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The Cocker Home Companion

Cocker Spaniel Rescue of New England, Inc. (CSRNE, Inc.)

Vol 36 Summer 2013

Since 1987, CSRNE has saved, improved and extended the lives of abandoned and neglected American Cocker Spaniels

Teddy: 2013 Joey Fund Poster Dog

Teddy's Team

Found: *Older male cocker spaniel – not neutered – no collar or tag – large growth on eyelid – ears and eyes infected – scabby skin – several fatty growths – red paint on his head.*

This is not the description of a readily adoptable dog, but it is the description of a Joey Fund dog.

The Joey Fund was established back in 1997 to raise the money to provide veterinary care to neglected cocker spaniels – and Teddy was one very neglected cocker.

Teddy had infections everywhere – eyes, ears, skin, feet – but from the moment the Animal Control Officer (ACO) picked him up wandering near the street, he was smitten by Teddy's gentle, trusting nature and took him immediately to the local veterinarian, Dr. Griffin O'Connor, at the Suffield Animal Hospital in Connecticut.

Teddy

Most veterinarians see dogs owned by people who love and care for their pets. It can be distressing for a vet to see (and smell) a dog that has been so neglected for so long, but Teddy's sweet, calm disposition endeared him immediately to Dr. O'Connor and her kind vet techs.

The first thing Teddy needed was a bath (actually several baths). He smelled so badly that no one could stay near him for very long.

After doing a complete exam and getting a total picture of Teddy's medical issues, Dr. O'Connor called CSRNE and said she would gladly donate the cost of some of the care he needed right away and asked if we could pay for his skin care products, medications and take him into our foster home program – of course, we said, "Yes."

The ACO who rescued Teddy and Dr. O'Connor, who evaluated him and began his treatment, were the first members of "Teddy's Team."

The next and most important person on Teddy's Team is Joan Carson, his devoted and patient foster mom. We're always a bit anxious when we first place a high maintenance cocker like Teddy in foster care, so it was very encouraging to get Joan's message the following day that "he's absolutely wonderful" and "everyone loves him!" Little did Joan know then that she would become Teddy's full-time healthcare manager.

Teddy has several health issues and each issue had to be addressed separately, which meant frequent trips to the vet for diagnostic tests, surgery and recheck exams, as well as trips to Wal-Mart to pick up his medications.

Teddy's ongoing problem, and the one that caused him the most distress, was his dry, itchy skin. Clearly, we had to diagnose the cause of his itchiness and not just treat the symptoms. It was time to see a veterinary dermatology specialist.

Dr. Deidra Galbo at Veterinary Specialists of CT ordered more tests including skin culture, thyroid panel, new medications for a staph resistant skin infection and twice per week medicated baths. Despite the new antibiotics, baths and an antiseptic mousse, Teddy's skin infection was not improving and Dr. Galbo decided he should be tested for Cushing's disease. And, sure enough, Teddy tested positive for Cushing's.

At this point, Teddy began seeing Dr. Kenneth Knaack, a board certified internist, also at the Vet Specialists of CT. Dr. Knaack is now carefully managing Teddy's ongoing treatment for Cushing's *(see page two for Dr. Knaack's article)*.

At one of his recent visits to see Dr. Knaack, one of the vet techs patted Teddy and said teasingly, "You're so cute, but you're a real train wreck, aren't you?!" Joan laughed – Teddy wagged his tail and looked up at Joan with his "let's go home" expression and off they went back home - where every dog wants to be.

Teddy's life has been "saved, improved and extended" thanks to the Joey Fund and the efforts of his team: the ACO, Dr. O'Connor, Dr. Galbo, Dr. Knaack, and, the love of his life, foster mom Joan Carson. And you, our friends, who donate so generously to the Joey Fund are all part of Teddy's Team too. Your support and dedication make it possible for CSRNE to pay for the expensive veterinary care these neglected cockers need.

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Cushing's Disease

by Dr. Kenneth Knaack, DVM, ACVIM

Dr. Kenneth Knaack

Dr. Harvey Cushing, a human neurosurgeon, described the constellation of clinical and chemical abnormalities associated with excess cortisol production in the human body in 1932. Due to his work, Cushing's disease was coined as an umbrella term to describe this condition. Hyperadrenocorticism (HAC) is the formal term for Cushing's disease.

Hormones are products of glandular organs in the body that are carried by the bloodstream to other cells which it stimulates by chemical action. HAC is the overproduction of cortisone by the adrenal gland. The adrenal gland is a small organ located in the abdomen just in front of the kidneys. Excess cortisone is carried in the bloodstream to all parts of the body which produces classic symptoms of Cushing's disease. These include:

- increased water consumption
- increased urination
- pendulous (potbellied) abdomen
- hair loss
- increased appetite
- muscle weakness / atrophy
- panting

The three causes of HAC are excessive secretion of ACTH by the pituitary gland, a functional adrenal tumor or iatrogenic causes. The pituitary gland is a small structure in the middle of the brain that is responsible for production of many hormones, one of which is ACTH. ACTH "drives" the adrenal gland to produce cortisone. Excess ACTH produces too much cortisone. Excess ACTH is the result of a small microscopic tumor of the pituitary gland. This accounts for approximately 85-90% of the causes of HAC.

Adrenal tumors can also cause an overproduction of cortisone. This accounts for 10-15% of the causes of HAC. Iatrogenic reasons are caused by the administration of oral cortisone (prednisone) in excess for various medical conditions.

The diagnosis of HAC is made through various testing that your veterinarian may recommend. The two common tests used are the ACTH stimulation test or the low dose dexamethasone suppression test (LDDST). These are two separate tests, rarely performed together on the same day.

The ACTH stimulation test checks for excess cortisol production by "rousing" the adrenal gland with an injection of synthetic ACTH. Samples are measured at zero hour and one hour post injection. An excess value at the one hour sample is suggestive of HAC. This test has a sensitivity of about 85% for diagnosing HAC.

The LDDST is probably the test of choice for diagnosis of HAC. It has a specificity of 95%. This test takes approximately 8 hours to perform, with 3 blood samples taken during that time. One is looking for suppression of cortisone production during that time frame; normal dogs suppress production, abnormal dogs (HAC) do not.

Once the diagnosis of Cushing's disease has been made, it is important to distinguish between that caused by the pituitary called pituitary dependent hyperadrenocorticism (PDH) or that caused by an adrenal tumor (AT). Other blood tests (ACTH level) and /or abdominal ultrasound aid in that differentiation.

For PDH, medical management is the treatment of choice. Lysodren (op DDD) has fallen out of favor as a drug to treat Cushing's. It actually destroys the abnormal adrenal tissue. Trilostane is the drug used most commonly. This drug actually decreases the production of cortisone by the adrenal gland.

The treatment of choice for AT is surgical removal of the abnormal adrenal gland. About 50% of these tumors are malignant, 50% are benign.

Cushing's disease can be a challenging diagnosis to make, but with correct diagnostic protocols and proper therapy, it can be a manageable disease. Eighty percent of patients respond appropriately to medical management.

The Cocker Home Companion
Volume 36
Summer 2013
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Attend our Cocker-Palooza at the Holiday Inn in Boxborough on Saturday, October 26, 2013 to Support the 16th Annual Joey Fund Auction

Peace – Love – Rescue is the theme of our 16th Annual Joey Fund Auction, so groove on in and help make it our most memorable and successful one yet! Attend our 16th annual Joey Fund Auction and Cocker-Palooza for a fun-filled day to support deserving cocker spaniels who need your help.

The auction proceeds benefit the Joey Fund which pays the veterinary expenses for the dogs we rescue. Real-life Joey was an abandoned cocker who was found wandering the streets on a bitterly cold evening searching desperately for a friendly face. CSRNE found sweet Joey a forever home and paid for his considerable medical needs. In honor of this brave little cocker, the Joey Fund was created.

This year's auction is going to include many interactive venues and exciting gifts. Our ever popular Cutest Pets Contest is well underway, so hurry to enter and vote on our website at www.csrne.org. Not only may your best pal be featured on the 2014 calendar, but the top six cocker vote getters will be featured on wine labels! These items would truly make unique holiday gifts for friends and family.

You can enter raffles, purchase tasty baked goods, and browse at BloomingTails where you can purchase lovely gifts.

The live and silent auction venues include items to bid on for yourself and everyone on your holiday shopping list, so come take a look. You'll find vacation getaways (including Key West, FL), pet items, wine, jewelry, hard-to-get sports memorabilia (including an autographed famous gray hoodie sweatshirt that a certain coach wears) and much, much more!

We are excited to have Randy Price, Boston Channel 5's Morning News Anchor, as our honorary chairperson again this year. Come on by and meet Randy, who has attended all sixteen of our annual auctions. Over the years, Randy has generously offered memorable get-togethers to bid on including tours of the Channel 5 news studio, which include the viewing of a live news broadcast and breakfast. You will have the chance to bid on this again this year! It is a must do experience whether for the first time or for a return visit. Regarding the tour and breakfast, a recent attendee shared with CSRNE, "We had a wonderful time! It was very interesting to see how a news show is produced. Randy was very generous with his time and showed us all around and didn't seem in any hurry, although I'm sure he would have liked to be on his way back home! We went to a breakfast place not far from the news building in Wellesley for breakfast. It was great!" New this year, you can also bid on dining with Randy at Jane Morgan's lovely Worcester, MA home!

Would you be interested in helping with the auction? We need donated items to bid on! Hotel getaways, professional sports tickets, liquor, theater and museum tickets, golf outings, restaurant gift cards and more all bring high bids. We always welcome new ideas and suggestions. Please contact CSRNE if you can help in any way (whether it's donations; helping on auction set-up day on Friday, October 25th; or helping out on the day of the auction). For more information, email us at info@csrne.org or call 603-547-3363.

Come to the auction! Meet Teddy our poster dog and his foster mom Joan Carson! Bring friends and family! There is something for everyone and all age groups. The auction is CSRNE's largest fundraiser of the year and we depend on the money raised to help cockers who desperately need veterinary services. Registration is open on our website at www.csrne.org. You can also view photos of some of our auction items. Cocker-Palooza is truly a fun experience. It's nice to share cocker stories with other cocker enthusiasts, as well as to hear adoption stories and learn more about adopting a rescue cocker. If you can't attend, we hope that you will become a Friend of the Auction by making a tax deductible donation. For more information click on CSRNE's website and you can see some of the wonderful cockers we've rescued and read their happy tales. You can also learn more about the cockers still waiting for their forever homes.

See you at the auction!

Jane Morgan and Elaine Alden, Auction Chairs

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The Joey Fund and Foster Homes Give Seniors a Second Chance

Teddy, "The Sweetest Thing Going"

by Polly Marmaduke

Charlotte Bronte once commented, "There is no happiness like that in being loved by your fellow creatures and feeling that your presence is an addition to their comfort." Looking after a cocker spaniel with chronic health issues is not easy, but it can be very rewarding. Just ask Joan Carson, foster mom to 11-year old Teddy, who adds a recent diagnosis of Cushing's disease to his already long list of health challenges.

Teddy and the love of his life, Joan

When Joan agreed to foster Teddy in October 2011, he gained an attentive caregiver and a tireless advocate. Joan is fully committed to Teddy's well-being and derives much satisfaction from tending to him. And Teddy gives back plenty, in love and laughs. Asked about the demands of caring for Teddy - overseeing his veterinary care and managing his various health problems - Joan readily shrugs it off, preferring to talk about what a wonderful, resilient boy he is, "the sweetest thing going." Giving him six eye drops every day can be challenging, especially when he leads Joan on a playful chase before accepting his medication, but Joan acknowledges that Teddy is "perfectly willing to do what's necessary." No doubt he knows that she only wants to help him feel better.

Cocker Spaniel Rescue of New England (CSRNE) took custody of Teddy after he was found by an animal control officer wandering the streets. Joan says that Teddy was "a total wreck and probably stunk to high heaven." He was filthy, smelly, and itchy, suffering from a drug-resistant staph infection that covered most of his body. Nonetheless, Teddy's underlying cheerful disposition came through. The animal control officer who found Teddy remarked that he was "such a nice dog, so content, happy, and appreciative."

When CSRNE reached out to Joan, an experienced "cocker mom", asking if she and her family would consider fostering Teddy, she overcame her reluctance upon hearing that someone had spray-painted his head red. Joan knew that opening her home - and giving Teddy time, love, and attentive care until he could be placed in an adoptive home - was the only thing to do. Joan went to the veterinary clinic where Teddy was being "rehabilitated," expecting to find an emaciated and skittish dog. Instead, she was greeted by a confident 42-pound, smooth-coated cocker "who came trotting into the room and just sat down next to me like he was ready to go." The bond was formed.

Teddy is deaf, has severe dry eye and limited vision, frequent ear problems, and a thyroid condition. Recently, he was diagnosed with Cushing's Disease. The diagnosis was confirmed by lab tests after Joan observed that Teddy was drinking unusually large quantities of water and his specialist, Dr. Kenneth Knaack, noted that Teddy's abdomen appeared large compared to the rest of his body, a common symptom of Cushing's.

Now they must work to determine a treatment regimen that Teddy's stomach can tolerate. Joan responds to this latest challenge with characteristic good humor. "I can't believe I'm saying that a cocker spaniel has lost his appetite!" And Teddy? He continues to be his sweet self, just happy to be part of a loving family.

Teddy

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***My little old dog: a heartbeat at my feet.* – Edith Wharton**

It's just so hard to believe that anyone could abandon a sweet, little, very old cocker – but that's exactly what happened.

Juliette (as she was named by the caring Animal Control Officer) was found wandering on the street – tired, weak and pathetically thin. You could see almost every bone on her body. Despite being utterly exhausted, she never gave up.

At last, Julie finds love

After a thorough exam by our vet, Juliette was put on meds for arthritis, infected ears and a special diet for kidney function. Now CSRNE needed to find that special person who would give this senior cocker the meds, good food, and care she so deserved. Enter Sue Granger! Sue was no stranger to caring for aging cockers, having had several.

Sue writes, *"She was all black, and I love black cockers. She was old, arthritic, deaf and needed someone to love and care for her…. I picked her up at the kennel on a very cold, snowy day in January 2013. The attendant brought her out to me; I had never seen such a pathetic little dog. Skinny, thinning coat with bare flaky patches down her spine."*

Sue found that little Julie (as she was now known) didn't like the food the kennel had been giving her, so Sue started trying to find something she would enjoy. Finally, Sue discovered that Julie would eat boiled chicken, a little sautéed beef liver, microwaved peas and sweet potato. Eating became the highlight of Julie's day and she was fed four to five times per day. Sue also started giving her Dinovite to improve her skin and coat, and a joint supplement.

Sue Granger

Julie was not like the other cockers Sue had had. *"I kept waiting for her to come to me for attention, or wag her tail when I patted her, or even want to come into my bedroom at night and nap next to my lounge chair while I watched TV. She didn't want to sit on my lap either; she preferred to stay in the kitchen on a bed under my computer desk. It seemed that in her previous life she had not had the attention, care or love that I was used to giving my dogs and she didn't know how to respond to it."*

"Julie was a part of my life for four months. Her coat went from sparse and flaky to silky and almost luxurious. There still were issues with her health. She had an ultrasound to look for any tumors that were causing the strange results in her blood and urine tests. She had a teeth cleaning and an ugly growth removed from her neck where her collar rubbed. Her ears were flushed out a couple of times and I tried to maintain them with Zymox Ear Solution."

Sue continued, *"Julie was beginning to relate to me, but in her own way. She would nap on her bed in the bedroom in the evening before I put her to bed for the night in the kitchen. She would sleep in my lap for almost half an hour before wanting to get down on her own bed. When I took her for short walks outside when the weather got warmer, she would get excited when she met another dog. That was the only time I ever saw her wag her tail.*

"Then on March 30th Julie woke up acting very strange. Her head tilted to one side, her eyes flicked from side to side and she circled on wobbly legs. The vet said it was Old Dog Vestibular Syndrome and there was no cure except time. She stopped eating and drinking and she lost all the weight she had put on - over three pounds. But one day I tried some canned dog food and she ate it. She started to drink some water and walked a little without my help holding her up."

By mid-May Julie was showing fewer signs of the vestibular disease but she was sleeping most of the time and not eating well. Sue felt that she was beginning to fail and her vet agreed that it was time to let her go. Julie went peacefully to sleep as Sue held her in her arms.

Little Julie had more love in those last few months than she ever had before. She had what we can only hope to give every cocker – good care and most important, never-ending love and utter devotion from her foster mom, Sue Granger.

Editor's Note: CSRNE has been able to pay for Teddy and Julie's expensive vet care because of your generous contributions to the Joey Fund. Your continued support is much needed and appreciated.

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In Memory of Lance Mulleneaux

This issue of the CSRNE Newsletter is dedicated to our friend and supporter, Lance Mulleneaux, who passed away February 26, 2013.

By Francine Montemurro

In 2004, Lance adopted Nooner, a 7-year-old CSRNE cocker quite by chance. When Nooner's first family needed to find him a new home, CSRNE asked Lance to meet him and check out his temperament. Lance was still mourning the loss of his first cocker, Molly, and hadn't planned to adopt again. But that meeting ended up being life-changing for both Nooner and Lance. As Lance liked to say, "It was love at first sight." Their connection was immediate and the two were inseparable for the next 8 years.

Once Nooner arrived, Lance's life took on new meaning and dimension. Lance wasn't big on observing his own birthday, but Nooner's was an annual event in Coolidge Corner, complete with cake, champagne, and formal invitations mailed to friends, canine and human. Lance liked to travel and, with few exceptions, Nooner always went along; if Lance couldn't find pet-friendly accommodations, he just didn't go. Those of us who were fortunate enough to know them both, understood they were a special pair. They seemed to communicate in some secret, unspoken language, like two old people who have been friends since childhood. In the world of dog rescue, they were the proverbial match made in heaven.

Lance and Nooner

In Lance's care, Nooner lived a full life and was enormously loved. He passed away in January 2012, just three weeks shy of his 15th birthday. Lance's passing, just over a year later, leaves his circle of friends and we at CSRNE deeply saddened. So, with this Newsletter, we honor Lance and celebrate his devotion to Nooner. Their story recalls the deep connectedness and love we humans share with our canine friends, and reminds us just how much richer our lives are for all they give us.

A personal note from Gerry Foss, President CSRNE:

Lance was a good friend and a dedicated volunteer for CSRNE for many years. Lance and I had many phone conversations about how intelligent, perceptive and beautiful Nooner was. We laughed a lot and always agreed that no dog was ever more amazing than Nooner. I miss those funny, happy conversations.

Lance left a generous bequest to CSRNE. His profound devotion to rescuing homeless and neglected cockers was a fundamental part of his life. Through his generosity, abandoned and needy cockers will be given a second chance at life.

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Bailey says, "Mine!"
Adopted by Michelle Roberson

Help Celebrate & Support CSRNE's Joey Fund!

Come to the 16th Annual Joey Fund Live and Silent Auction

Saturday, October 26, 2013 11am - 4pm

Holiday Inn, Boxborough, MA

See you there!

Scan

For more information, please visit www.csrne.org or call Jane at 508-868-9887