

THE MERRIMAC MONITOR

For people who love dogs and the dogs who train them
MERRIMAC DOG TRAINING CLUB, INC.

P. O. Box 1685
Training Building: 723-8141
Newport News, Virginia 23601
15 Newsome Pl., Hampton 23661

Visit our site at <http://www.merrimacdogtrainingclub.com>



Next Meeting
Monday, March 8, 2010
7:30 pm

Next Session
Week of Mar 2nd
Through
Week of Apr 5th

Greg Boeshaar - **President**
Pat Wright - **Vice President**
Sherry Bryant - **Recording Secretary**
Linda Walker - **Corresponding Secretary**
Jean Conroy - **Treasurer**

Board of Directors
Debra Cross
Barbara Dorr
Sharon Knapp
Jackie Harris
Mary Ommundsen
Tami O'Connell

STANDING RULE CHANGES

Section B. Training and Instruction

14. Lifetime Members may request preferences in obtaining a position in one class in each training session, provided the request is made at the time the registration form is submitted and before the class is full. Lifetime members shall be permitted to enroll in three classes per session without having to pay the member training fee per class. Lifetime members enrolling in more than three classes per session will be required to pay the member fee per each additional class.

16. Members who are instructing training classes shall be required to have obtained a title equal to or greater than the level of class they are instructing. Titles must be obtained from a recognized organization such as the American Kennel Club, United Kennel Club, NADAC, or USDAA. Members who do not have a recognized title who wish to instruct will be evaluated on a case by case basis by the Training Director and will be required to follow written lesson plans provided by MDTC.

17. Members, when instructing training classes for Merrimac Dog Training Club, shall be prohibited from soliciting private lessons from students enrolled in Merrimac Dog Training Club classes. Solicitation of private lessons from Merrimac Dog Training Club students shall be considered a conflict of interest and not in the best interest or financial welfare of the club. Members, while acting in the capacity of instructors for Merrimac Dog Training Club who are found to have been soliciting private lessons for personal gain from Merrimac students will be referred to the board of directors for disciplinary action.

18. Assistants will be permitted for a class size of a minimum of 8 dogs. Assistants for classes with less than 8 dogs, must be approved by the Training Director. Co-instructing of classes will not be permitted.

TRAINING DIRECTOR'S REPORT

It's hard to believe we are already nearing Session 2 for 2010. I would like to personally send a huge THANK YOU to Maryann Mullen for her service as past Training Director for a superb job. I would also like to thank all the Session 1 instructors, Jim Swimme, Meg Postema, Mary Sweany, Ann Bright, Leslie Wemhoff, Bunny Gist, Midge Fagan, Barb Foley, Maryann Mullen, Jonnie Hargrove, Shannon Bowman, Janet Cornell, Helen Noles, Deanne Bullock, Lynn Harley, J. Brooks, Jean Conroy, and Gayle Petrick. Your willingness to instruct is greatly appreciated.

Thank you in advance to all the instructors signed up to instruct in Session 2, which runs from March 2 thru April 9. Please thank Meg Postema, Jim Swimme, Paula Dayton, Vanessa Vance, Mary Sweany, Leslie Wemhoff, Bab Foley, Claire Hubbard, Gloria Smith, Janet Cornell, Wendy Keene, Candy Stephens, Diane Sparks, Helen D'Alfonso, Jackie Harris, Lynn Harley, Tami O'Connell, Gayle Petrick, and Shannon Bowman for volunteering.

The training committee has had a busy few months. We have worked to bring back the end of session survey for students to give us their input on what we are doing right and what we need to work on. Surveys were used for years in the past and the training committee felt with the increase in the amount of competition MDTC has now input from our students would help us to determine our strengths and weaknesses. After all our students are our FIRST and BEST form of advertisement. We have already collected surveys from many of the Session 1 evening classes. I will be emailing daytime students a copy of the survey to complete. As an incentive, the Board of Directors approved a random drawing for half off a student's next class with MDTC within 6 months of completing the survey. After we collect surveys from all the classes the training committee will conduct a random drawing for one paying customer and another for one member.

Another change for 2010 is we are asking all instructors to be diligent in taking attendance. This will allow us to track attendance habits of our students both paying and members.

The training committee is also tasked with making some very difficult decisions to protect the best interest of MDTC as a whole. There's a lot more behind the scenes responsibilities than scheduling classes and finding instructors. With that said the committee presented the Board of Directors with additions to the Standing Rules. The Board of Directors voted to implement the Standing Rules effective immediately at the February 8, 2010 board meeting. In short, the training committee presented and the board approved the requirement for all instructors to be titled **equal to or greater than** the level they are instructing. If anyone is affected by this rule that I have not had the opportunity to speak to personally, please call me. While we understand that having a title doesn't necessarily mean a person is cut out for instructing, it provides us with a necessary "experience" background that is needed for liability purposes.

The second rule is the training committee and the board are asking instructors to please not solicit private lessons while instructing at MDTC. We know several members offer private instruction and that is your right. However, MDTC is not the place to advertise as this is a conflict of interest. There are plenty of other avenues for private promotion.

The third rule affects assistants. Classes must have a Minimum of 8 students to have an assistant. If there is a problem in the class and an instructor feels an assistant is required with less than 8 students, please bring this to my attention. No Co-Instructing of classes will be permitted.

The final rule change affects Lifetime members. The number of classes per session has been limited to THREE free classes. Any additional classes will require the membership class fee to be paid.

A copy of the standing rules in their entirety is included elsewhere in the newsletter.

A couple of other points the training committee would like to remind all instructors of. We are in the winter months so remember if TNCC is closed MDTC is closed. Please remind your students of this rule. There are always exceptions to the rule, but this is a good indicator as to what the roads are like if TNCC cancels classes. Also any instructor needing a key, please contact me directly. Carla Bright has provided me with "instructor" keys for those who do not have their own key to the building. Keys will need to be returned at the end of the session. Finally, if there is any type of incident in any class i.e., aggressive dogs, dog bites, dog injuries, please notify me immediately and prepare a written report of the incident.

If anyone has any suggestions, complaints, comments, please send me an email or give me a call.

Again, THANK YOU to all the members who willingly give of their time to instruct classes. You are a very integral part in MDTC being able to keep the training building and your time and efforts are sincerely appreciated.

Diane Payne

Training Director



HEART AND EYE CLINICS - MARCH 20, 2010

In case you were unable to attend the heart and eye clinics held in January at Merrimac or just could not afford to have all your dogs checked at one time, the Cavalier King Charles Spaniel Club is holding a specialty show 18-21 March at the Sheraton Richmond West Hotel, 6624 West Broad Street, Richmond, Va. 23230.

On Saturday, 20 March, they will be having heart and eye clinics **open to all breeds**. Clinics start at 9 AM. Eye clinic is \$30 and will be conducted by Dr. Elizabeth Adkins. Heart clinic is \$30 for auscultation and \$160 for ultrasounds using color Doppler and will be conducted by Dr. Jess Weidman. (These are the same doctors that were at Merrimac.).

For appointments or more information, please contact Lynda Fairchild at (804) 684-5480
or lynsfairecavaliers@cox.net.



RUN THRU/REGISTRATION INFO

We had a great run thru at the club on February 27th. I would like to thank the following people who made it possible: Roberta and Meredith Garrett, Diane Sparks, Jenny Gattis, Elizabeth Johnson, Zella Bronakowski, Vicki Gallagher, Bonnie Warde, Jim Swimme, Paula Cole, Delores Densten, Barbara Lackner and Anne Bright. These run thrus not only help the club, but it really helps the attendees who are preparing to show their dogs in trials.

The next run thru will be on April 24th in conjunction with Registration. Many people that came to sign up for classes were able not only to see what a great facility we have but to see the dogs in the run thrus and were very impressed with the dogs. The sign up sheet for next run thru will be in the lobby on the board.

Mary Ann

May Time and Memories bring you comfort and help to heal your heartache.

Joanna Simonsen lost "Dolly", CD TD, her beloved rescue Golden, after an unexpected surgery. Dolly was 10yrs old. She died Jan 30, 2010. Joanna suffered a double loss in February when another of her beloved Golden's Dexter, passed away.

Our deepest sympathy to Sheri Lilly-Peck who lost her mother on Jan 31, 2010.

Charlotte Price lost her beloved Ziska Wildsteiger Land (Ziska) to the Rainbow Bridge. She was 8yrs old when she succumbed to cancer. German born and titled, she was exceptionally sweet to all she met (children/adults/all animals). Her time on this earth was far too short.

*Hearts and Flowers Chairperson
Marylen Melton*

Bassetk9@verizon.net or 757-440-1416

BUILDING RENTAL

- Sun Mar 7:** MDTC Gloria Smith seminar (Part 2)
- Sat/Sun Apr 17/18:** Blue Ridge Aussie Club Conformation shows
- Sat/Sun May 1/2:** Hampton Roads Dog Obed Club - Obed Trials
- Sat Aug 28:** MDTC Maggie Hayes seminar
- Sat/Sun Sep 25/26:** Tidewater Dog Perf Club - UKC Obedience/Rally Trials

JANE ISABELLE
BUILDING RENTALS

 **AWARDS PRESENTATION – MARCH 8TH** 

Just a quick reminder, at our March 8th member meeting, we will be holding our annual Awards Presentation. We hope all will attend receiving awards or not as it will be something very special.

Paula Dayton
Awards Chairperson

FEBRUARY AGILITY TRIAL

The agility trial held on February 13 and 14 was a huge success. The courses were wonderful; we had plenty of workers and lots of good food for all!

Thanks go to Bonnie Warde, Shirley Meyers, John Taylor, Joyce Britt, Debbie Ezzell, Diane Sparks, Janet Wiggs, Jenny Gattis and Curtis Grier for meeting me on Friday afternoon and preparing the building for the trial. With so many hard workers, we had the building in shape within two hours.

Jenn Galgano did a great job as Trial Secretary! Everything ran smooth with no problems at all. Jenn was cool and calm throughout the weekend. She makes her job look so easy.

Candy Stephens was great as worker coordinator. She made sure all positions were filled and did it all without bringing out her black boots and whip :-)

Teresa Womble did a wonderful job with hospitality. Her husband made barbeque and Cole slaw that everyone raved about. She also donated paper products, ice and drinks, saving the club quite a bit of money. Helen, Candy and other members donated soups, snacks, baked goods and other dishes also. We had quite a spread!

Thanks go to the following members and prospective members that worked either Saturday, Sunday or both days: Carla Bright, Kathy Stuewe, Jean Conroy, Pat Stearns, Diane Sparks, Marilyn Sanders, Sherry Bryant, Bonnie Warde, Julie Morrison-Frickert, Sharon Potter, Mary Baker, Grier Curtis, Holly Boyd, John Taylor, Johnnie Noles, Paula Cole, Heather Tyler, Linda Walker, Janna Drof, Aleta Channel, Jane Isabelle, Grace and Michael Scarpa, Sheryl Shea, Deanna Bullock, Janet Wiggs and Lois Smith. Thanks also to Helen Noles for handling the ribbons both days.

Because of all the member and prospective member donations the club earned approximately \$1,500.00! Thank you all for your help and your contributions!

See you at the April Trials in Gloucester!
Denny Garwood
Trial Chairperson



APRIL AGILITY TRIAL



On April 9, 10 and 11 Merrimac will sponsor it's first three day agility trial. It will be our last trials at Nelson and Emily Fletcher's beautiful site in Gloucester.

These trials are a great way for members to earn the hours they need for reduced membership fees and for

prospective members to earn their membership hours.

Most jobs require no training and very little thinking (those are the jobs that I prefer!)

You also earn hours for donating raffle items and snacks and drinks.

Preferred raffle items are gas cards, coffee cards, dog food and dog toys. We are also having NQ raffles.

Wine is the preferred item but anything would be appreciated.

If you are able to help please contact me at pgarw81849@aol.com or Laurene Galgano at l-galgano@cox.net

All workers will receive a \$5.00 coupon towards lunch and raffle tickets for the worker raffle.

Thank you!

Denny Garwood



Braggs – Brags - Brags!

***Please always send your official braggs to the newsletter editor.
Braggs sent to the Yahoo Group page will not be copied to the newsletter***

Lisa Hundley's Rottweiler, Chase earned the last leg needed to complete his UKC Rally 1 (RO1) title, three legs in three trials with one placement. He also passed the AKC's Canine Good Citizen test.

Holly Boyd: At Merrimac's Agility Trial Feb. 13 and 14, **Boyd's Call me Crazy or Fantastic** aka **Lunatic**, qualified in her first trial in Novice Jumpers with a score of 94!! I am so proud of my baby girl, who is just 18 months old. She was fantastic both days, but we only qualified on Sunday. She was over time both days (because she is always looking for food on the ground)!!

Her older "brother", **Boyd's To Infinity and Beyond**, OA,OAJ,OAP,OJP,OF,OFP, AKA **Buzz Lightyear**, shared in the limelight with 2 qualifying runs in Open Fast to earn his title. At 10 years old, he is still running crazy as ever!!

Lynda Fairchild's, AKC/UKC CH Brookhaven Bear with Me at Lynsfaire (Brady) (Cavalier King Charles Spaniel) passed his Therapy Dog International (TDI) and Canine Good Citizen (CGC) tests on my birthday, Feb 18th.

Barbara Dorr's, Chihuahua, Solomon earned another agility title – OFP. He Qualified for his second leg of Open Fast Pref on Saturday at the MDTC AGILITY TRIAL with a 1st place and Qualified on Sunday for this 3rd leg and Title - OFP (Open Fast Preferred). I goofed us up on the other runs that didn't qualify. Smart dog, not so smart a handler.

Saturday, February 6, 2010, **Diane Sparks** and her two loyal canine companions ventured through the wind and snow to compete at the Belroi Agility Club UKC Obedience Trial. **Noodle the Super Springer Spaniel** earned his first UCDX leg while **Nipper the Wonder Dal** took first place in the Open B class to earn a bonus leg and High In Trial Honors. We'll be out in utility as soon as we can master those tricky glove exercises!

Sharon Knapp's, Australian Cattle Dog Johnny (Ch Lassic Johnny Come Lately, PT, NA, NAJ, HTAD-1s) can now add another agility title. He finished his Novice Fast title (4th place) and got OF and OA (1st place) legs in the MDTC trials on February 13 and 14. His inept handler (nameless, of course!) cost him some other OA and OAJ legs. Johnny did fine in his other runs; unfortunately the handler didn't. Johnny promises to try to teach her to do better.

MDTC MEMBERSHIP

Please Welcome our Newest Members!

In January, **Diane Sparks and Vicki Gallagher** were voted in and welcomed at the Membership Meeting that same evening.

At the February Board Meeting, Pat **Gammon and Barbara Lackner** were voted in as new members!
Welcome Ladies!

Prospective Members:

Elizabeth Johnson: I have been training at Merrimac consistently since early 2009 in obedience and agility classes with my three dogs and in 2010 my Boston puppies will begin training. I have 3 Boston Terriers, a rescue Beagle and a Burmese Mountain Dog. Together my dogs have all earned Rally Novice, Advanced and Excellent titles (working on RAE now), a CD and hopefully in March a Novice title in JWW and Std. Each one of my dogs has their own forte and I try to focus on that as well as doing some cross training for fun and confidence. My BMD competes and trains primarily in Rally and Obedience. She was the first dog I purchased with the intention to do performance events. My Boston terrier competes in Rally and Agility (hopefully obedience soon) and my Beagle, although he earned his RN would just rather hang out and be loved by everyone around him. He greatly enjoys agility classes for a fun time with mom. I'm not quite sure what my puppies will excel at, but I'm sure we will find something they love. My 3 adults are all CGC/TDI certified and I am a CGC evaluator. I think that having dogs is like having kids (although my dogs ARE my kids). They need to have a leader and rules, but you have to have fun with them also. Socialization is critical to their development and we should work to expose them to a variety of safe, but new situations throughout their lives. Having dogs is amazing. It's a constant state of change and excitement because of the dogs and diversity your dogs bring to your life.

Cheryl & Marshall Johnson: My husband and I have been attending obedience and agility classes at MDTC since 2002. During the past 8 years, we have met so many wonderful members and their pets and have learned so much from the classes and instructors. Our 2 dogs are a very important part of our family and we include them in many activities. Kekoa is an 8 year old mixed breed and Kalani is a 2 yr old boxer. We enjoy and support MDTC and wish to become involved and active members.

CALLING FOR COMMENTS

Barbara Rountree, Lois Smith and Grier Curtis have completed all of their requirements for membership and their names will be brought before the Board at the March meeting. If you have any comments that might help the Board in making an informed decision on these two ladies, please write to me at ommunds@aol.com or call me.

 **CHECK OUT PICTURES OF PROSPECTIVE AND NEW MEMBERS**
NOW POSTED ON THE BULLETIN BOARD!!! 

Mary Ommundsen,
Membership Chairperson

OPEN FORUM FOR MEMBERS

Do you have a **concern** regarding **OUR** club? Is there a **new direction** you would like **YOUR** Board to consider? Have **SOMETHING** you just want to say? Here's your chance. *Your* Board of Directors is scheduling an OPEN FORUM, where you, the member can talk in **PRIVATE** to us and know you have our **undivided attention**. A member can sign up for a **5 minute time slot** during which time he/she can present their "issue" in a **POSITIVE, CONSTRUCTIVE MANNER**. There may be **clarification** questions from board members but that will be the extent of it. No **GRILLING**, no arguments, just **LISTENING**. A **strict clock** will be kept to help us manage **TIME** and **respect** the schedules of others. A **relaxed** atmosphere will be maintained in the **office area** where the *board members* and the scheduled *member* will sit down for their **private session**. We want this to help us get our **finger** on the pulse of **OUR CLUB**, tackling those **issues** that are important to the **MEMBERSHIP** and **IMPROVING** what we offer to you and the **canine community** in our area. All ideas are **WELCOME**...bring it to us. We can only **serve you** if we know what you need. **This is your chance...use it**. Watch for a **SIGN - UP POSTER** soon in our lobby with the **FORUM DATE** and **time slots**.



FUNDRAISER



Teresa Womble and her husband, owners of R&W Auto Sales will extend their fundraising donation to Merrimac through the end of 2010. Here's the offer:
We will donate \$100 for every car sold if the person mentions Merrimac Dog Club when they buy from us.

OPEN LETTERS TO THE BOARD OF DIRECTORS OF MERRIMAC DOG TRAINING CLUB:

To the Board of Director of Merrimac Dog Training Club:

We would like to nominate **Diane Payne** as a lifetime member of Merrimac Dog Training Club (MDTC). She has been a member for approximately 20 years. In that time she has served on the board in all capacities except that of treasurer. She has taught puppy through Open obedience classes, footwork, conformation and beginning agility. She has served on most of the committees we have and has chaired several. (Registration, membership, obedience trial chair, obedience trial trophies, merchandising, audit/budget, building rentals, ways & means, Christmas party, parades, phones, fund raising, conformation matches, awards, nominating committee.)

She has been an active competitor in obedience, agility and conformation. Her show experience includes dogs from terrier, herding and sporting groups. This vast range of experience and her years of service working for and promoting MDTC make her a valuable member who deserves the status of a lifetime member.

Thank you for your consideration,

Greg Boeshaar	Brenda Boesel	Helen Noles	Penny Garwood
Candy Stephens	MaryAnn Mullen	Ann Bright	Kay Routten
Deanna Bullock	Kathy Steuwe		

To the Board of Director of Merrimac Dog Training Club:

We would like to nominate both, **Emily and Greg Boeshaar** as lifetime members of Merrimac Dog Training Club (MDTC). Both Emily and Greg have been very active members of MDTC for 20 years. They have both served on the board of directors and have taught classes to hundreds of MDTC students.

Greg has served on the board for several years in many positions which includes that of president. He has frequently been the only instructor teaching utility classes. He also developed classes that are primarily for pet owners. His instruction and encouragements guided several of the members of his pet classes to continue training with their canine companions.

Emily has served on the board and has been training director. She gained a following of students through her work as an instructor in attention, footwork and advanced obedience classes. She was a leading force in introducing the positive training techniques for which MDTC has become known.

Both Greg and Emily are familiar with many aspects of dog competition – agility, herding, obedience and conformation. They willingly share this broad knowledge of the dog show world to help establish MDTC continues as a positive force on the local training scene, we ask that Greg and Emily Boeshaar be recognized as lifetime members.

Thank you for your consideration,

Barb Foley	Brenda Boesel	Helen Noles	Penny Garwood
Candy Stephens	Jane Isabel	MaryAnn Mullen	Ann Bright
Gwen Gore	Kay Routten	Maggie Salls	

A Bad Saturday for Natalie

Many of us have intact bitches that we have dreams of finishing Championship titles and then possibly breeding so that we can continue a sound, beautiful Championship bloodline. Generally there are few problems along the way, but sometimes disaster strikes. Never mind the inherent problems of a bitch in heat, the possibility of an “oops” litter, or the aggravation of any intact male getting a bit silly... these are all very minor in the big picture.

Natalie, my Captiva’s Still Unforgettable, is the product of a stellar sire & dam, with platinum bloodlines, and she carried the hopes and dreams of my breeding program on her lovely shoulders. She was well on her way to finishing her Championship, from the Bred by Exhibitor class, when our plans came to a screeching halt. Irish’s are very slow maturing dogs, so I was unconcerned when she did not have her first estrus until the age of 17 months. She was neat & tidy, kept herself clean, and had a very uneventful cycle. In all my years of dog ownership, I was fortunate in that I never had a problem with any of my bitches, never had a problem with breeding or whelping, and I truly enjoyed my good fortune. That all came to an end yesterday...

When I got home from work last night, Natalie did not greet me with her usual chortles, squeals and playful bouncing. She was very quiet, and at first I thought she must have been sleeping very soundly! I took all 3 dogs outside for potty time, and she seemed just a little off. I watched her for a bit; she peed & pooped, and yet still didn't seem just right. I brought her back into the house where I noticed her eyes were red, and appeared a little sunken into her head. Recognizing this as a sign of dehydration, I put her up on the grooming table for a closer look, and to take her temperature. Her tail and skirts had clumps of a dark bloody discharge and her vulva was slightly swollen, with a thick discharge. I washed her butt thoroughly, and a clean towel swiped over her nether regions revealed a dark, thick discharge. Her temperature was 104.7, rather than the normal 100.5- 102.5. I grabbed Cassi & Kagan, brought them in to feed them, and Natalie was not the least bit interested in food...a VERY unusual behavior for this Chow Hound!

I called Jay on my way to the Emergency Clinic, and she met me there as I was telling the vet about Natalie. My heart sank as the Vet also suspected Pyometra, and we discussed treatment with antibiotics & prostaglandin. This has been successful for some bitches, and they have been able to successfully conceive and whelp a litter, but things were looking grim for Natalie. She was sick, very sick, and the vet felt that she was very close to a uterine rupture, which is a serious, serious life threat. My mind was in a dither as I agreed to emergency surgery, spaying my little girl to save her life, but ending my dreams for her as a Show Champion. Jay grabbed me as I sobbed, and pulled me down the sidewalk to a restaurant as we waited for the surgery. True friends are rare, and when one will drop everything and come running to your aid, that's just priceless!

I was lucky with Natalie; I recognized that something was wrong, and there is an Emergency Clinic very close to my home. They took Natalie immediately, and while there were some very tense moments, she came through the surgery just fine. The next morning she refused to eat for the clinic, but when I brought in some browned chicken & rice, she gobbled it down! She was able to come home just 10 hours after surgery, and is making a beautiful recovery.

In all my years of dog ownership & breeding, I had never experienced this potentially fatal complication, so I researched it to be better educated. I'll share this information with all in hopes that neither you nor your bitches ever have to go through that horrible experience.

Pyometra is a disease of the [uterus](#) most commonly seen in intact female dogs and is an important disease to be aware of for any dog owner because of the sudden nature of the disease and the deadly consequences if left untreated. It has been compared to acute [appendicitis](#) in humans, because both are essentially [empyemas](#) within an [abdominal](#) organ. An empyema is a collection of [pus](#) within a naturally existing anatomical cavity, such as the uterus. This effusion, which starts out sterile, then becomes infected. As the infection progresses, the thickness of the fluid increases, going from a broth type consistency to a concrete sludge.

Pyometra is a result of hormonal and structural changes in the uterus lining. This can happen at any age, whether she has bred or not, and whether it is her 1st or 10th heat (although it becomes more common as the dog gets older). The main risk period for a female is for the eight weeks after her peak standing heat (or estrus cycle) has ended. Normally during this period, the cervix, which was open during her heat, begins to close, and the inner lining begins to adapt back to normal. However, cystic hyperplasia of the endometrium (inner lining of the uterus) – known as cystic endometrial hyperplasia (CEH) – may occur at this time for some animals, as an inappropriate response to progesterone.

*Under these circumstances, bacteria (especially *E. coli*) that have migrated from the vagina into the uterus find the environment favorable to growth, especially since progesterone also causes mucus secretion, closes the cervix (preventing uterine drainage), and decreases uterine contractility. The condition of the cervix is a major factor in the severity of the condition.*

- *If the cervix is open, the infected material can leave the body, and this is far easier and safer to treat. This is known as open pyometra.*
- *If the cervix is fully closed, there is no discharge from the vulva, and like in appendicitis, the uterus may rupture and pus escapes into the abdomen, causing peritonitis and possible rapid death. This is known as closed pyometra.*

Signs & Symptoms

Because the infection can be so overwhelming, the signs & symptoms are not limited to the genital tract. The animal can become so overwhelmed by the inflammation associated with the infection that the animal may die from its own uncontrolled inflammatory process. The most common clinical signs that are present in greater than 50% of dogs are:

- *Lethargy*
- *Depression*
- *Anorexia*
- *Excessive water intake*
- *Excessive urination*
- *Pale mucous membranes*
- *Vomiting, diarrhea, weight loss, abdominal distension, and inflamed eyes have been reported although much less frequently*
- *Up to 16% of patients may have no clinical signs other than purulent vaginal discharge.*

Treatment

- *The most important aspect of treatment of pyometra is quick action. Bitches are often septic and in shock. Intravenous fluids and antibiotics should be given immediately. The treatment of choice is an emergency spay, to remove the infected organ, but as this prevents a female dog from breeding it is worth noting that some advances have been made in treating pyometra with long term antibiotics and prostaglandins to cause contraction of the uterus and expulsion of the pus.*
- *Spaying (ovariohysterectomy) completely and promptly removes the infection, prevents uterine rupture and peritonitis, and of course prevents recurrence, in most cases.*

Complications Caused by the Disease

The most life threatening complications seen associated to pyometra are sepsis and systemic inflammatory response syndrome (SIRS) or multiple organ dysfunction syndrome (MODS). These generally develop as a result of the body's overwhelming response to infection or inflammation, which pyometra has plenty of both. Other systems that may fail either in response to the SIRS/MODS or the results from pyometra would be the immune system, red and white blood cell production, kidneys, liver, and coagulation control. Up to 25% of the patients will show azotemia (elevations in the nitrogen waste products that the kidney will excrete) and 8% endotoxemia (severe sickness related to massive bacterial infection).

Although surgery is considered the therapy of choice, very special case selection meeting certain criteria may allow valuable breeding bitches to be treated medically. However, in addition to the previously mentioned multiple organ problems, the dogs will generally exhibit abdominal pain, excessive vomiting/ defecation, high heart rates, salivation, dyspnea, panting and fever with the medical management. It generally takes 5 days or until an effect is seen to treat pyometra with low doses of prostaglandin F2 alpha (PGF2α). Dogs are susceptible to developing pyometra again after medical treatment; therefore, should have an ovariohysterectomy when their breeding purposes are finished.

Potential Complications Following Surgery

The SIRS/MODS and sepsis are still major problems after the surgery. However, once the inflamed/infected uterus is removed, the body generally recovers well over a couple of days. Very few patients will maintain kidney and white blood cell problems long term.

Aftercare

Once the pet is discharged from the hospital, the aftercare is minimal. The care is generally the same as it would be for a routine ovariohysterectomy; however, the bitch will be on antibiotics as prescribed by the veterinarian for at least 10 days. The animal should not be allowed have normal play, stairs, or any off leash activities since recent surgery has occurred and abdominal herniation is possible if not careful.

Prognosis

The prognosis with ovariohysterectomy can be as high as 80-100% if abdominal contamination is avoided and shock/sepsis is managed and responds appropriately post-operatively. However, if severe sepsis and organ failure develops, the prognosis can be grave.

Submitted by Lynne Harley
February 28, 2010

When nature calls please answer, and scoop the poop – inside as well as outside

MERRIMAC DOG TRAINING CLUB
P.O. Box 1685 Newport News, VA 23601
“A Trained Dog is a Better Dog”