her in her efforts. In this issue you'll find more details about Dr. Mason's research and the studies we're supporting.

Even with that good news it's still been a roller-coaster of a year: We planned - and subsequently had to cancel - our 2nd annual International Sighthound Health & Wellness Conference in August. Lack of interest in a breed-specific conference was a common theme heard from both the veterinary community and sponsors and has caused us to re-evaluate and re-think the future of our conferences. More information on that will be forthcoming. Keep an eye on our website and Facebook page where we'll release details as they become available.

Speaking of our [website](#)...

Have you noticed our updated look? We undertook the massive effort of redesigning our site while also upgrading all of the back-end systems that support it. We rolled it out just in time for the 11th Annual online Miss Nellie Auction, which we were able to fully host ourselves for the first time using one of those

upgraded systems. But no matter how much we planned and tested, there were still hurdles that only a live auction environment allowed us to find. Or should I say, "...allowed *you* to find" since it was the hundreds of extra eyes on it that identified the issues. For this I am indescribably thankful. Not for the hurdles themselves, but for the incredible things it revealed about our community; the way the GHI team



expediently dealt with the issues at every turn and for the incredible patience, perseverance and loyalty our supporters showed in sticking with us to raise over \$6,000 for canine cancer research in this auction. And I would be remiss if I didn't give a special thank you to all of our donors, who parted with their cherished greyhound memorabilia and allowed others to bid on them to help us raise these funds. One group in particular, The Whirled Famous Unruly Boys Chat Club, donated a significant percentage of the items in the auction and also made a generous contribution to cover shipping. I've said it before and I'll keep saying it because it's still true: Greyhound people are the best kind of people!

Another hill on this coaster was the recent media storm surrounding a canine blood bank in Texas that was closed down due to alleged poor living conditions for the dogs (mostly, if not exclusively, Greyhounds). Some say they deserved to be shut down, others say it was a witch-hunt, and both sides presented "irrefutable" evidence. The response, as it so often is on social media, was visceral. Even the National Greyhound Association eventually weighed in on the matter and announced a new policy regarding adoptable Greyhounds and blood banks. And, of course, because The Greyhound Health Initiative also runs a canine blood bank, we got caught up in the fray, receiving numerous emails and PMs — and one threatening phone call — questioning our practices. I responded publicly on social media and soon we will also be publishing detailed processes and procedures on our website. We offer this transparency as evidence that we hold the health and wellbeing of our donors, and all animals, in the highest regard. Learn more in our Blood Bank update.

*"Muzzles are not
punitive devices."
-Dennis McKeon*

Our guest writer in this issue is Dennis McKeon. Dennis has written numerous articles on understanding Greyhounds, has been working with them for over 40 years as a professional trainer, is the co-founder of Race For Adoption and studies Greyhound bloodlines. Regardless of your stance on racing, these articles on *separation anxiety* and *prey drive* may help shed some light on why your hounds do some of the things they do.

We hope you find this issue of The Healthy Hound Quarterly as informative an entertaining as previous issues. If you have any suggestions on topics you'd like to see us cover, or would like to submit your own hound's story, please contact Leslie at lglynn@greyhoundhealthinitiative.org.

Thank you, as always, for your support.
Sincerely,



Executive Director

"Articles and product information within the Healthy Hound Quarterly are not intended as a substitute for medical advice and, while the information contained herein is provided as a reference, it should not under any circumstance replace proper veterinary care and diagnostics".

OUR SPOTLIGHT IS ON Dr. Nichola Mason



Dr. Nichola Mason, PhD, DACVIM

Cancer is the leading cause of death in dogs over the age of 10. Currently, three main types of cancer treatment exist for dogs and cats – surgery, radiation, and chemotherapy. These treatments are used either alone or in combination to eliminate cancer cells from the body.

Despite these treatments, some cancer cells usually survive leading to disease relapse or progression. Unfortunately, most patients usually die of relapsed, drug-resistant metastatic disease.

Another type of therapy that is rapidly gaining attention in the treatment of cancer in people is *immunotherapy*. Cancer immunotherapy aims to create, redirect, or strengthen the patient's own immune response to target and kill cancer cells in the body.

Immunotherapy encompasses many different treatment modalities, including monoclonal antibodies, cancer vaccines, cell-based therapies (CAR-T cells, antigen presenting cell vaccines, and others), and checkpoint inhibitors.

A considerable amount of work by a number of different veterinary researchers has been performed to understand the genetic basis of hemangiosarcoma. In her research project The Greyhound Health Initiative is supporting, Dr. Mason's team is delving deeper into understanding what genetic mutations occur in hemangiosarcoma. In collaboration with geneticists and bioinformatics experts at the School of Medicine, they are working on a project to sequence all the genes in splenic hemangiosarcoma tumors via a technique called *whole exome sequencing*. Their aim is to determine what genes are mutated in each patient's tumor to gain a better understanding of the abnormalities that contribute to hemangiosarcoma initiation and progression. This work aims not only to further our understanding of the disease but also to determine which signaling pathways inside the tumor cells are active and to provide information on what types of molecules might be useful as therapeutic targets. They aim to develop a diagnostic gene panel that will enable each patient's tumor to be rapidly analyzed to identify tumor drivers that may be effectively targeted and so choose the best option for treatment for that patient. This "personalized medicine" approach aims to provide the best type of treatment first for each patient. While the types of therapies that might be employed to block certain pathways in splenic hemangiosarcoma are not currently commercially available, they are currently under development in the human sector and these or similar products may become available in the future.

Dr. Nichola Mason B.Vet.Med., PhD, DACVIM, Associate Professor of Medicine and Pathobiology, runs a translational research laboratory that focuses on ways to train the immune system to recognize and kill cancers in veterinary species. Find out more about her lab and ongoing research [here](#). Her lab also usually has multiple trials going that may be looking for participants. You can read more about those trials [here](#).

PLAYTIME SAFETY FOR GREYHOUNDS

Greyhounds LOVE to play! When alone, they can amuse themselves quite nicely with toys, stuffies and whatever else they find around the house that catches their eye. They also like to play with other Greyhounds. Retired racers have grown up in the company of each other from birth, through puppyhood, throughout their training and on into the racing kennel. They are well socialized within their own community and they are comfortable with and enjoy the company of their own kind.

The Greyhound community is a very close family with many Greyhound owners knowing one another in their neighborhoods and within their cities. Play groups have become a common event organized by local adoption groups as well as groups of friends as a chance to socialize, talk about their hounds and let the hounds have a good romp with other hounds.

Safety at the playground is of the utmost importance when there is a gathering of canines. There is a good reason a lot of Greyhound owners avoid taking their hounds to dog parks. Dogs can quickly revert to pack behavior when one dog appears weak or hurt. Pack behavior can turn a playful outing into tragedy. Many people at dog parks do not watch their dogs closely and do not recognize bullying behavior of one dog by another. Many do not respect the size rule of small dogs on one side and large dogs on the other. This can put a Greyhound at risk of doing what comes naturally for them as prey driven canines which may lead to legal problems and your hound being labeled as vicious.

Many dog owners do not follow leash laws. How many times have we seen someone with their off leash little dog thundering toward your “not cat/small dog safe” Greyhound while loudly stating that their little dog is friendly! That’s nice, but my Greyhound will dispatch your little dog in a heartbeat if given the opportunity. While many Greyhounds are small dog/cat safe, why put your hound at risk.



Safety FIRST!
ALL HOUNDS IN THE PLAY AREA SHOULD BE MUZZLED! NO EXCEPTIONS!

This is one of the most important safety rules for Play Groups! ALL racing kennels do turnout with ALL Greyhounds muzzled for a reason. Decades of experience has taught them that any time there is a gathering of canines that mischief, arguments and injury can happen. This is for their own safety and protection. Greyhounds have thin fragile skin which tears easily and muzzles will prevent injury if play becomes aggressive or pack behavior takes over.

Muzzles are also a must when transporting more than one hound in your houndmobile. Space is sometimes at a premium and toes and occasionally noses, will be accidentally stepped on. Grumpiness may ensue so muzzles can prevent a snarky nip.

Play times should be mornings and late afternoon. Hounds can overheat quickly even in pleasant weather so monitor them closely.



Muzzles for safety during Gizmo and Bandita's playtime. Photo courtesy of Judy Bond Losey

Greyhound owners should ALWAYS be in the play area monitoring their hounds.

Pick a play area that is COMPLETELY fenced in and check the play area for large rocks, holes and other dangers that might compromise your hound's safety.

Limit the number of hounds playing at any given time if there are a lot of hounds present. Rotate in and out with time outs for rest and hydration.

Those hounds not in the play area should be kept on leash with a shady place to rest.

The play group should be limited to Sighthounds only.

Limit the number of toys within the play area. This decreases the chance of squabbles over those toys.

Monitor your hound's behavior while in the play area. If they become too aggressive when playing, a time out for them may be required.

No children should be in the play area with the hounds as they may be knocked over or hurt.

Ultimately you, as the owner, are responsible for the safety and wellbeing of your hound. Playgroups are a wonderful activity for your Greyhound and an opportunity for them to socialize with other hounds. It is also a greyt opportunity for you to get to know other families within your Greyhound community and to share not only your hounds, but also the knowledge you have gained through your life with hounds.

PLAY SAFE!!

Leslie Glynn December 2017

A WORD ABOUT MUZZLES AND PREY DRIVE

By Dennis McKeon

I wish I had a fifty dollar bill for each time I heard someone remark “The reason Greyhounds wear those muzzles, is because they’re vicious.”

Now anyone who has even the slightest familiarity with the National Greyhound Association racing Greyhound, might be astounded by such an absurd notion. How could anyone think such a thing? These dogs are universally acclaimed for their placid, sweet and gentle nature. Well, to understand how this characterization became part of the racing Greyhound’s pop narrative, we have to go back to the earliest days of anti-racing activism. Even then, the people who knew the least about the Greyhound were writing that narrative, and making it up as they went along--as they continue to do today.

There was a time when most young Greyhounds were given the opportunity to course after live game (the pestilence of jackrabbits), prior to beginning their racing careers. The anti-racing activists of the 1970s and 80s, focused much of their energy and effort toward banning the practice of live game coursing by Greyhounds. Eventually, they succeeded, in some locales.



Greyhounds lure coursing at Raisin River Rhodesian Ridgeback Club of Michigan event – Photo courtesy of Kathy Lazenby

The way they went about getting their point across, however, was to portray Greyhounds as having been “trained to kill”, and as a result of such savagery, having been made bloodthirsty and entirely unpredictable. Naturally, they wore muzzles.

Needless to say, the old media had a field day spreading this nonsense far and wide, and thus was born the Genesis book of Popular Greyhound Mythology. We won’t delve into the problems this toxic propaganda created for racing’s own early adoption pioneers, or the retired Greyhounds who were to be the first generation (and several later generations) of the organized, retired Greyhounds-as-pets phenomenon.

In their real world, Greyhounds wear muzzles so that they can’t injure one another during play or roughhousing sessions, and for their own safety, should one of those sessions become a little too animated. Having extremely thin skin, and storing relatively little body fat, that thin skin is quite easily

penetrated and torn, as most owners of retired racers have learned. They do not, and have never worn them, because they pose a common and imminent threat to humans.

Now, racing professionals insist that their greyhounds be muzzled at all times during turnout sessions, when there can be as many as 25-30 greyhounds in one turnout area. This, again, is for the Greyhounds' own protection.



Bay Bay (Bay Invasion) in the turnout pen with her friends at the racing kennel.

Muzzles are not punitive devices.

The dogs can drink water, and can still sniff around the turnout pens--or their neighbors' nether regions--to their heart's content. The muzzle simply provides a protective barrier against injury, when the occasional scuffle or fight breaks out. And that can happen in a flash, when fiercely competitive Greyhounds, in the prime of life and in peak physical condition, take exception to the antics of one another.

Now, we occasionally read of the misfortunes of Greyhound pets, who have been allowed to play as part of a group, un-muzzled. A fight breaks out, turns into a donnybrook, and before order can be restored, one or more of the participants is in dire need of emergency vet care--or worse. And it can be much worse.

So once again, we have to view the Greyhound through the prism of thousands of years of selective breeding toward a specific function. They are genetically hardwired to chase prey (or prey effigies, as in racing and lure coursing), and upon seizing that prey, to quickly dispatch it. This genetic hardwiring is what we commonly call "prey drive".

Now all canines are prey driven to one degree or another. In the case of the sporting Greyhound, however, that irrepressible desire to sight, chase and dispatch prey, lurks just beneath their very thin skin—and it can demand to be let out at the slightest provocation. Thousands of years of selective breeding toward a specific function will do that.

The trigger for projection of that prey drive need not be a moving object, nor the cries of a hare in distress. It can be the "yelp" of another dog, who has simply been stepped on during a light galloping session, or while passively standing still.

It is not anything the Greyhound can control, or that you can train or wish away.



Greyhound play can lead to issues, think big teeth and thin skin. Photo courtesy of The Greyhounds' Yarn

The larger the play group, the more chance there is that un-muzzled greyhounds might do some real damage to one another, should things get even slightly out of hand. Once the frenzy begins, it isn't controllable by anything other than physically interjecting oneself into the melee, and moving the dog(s) who is under attack, to a safe space. It goes without saying that the chances of things escalating to that degree, are significantly reduced when all potential participants are muzzled. It's basic, common sense.

I know it may be hard for some of you to envision your dozy, elegant, demure, needle-nosed sofa ornament, as a fierce and fiery hunter, capable of committing mortal acts at the mere pitch of a sound. But they can, and they may, particularly if we decide for ourselves, that there is but a single, passive dimension to them. That is most certainly not the case. And it is why, in the case of muzzles, an ounce of prevention is worth a shipload of cure.



Muzzles for safety AND as an elegant fashion statement

We are dealing with real flesh and blood hunting dogs, who have been bred to do just that (or a reasonable facsimile thereof) for countless generations, and thousands of years. Whatever whimsical notions you have about your Greyhound, true as they may be in their home environment, remember that their essence, as a sporting breed with an unusually high prey drive, and the capacity to act on that in the blink of an eye, is no less the case.

When in doubt, get the muzzles out.

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VACCINE HOLDS PROMISE FOR TREATING OSTEOSARCOMA IN DOGS

By Katie Burns

Posted Nov. 15, 2017

Veterinarians in the audience wanted to know when they could get their hands on the new treatment.

Dr. Sue Ettinger, a veterinary oncologist, had mentioned a promising vaccine for osteosarcoma in dogs when she presented "Osteosarcoma Survival Guide" at AVMA Convention 2017 this past July in Indianapolis.

A study by Dr. Nicola J. Mason in 18 dogs with osteosarcoma but free from gross metastatic disease found that the median survival time was 956 days with the vaccine, compared with 423 days in a historical control group. At press time, Aratana Therapeutics Inc. hoped to receive a conditional license for a freeze-dried version of the vaccine by year's end from the Department of Agriculture's Center for Veterinary Biologics.



*Dr. Nicola J. Mason, an associate professor of medicine at the University of Pennsylvania School of Veterinary Medicine, is studying a Listeria-based vaccine to treat dogs with osteosarcoma.
(Courtesy of the University of Pennsylvania School of Veterinary Medicine)*

Osteosarcoma in dogs is similar to the disease in children in terms of initial signs, progression, and propensity for metastasis as well as possibly the presence on tumor cells of the HER2/neu receptor, which is present in certain other cancers. Yvonne Paterson, PhD, a microbiologist at the university's medical school, has developed an experimental vaccine using an attenuated *Listeria* strain to target HER2/neu, originally focusing on human patients with other HER2/neu-positive cancers such as breast cancer. The data in mice were very promising. In the field of veterinary medicine, "We all recognize the need for better, safer, kinder, and more effective treatments for dogs with cancer," Dr. Mason said. "And this need is clearly evident in osteosarcoma."

Researchers have speculated that osteosarcomas in dogs are usually HER2/neu-positive, although this is still a matter of debate. Dr. Mason said about 70 to 80 percent of osteosarcoma tumors that have been examined in her laboratory have positive staining by immunohistochemistry using a polyclonal anti-HER2/neu antibody.

The pilot study of the vaccine involved dogs with appendicular osteosarcoma that was found by immunohistochemical methods to be HER2/neu-positive. Dogs in the experimental group underwent amputation, follow-up chemotherapy, and then vaccination. Dogs in the historical control group had only amputation and follow-up chemotherapy. Dogs in both groups had minimal residual disease following chemotherapy.

"We know that most of these dogs relapse with metastatic disease, so clearly cancer is left after chemotherapy," Dr. Mason said. "And we were asking the question: Could this vaccine induce an immune response which would eliminate those remaining cancer cells?"

The vaccine was created by removing many of the virulence genes from the *Listeria* organisms and genetically modifying the bacteria to express HER2/neu. The immune system attacks the attenuated *Listeria* organisms and learns to kill other cells that express HER2/neu, including osteosarcoma cells, at least hypothetically. Although other healthy cells do express HER2/neu, the pilot study did not find any evidence of targeting of other tissues.

The first two dogs in the pilot study are alive as of this writing in October. Scooby Doo was found to have osteosarcoma on May 1, 2012, and Dolly on June 1, 2012. Other dogs are alive after four to 4 1/2 years. The survival rate was 67 percent at two years and 50 percent at three years. Some dogs did not respond and died of metastatic disease. So now one question is: Why do some respond and others don't—and is it possible to predict responders versus nonresponders?

Dr. Mason said: "These dogs live normal lives. They have an excellent quality of life. If you look at these dogs, other than the fact that they are missing a limb, you wouldn't know anything's wrong with them." She has pictures of the dogs all around her office.

These dogs live normal lives. They have an excellent quality of life. If you look at these dogs, other than the fact that they are missing a limb, you wouldn't know anything's wrong with them."

Dr. Nicola J. Mason, associate professor of medicine, University of Pennsylvania School of Veterinary Medicine

The pilot study was part of a program by biotechnology company Advaxis Inc. to develop a *Listeria*-based vaccine to target various HER2/neu-expressing cancers. Advaxis licensed the product to Aratana Therapeutics, which is developing and manufacturing the vaccine for dogs.

Dr. Ernst Heinen, a veterinarian who is chief development officer for Aratana, said the Advaxis product is frozen, not a good way to distribute a product on the veterinary side. Aratana created a freeze-dried product to distribute at refrigerated temperatures.

Receiving a conditional license from the USDA would give Aratana the opportunity to start commercialization of the vaccine for osteosarcoma in dogs but not under a brand name. The vaccine is administered as three doses two weeks apart with boosters every six months.

Starting out, the company will provide the product to certain clinics to run an additional safety study in the field, a necessary step to apply for full licensure. Aratana is working on being ready soon to start manufacturing and distribution.

"This technology is very exciting for everyone; it's something completely new," Dr. Heinen said. He said veterinarians "are eagerly awaiting for the product to be released."

ONE IS THE LONELIEST NUMBER

By Leslie Glynn

When is it right to add another hound to the pack? The reasons can be many. Sometimes it's a well thought out decision and other times it's a fly by the seat of your pants spur of the moment decision. There is also a time when the decision is made because of a particular need. A need, we as humans, see clearly and irrevocably as not our need, but the need of another. It is a choice we make for the sake of someone else's heart and not that of our own.

For many years they have come through the seemingly, always revolving, door of our house, our lives and our hearts. Each of our Greyhounds have come in different ways, joining us according to their needs, or ours. The reasons for welcoming each of them into the Miami Hound House have been very easy, very different, and all very right.

When adding another hound to our pack, reason and logic are frequently thrown to the wind. They are a fait accompli, carved in stone, with no regard to how it would affect our lives. These Greyhound choices have been made purely from the gut but have always been countenanced by my heart. Only once has a hound come to us in the midst of emotional chaos, grief and despair. Though the decisions to come were hard, they were fated and undeniable.



L to R – Jim (Neuces Wolfer). Ryce (Hillas Rice) and Bo (Irish racing name unknown)

We had lived happily with our three original pups for quite some time. Bo, our girlie hound had come home with my daughter from England. She was a beautiful brindle and white bundle of love. She had a sweet nature and loved to snuggle, wrapped in a mishmash of comforter and pillows. Ryce was our diplomatic gentleman. He was waiting for his new sister Bo when they arrived in Miami. Their introduction was an easy acceptance of one another which transformed quickly into a strong and loving bond. Bo and Ryce were joined later by Jim, a big fawn boy who had come for a sleepover and never went home. He was our eighty pound lap dog who wanted nothing more than to be with his humans. These three hounds had lived together with only the occasional squabble. They truly loved being together. It was a very happy hound home indeed.



Our lap dog Jim



Bo at RAF Lakenheath in Suffolk, England

There came the day though, when I knew that our pack was going to change. Bo had become ill, her liver failing. Ryce and Jim seemed to understand her frailty, treating her with a gentle deference. Early on a Sunday morning, I returned from the vet without our precious Bo. Jim and Ryce seemed to sense my broken heart and sadness. Jim put his head in my lap as if to console me. Ryce leaned on me in his dignified way for a while and then went to the window, staring out. I knew he was looking for Bo. He would check her bed, staring at it as though willing her to be there. He was always waiting for her at the window, his Bo, always looking for her. I watched helplessly, not knowing how to console him, simply loving him more. Jim gave Ryce his space but stayed close with an occasional gentle nudge of muzzle to nose, as if to tenderly kiss his brother and tell him it would be alright. We gave him Bo's bed and blankets and put her collar on him and this seemed to help his sadness. Over time, Ryce seemed to quietly accept that Bo would not be coming back. I finally had hope that our household could return to some semblance of normal. But that was not to be.

Four weeks to the day of our loss of Bo, my daughter woke me early that Sunday morning, crying frantically. Jim was on the patio and something was terribly wrong. He could not get up and appeared to be in great physical distress. As I quickly threw on my clothes and my daughter and I got Jim into the car, I desperately tried to numb my mind to what was happening. I needed to think clearly with my head and not my heart. As I pulled out of the driveway, my paralyzed thoughts gave way to an overwhelming sadness, my fear of what lay ahead and the resolve to stay strong quickly dimmed. My courage crashed without warning and my heart shattered into a thousand tears as I glanced at the front of my house. There, standing alone in the big living room window was my beautiful and perceptive Ryce, staring at me as I pulled away, watching, always watching, and knowing.

An hour later, as I made my way home, the somberness of the morning reflected my distraught mind, closing in and suffocating my thoughts. I dreaded going home to face Ryce. As I pulled in the driveway, he was still at the window



Ryce – My truly sensitive gentleman

where I had last seen him. I saw the anxiety on his face and in his stance as I walked to the front door. Ryce's eyes searched hopefully beyond me. As I opened the front door, entering alone, there was a low keening whine that shredded my heart all over again. With an indescribable sadness, he walked slowly away with his head held low to the ground, to his bed. There he quietly laid down facing the wall. His spirit appeared to wither before my eyes. He understood. He knew. He was alone now.

My mother arrived soon after, called by my daughter, to sit with us, console us, to simply be with us. Ryce joined us after a while, seeming to know that we needed him as much as he needed us. I placed Jim's collar on him as we had with Bo's. As we talked, a thought was forming in the depths of my mind, foggy and very hard to grasp. It finally slammed into the front of my brain, full force and fully formed, when my daughter called to say she had called Michelle at Friends of Greyhounds to tell her of our second loss. My daughter had made arrangements for us to meet Michelle at the adoption kennel at lunch time. I knew it was the right thing to do but with the pain of a second loss, I didn't think I could handle this prospect of another hound in the house. My heart was too raw and hemorrhaging. My daughter gently reminded me that it was not about my heart, it was about Ryce's heart. The decision had already been made for me. And once it was accepted by my battered mind, it became a mission. Ryce was a hound used to the company of his own kind. He had never been alone as an only hound, ever. He had lost his two companions within weeks of each other. My heart could not heal Ryce – My truly sensitive gentleman unless his was healed also. Would it help him? Would it help us? I truly prayed it would, the sooner the better.



Gus - Gustopher P Jones (Pimpmaster G)

My heart felt lighter as my mother and I pulled into the kennel with Ryce quietly resting in the back seat. There was none of the usual excitement attached with going for a ride. Ryce accepted that we were there and showed nothing more. Michelle was there with dozens of hounds for us to choose from, play with, and pet. However, this would not be my choice. This important selection of a new hound for us would be up to Ryce. Michelle took an assortment of hounds to the large play yard and we sat under the tree and watched them. Ryce was respectful and wandered about amongst the hounds, looking at me occasionally, apparently expecting me to give him instruction or simply to make sure that I was still there. As time passed,

Ryce seemed to gravitate to a very large white and fawn cow doggie. Together they moved quietly along the fence line, each following the other when direction changed or something caught their attention. The rest of the hounds seemed to fade into the background as they cruised the play yard having a quiet, apparently nonverbal, chat. They stayed together during the rest of the visit, shoulder to shoulder. Ryce had made his choice.

Jetstar Dazzler came home with us that day and Ryce quickly flourished into his old self. How could these two man hounds be more different? My two boys, one the staid and gentlemanly hound, the other a big goofy jock of a hound with an outrageously big smile, were to become the best of friends for the many years they shared together at The Miami Hound House. Jetstar Dazzler would be renamed Gus,

becoming the larger than life, Gustopher P Jones (Pimpmaster G), one of the great loves of my life with hounds. I have always felt that Ryce interviewed Gus and picked him more for me than for himself. He would gaze at Gus sometimes then look at me as if to say “He is my best friend but he is the happiness you needed”.

So when is it the right time? It’s hard to say and should always be a very personal decision as to what is right for your pack at that particular time. Over the years, I have learned that the joy my hounds bring to my life is so much more valuable and precious than the pain of having to say goodbye. Sometimes we choose to invite another hound into our pack and sometimes the decision is made for us. I have lost many hounds over the years and I know it will never be a question of whether or not to invite another hound into the house. It will only be a question of when. And when that time comes, it will be according to our needs or according to theirs. And it will be right.



Ryce and Gus would remain the best of friends throughout their lives at The Miami Hound House

BLOOD BANKS: POSITIVE OR NEGATIVE?

Brian Collins



Over the course of 2017 an animal blood bank in Texas came under fire for allegedly having poor living conditions for its kenneled donors. The dogs were kept on a farm 24/7 exclusively as blood donors with little to no oversight on their quality of care from the outside world (this is known as a “colony” or “Farm” style blood bank). The purpose of this article is not to criticize either the general theory of colony-style blood banks (there are both pro’s and con’s) or to specifically comment on the blood bank in Texas (I’ve heard both sides of the story but, not having been there personally, I have no way to distinguish fact from fiction). My point in writing this is to explain how The Greyhound Health Initiative runs our canine blood bank, why we do what we do, and then to address the recent policy regarding retired racing Greyhounds as blood donors released by The National Greyhound Association in November.

The Greyhound Health Initiative Blood Bank is not a colony blood bank. All of our donors are pets that live in the comfort of their forever homes and visit us every other month to make their donations. This is not the most economical way to run a blood bank, but we believe it's the best way for the overall well being of the dogs that, after all, are there to help other dogs.

How We Handle Our Donors

When our donors come in for their appointment, they are examined, a small spot on their neck is shaved where the needle will be inserted, and then our wonderful technicians begin the donation process. We always have at least two qualified veterinary technicians with them during the process to ensure the dogs are safe, comfortable, and spoiled rotten at all times. After donating, dogs are fed and either returned to their waiting owners or provided beds to lie on in our office until their owners pick them up. Donors don't have to be Greyhounds, though we do prefer them for a variety of reasons: up to 85% have a “universal blood type”, they have a high red blood cell count, they have a calm demeanor at the veterinarian’s office, etc.



Our donors will not give blood more than six times per year and they receive perks that include a physical exam with every visit; free annual blood work; free heartworm, flea, and tick preventatives; free vaccines; free blood products for life, etc.

Why We Do It

We *don't* do this for the money. True, we do sell the blood products we get from our donors but the fact is that we don't even cover our operating expenses due to the high costs associated with processing the blood. We rely on the other kind of donor to help us cover those expenses so we can keep the cost of the product low for the veterinarians and, by extension, the patients in need. We have also donated plasma to veterinarians who do charitable work within the greyhound community and or discount their work with area animal shelters.

If it's not for the money, then why do we do it? In short, we believe in helping the community as a whole. Our nonprofit blood bank provides a necessary service to the veterinary community while also allowing us to bank samples of our Greyhound donors' blood, serum, and plasma to give researchers a head start on future studies. It's that simple.

When run properly, veterinary blood banks do not seek to help one animal at the expense of another, nor do they forego proper care and safety in the pursuit of profit. The wellbeing of our donors is our first priority and we believe we uphold the highest ethical standards in the operation of our blood bank.

If you have questions about our program or are interested in signing your dog(s) up to become donors, please contact us at (800) 416-5156 Xt. 1.

The New NGA Policy

Below is the press release recently published by the [National Greyhound Association](#) (reproduced in whole, with permission) that outlines their new policy regarding the prohibition of pre-adopted retired racers being sent to colony/farm style blood banks. What it says, simply put, is that NGA registered adoption groups cannot use, or allow the use of, pre-adopted retired racers as blood donors. The NGA is apparently trying to avoid two situations: one where dogs are taken from the track and surrendered (sold?) to colony blood banks and one where dogs are kept in "adoptable" status for extended periods because the adoption group is using them as blood donors, presumably to get discounts on vet bills or other perks for the adoption group.

Their policy stops once the dog has been adopted. Presumably, adoption groups' contracts would prevent their adopters from surrendering their dogs to farm facilities, but we hope they don't start deterring blood donations as a general rule. It's a scarce resource and other dogs are counting on blood donors to save their lives.

What Can You Do?

If you are part of an adoption group, we encourage you to be proactive and reach out to blood bank(s) in your area, arrange a site visit and establish a working relationship with them. Ask questions about what kind of testing they do on the blood, how they keep the dogs safe, what they look for in an ideal donor, how often dogs are allowed to donate, what perks they offer, etc. Trust me, if you're in a position to either help them get more donors or hamper their efforts to recruit more, they'll want to talk to you. Then, if you are comfortable with what you see, promote them with your adopters.

NGA Blood Donor Policy for NGA Members

The NGA Board mandates that members refrain from direct involvement with, or directly supplying animals to, animal blood donation facilities and animal blood donor colonies. NGA members found in violation of this policy shall be subject to disciplinary action by the Board up to and including termination of membership.

If an NGA member would like their greyhound to be considered for use as a blood donor, this can be done through pre-approved adoption programs affiliated with legitimate, sanctioned blood banks, a list of which can be obtained through the NGA.

NGA Blood Donor Policy for Adoption Programs

Any greyhound adoption program must be pre-approved by the NGA to use greyhounds for the purpose of blood donation prior to adoption and can only be done in conjunction with legitimate, sanctioned blood banks. The adoption program must establish a written, contractual relationship in which the adoption program and the blood bank agree that any greyhound used for blood donation will only be used for a limited period of time, not more than 18 months and not to exceed the 7th birthday of the greyhound. The greyhound adoption program and the blood bank must agree that all documentation relating to the blood donor, including blood draw information, is available for inspection by the greyhound adoption program or a representative of the NGA at any time. The blood bank must provide the adoption program, or any other named facility, all documented information on blood draws every six months. Prior to the donation period, the greyhound will be spayed or neutered, receive a full medical and dental exam and treatment and must obtain proof of clearance. This must be done by either the greyhound adoption program or the blood donation facility with the adoption program being responsible to forward this documentation to the NGA. After the donation period, the greyhound will receive a full medical and dental exam and treatment with photographs and proof of clearance. This medical treatment must be done by either the greyhound adoption program or the blood donation facility with the adoption program being responsible to forward this documentation to the NGA. The adoption program that makes the arrangement for the greyhound blood donor is then obligated to place the greyhound into an adoptive home after the donation period. All documentation regarding greyhound blood donors must be sent to the National Greyhound Association for review and filing. The adoption program is required to keep a copy of these files for seven (7) years and files must be available for inspection by designated NGA members at any time. Any deficiency or violation in this policy by the adoption program may lead to termination from the program and/or from receiving NGA greyhounds for the purpose of adoption going forward. All adoption programs affiliated with blood donor programs must reapply for approval every two years.

If you are a pet parent with one or more large dogs (over 55lbs) under the age of 6 and are interested in signing them up, contact your local veterinary blood bank or vet school. Most offer great incentives to be in their program, including credits on vet bills. Plus, you get the satisfaction of knowing that each donation could help save up to four other dogs. But the same goes for you as with the adoption groups: be proactive. Meet the staff and ask questions, etc. We want everyone, dogs and people, to be comfortable with the procedure.

Always remember, though, that there are no national or, in most cases, even state guidelines regarding the handling of animals in a veterinary blood bank (California is one notable exception), so it's up to all of us to self-police until such time as those guidelines are established. To avoid a situation like what allegedly happened in Texas, the best practices are not rocket science: the dogs' wellbeing should always be the first priority, whether the donor or the recipient.

Period.

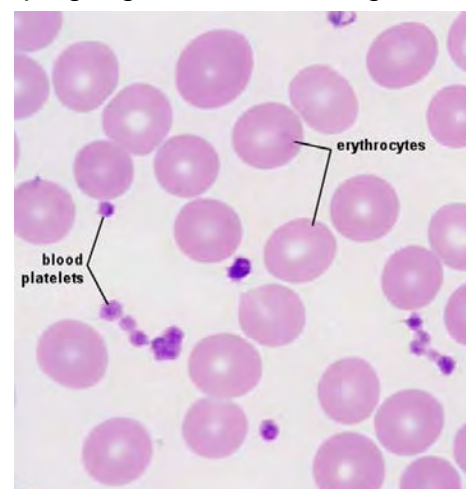
IN THE LAB: PLATELETS

Platelets are the smallest of the many formed components that make up the blood of mammals. Platelets are also known as thrombocytes (thromb- + -cyte, "blood clot cell"). They are an irregularly disk-shaped blood element with no nucleus and a fragile membrane which are continuously made within the bone marrow. They serve a valuable purpose in the safety and wellbeing of humans and animals. Their main function (along with the coagulation factors) is to stop bleeding by clumping together and clotting blood vessel injuries.

According to Dr. Marlene Williams, Assistant Professor of Medicine and CICU Director for Johns Hopkins Bayview Medical Center, "Platelets are the cells that circulate within our blood and bind together when they recognize damaged blood vessels. When you get a cut, for example, the platelets bind to the site of the damaged vessel, thereby causing a blood clot. There's an evolutionary reason why they're there. It's to stop us from bleeding."

Platelets are activated when an injury causes a blood vessel to break. They change shape from round to spiny, "sticking" to the broken vessel wall and to each other to begin the clotting process. Proteins in the blood called clotting factors help to activate the changes in the platelets as it works to form a clot.

According to Dr. Marlene Williams, "platelets, the smallest of our blood cells, can only be seen under a microscope. They're literally shaped like small plates in their non-active form. A blood vessel will send out a signal when it becomes damaged. When platelets receive that signal, they'll respond by traveling



Erythrocytes (Red Blood Cells) and Platelets



Inactivated and activated platelets

to the area and transforming into their “active” formation. To make contact with the broken blood vessel, platelets grow long tentacles and then resemble a spider or an octopus”. Other blood components known as “factors” are also drawn to the site to assist in clot formation.

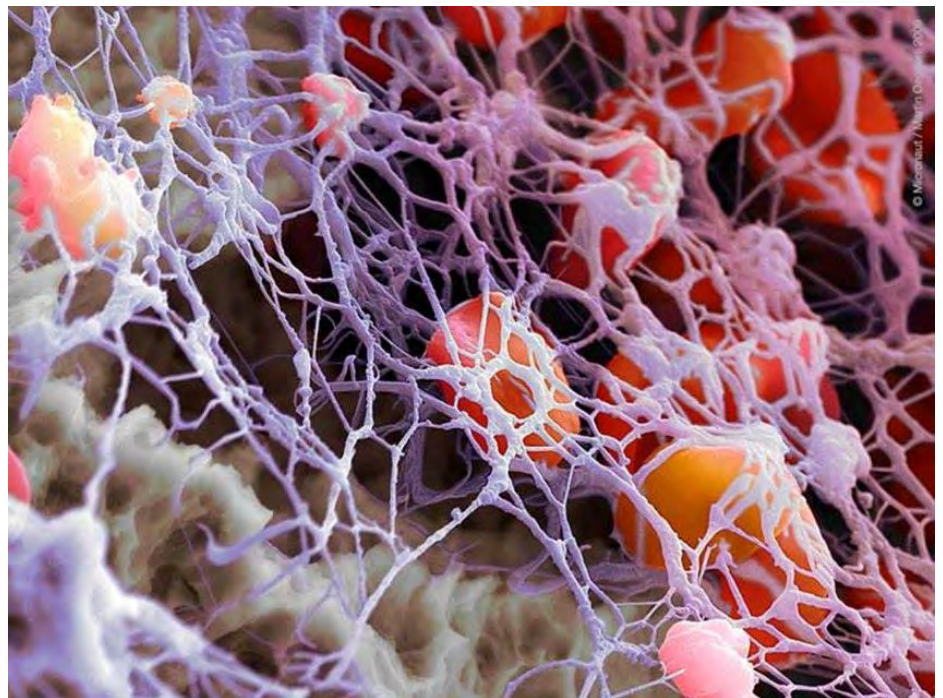
To help secure the platelets to the tissue wound Fibrin, a protein that is produced in response to bleeding, is the major component of the blood clot. Fibrin is a tough protein substance that is arranged in long fibrous chains; it is formed from fibrinogen, a soluble protein that is produced by the liver and found in blood plasma. Fibrin assembles into a tough matrix across the platelets and wound and together stops the loss of blood and creates a sturdy scab to protect the area as you heal.

Dr. Guillermo Couto states “Not surprisingly, platelet counts in Greyhounds are different from those in other dog breeds. Most normal Greyhounds have lower platelet counts than other dogs; depending on the hematology instrument used, platelet counts of 100,000/ μ L are normal in Greyhounds; in other dog breeds, platelet counts are higher than 175,000/ μ L. Platelets in Greyhounds also display another uncommon feature: the “aggregate” shortly upon sample collection, as they do in cats. These results in “clumps” of platelet developing in the tube, so when the instrument counts them, the number is artificially lower. If your veterinarian reports a low platelet count from a reference laboratory, please read the “Comments” section; it usually states “platelet clumps found”. A low platelet number should ALWAYS be confirmed by evaluating a blood smear under the microscope. Despite their lower numbers, platelet function in Greyhounds is similar to that of other dogs”.

This short video gives an easy to understand visual of how clotting is achieved.

HOW DOES BLOOD CLOT

Leslie Glynn December 2017



Fibrin working with platelets binding together to secure the clot in place

UNDERSTANDING SEPARATION ANXIETY IN GREYHOUNDS

By Dennis McKeon

One of the most common complaints we hear from new greyhound adopters, has to do with what is known as “separation anxiety”. What it means, is that when the new adopter leaves the home, the greyhound becomes extremely stressed.

This behavior can manifest as “fretting” (hyperventilating), whining, barking, or all of the above, as well as engaging in less creative behaviors--like chewing things, and/or other not quite constructive expressions of angst or agitation. While there are sedatives that the vet may prescribe for extreme cases of anxiety, it may be of some help to look at why a greyhound might exhibit this upsetting behavior.

From the moment he or she came into this world, your greyhound was probably never alone, for even a moment. They are raised in the constant company of their dams and littermates, and while the dam will be separated at some point, the littermates usually remain together. There are often dozens of other pups on the breeder's premises, and they are kept in kennel runs adjacent to one another, where they can be seen, barked at incessantly, and/or goaded into dashing competitions, or display-of-fierceness contests.

Then, in the racing kennel, often the litter remains together, and the larger pack is introduced to them. There, they learn to do everything in concert with their pack/colony, and their handlers, and the atmosphere is quite social.

Even in their crates, they remain in visual contact with their kennelmates and their handlers. Quite often, littermates may spend their entire lives at the same venues, with the same handlers, and remain together until one or more of them is retired.

So, is it any wonder that a newly adopted greyhound, suddenly thrust into what for them is an alien universe, full of strange things and unfamiliar people---and perhaps without the company of other greyhounds, for the first time in his life---might feel some uneasiness?



Separation Anxiety led to chewed up blinds

There can be much more than meets the eye to a greyhound's anxiety. Any number of triggers might induce anxiety in the new adoptee, from the strange new objects and appliances in the home, to the new smells, sights and sounds of the neighborhood, to any of the many changes in his established and ingrained routine, to which he/she must now learn to adapt.

The most overlooked of these triggers being, that the greyhound has no idea what he did wrong to have suddenly been picked up and plopped down into this entirely new, and (often) intimidating situation. There is a blind spot among some adopters, which can fail to perceive even the possibility that the greyhound may have been perfectly happy with things as they were, as a racing athlete, one among many---a pack member. Contrary to popular greyhound mythology, the vast majority of racing greyhounds, are quite content and fulfilled doing what it is that they have been bred to do, within a colony of their peers. Working dogs are generally that way. Most relish and thrive on their work, and the physical and mental stimulation it provides.

Greyhounds prosper with routine, punctuality and repetition. They blossom when they are as free of all stresses as we can make them. But they often have some reservations about novelty. They are used to regimentation and predictability, and their whole lives have revolved around the narrower confines of the breeding, raising, training and racing environment, as opposed to the brave new world of the adopter's home, social outlets, and leisure time activities, in which the dog may now be included. Regardless, he no longer has the outlet of training and racing to pleasantly fatigue himself, and to relieve pent up stress---a very important factor to be aware of.



The new, retired adoptee was likely already bonded to one or more of his/her handlers, and often, to one or more of their kennelmates---who are now, suddenly, gone. It's a huge void to fill for most of them. This bonding, by the way, generally happens over a period of time, where the greyhound learns who, in their circle, can be relied upon and trusted. Just because a newly adopted greyhound may resign himself to the fact that you are his new human, and even be amenable to it, doesn't mean that you have bonded with him--or he with you. That may or may not happen, with time, depending upon your individual greyhound's adaptability---and your own.

The point is, of course, that separation anxiety can be more of an "I simply can't deal with being alone, and I miss my job and my friends" anxiety--- especially for the new adoptee. Smothering the dog with toys, treats and attention won't usually be a panacea for the anxious, newly re-homed greyhound. That elusive panacea is more likely to be routine, punctuality, stress reduction in the home environment, physically and mentally engaging the dog in stimulating, healthy activities- -and time--time for the greyhound to learn to trust, to rely upon, and then to eventually bond with their new person(s).

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THANK YOU

Hope for Hounds, in partnership with The Greyhound Health Initiative, would like to thank all who participated in the 11th annual Miss Nellie Auction of 2017. We appreciate the patience and understanding you showed as we went through our auction "growing pains". Each of you made this auction a GREYT success and we could not have done it without you.
THANK YOU!

To our volunteers, you gave us the most valuable asset of your time.
THANK YOU!

To our donors, you gave us absolutely fabulous items to bid on.
THANK YOU!

To our bidders, you gave patience, support and generosity in your bidding.
THANK YOU!

To all of our brave hounds, past, present and those to come, you are the reason we come together each year to raise awareness and the much needed funds for this very important cause.
THANK YOU with love!

To all of the clinicians within the Veterinary community who continue the research with skill and dedication in finding a cure for canine cancer,
THANK YOU!

Working together, we raised \$6000.00 for Dr. Nicola Mason's clinical research of hemangiosarcoma at the University of Pennsylvania. Together, the Sighthound community can accomplish amazing things that benefit our hounds.

Alone we can do so little; together we can do so much.

~ Helen Keller ~



TO OUR READERS

We value your feedback and suggestions.

Is there something about GHI that you would like to learn more about?

Are there topics you would like to see covered or updated?

As we advance with the GHI Newsletter, we would like to hear any ideas and suggestions that you have. Please feel free to [contact us](#) with your feedback.

We Value Your Support!

Help us help your Sighthounds and spread the word!

