

# ANIMAL HOSPITAL NEWS



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## Stealing Home

I coach little league baseball. And I have to tell you, I *love* baseball - everything about the game. I used to pick the team name, and almost always picked the Red Sox, but I decided to let the kids have a say over the last few fall and spring seasons. Since then I have coached the Braves, the Pirates, the Rangers, and now most recently the Royals. Here we



are - dirtied after a hard fought win. This Royals team never gets down, never quits, even when our side strikes out in an inning, or even when we don't win - we show proper sportsmanship. We're no group of cry-babies. They

seem to have a sense of maturity about them...as much as little leaguers can have anyways. Our team was asked to practice away from the fields where games are played this season. That's a first, but our practice field was an un-mowed, un-raked field at an old defunct elementary school. And more grasshoppers than I have ever seen, I mean you should see them fly when a grounder is hit. While most families have complained about the fact that no other teams were practicing at other locations, the team is okay to make do and I feel they'll be tougher as a result. My two assistant coaches and I came out after a couple of practices and worked on the field ourselves, because that is what coaches do and we put the field in the best shape we could. It still wasn't pretty.

About midway through the season, during one of our

practices, I noticed that a dog had showed up outside the rusty old chain-link fence.



ing around our field. He watched our team running, fielding and throwing the ball for infield/outfield defensive drills. When we finished practice, I noticed that the dog had disappeared.

The next practice, the dog was on field waiting for us. He kept away though, seemingly a stray used to being run off by people. I could tell from his appearance that he probably lived outdoors and food was not an every day thing. He ran around the outfield and before the boys could corner him, he got between the two doors of the

right field gate. He had to be malnourished to be able to squeeze through there I thought to myself, as the boys busied themselves loosening up their arms playing catch with each other. He stayed for the whole practice this time, but took off into the centerfield woods as I attempted to approach him.

I told my wife about the dog at practice and about not seeing a collar, and his ability to squeeze through the narrow gate. My daughter heard us talking about it and chimed in her excited "Are we getting a new dog?" "No sweetheart, I am just talking to Mom about a stray dog at the ballpark. And he may even have a home, I don't know. Just a dog of that type should not be able to squeeze through a fence." The weekend passed with our Royals winning their game to improve to 4 - 4. The following practice Tues-



# STEALING HOME CONT'D

day at 5:30 pm found our groundskeeper dog waiting for us at the field. He pulled the same routine as last practice, squeezing out the right field gate. As the boys began to arrive, their chatter was about the ball field dog. The dog lay down behind the outfield fence as practice began. As the team worked drills and had batting practice, I made my way around the field, showing the right way to crow-hop on a fly ball, and barking at the boys to not miss the cut-off man. But I was also stealthily moving closer to the dog behind the fence. As the boys continued, I whistled to the dog. His ears perked and he raised up, but he didn't run yet, and I pulled a bone shaped dog treat from my pocket and broke it in two. I tossed it up in the air, over the fence. The dog, not missing a beat, tracked it and snatched it out of the air like a pro. The only thing missing was the signature Rickey Henderson smack of the glove on his thigh before making the catch. "Good boy!" I praised. He turned to run, but paused as I whistled again. "I have another treat, want another treat?" I asked assuming that all dogs somehow know the universal language "TREAT?" with the up swing of your voice pitch at the end of the word. He did, and I tossed #2 to him. Another perfect catch. I praised him again, but being out of more treats, decided that it was best to quit now and see what his next move would be if I let him be. I jogged back to my team not looking back. Practice continued and we were nearing the end of our batters getting their swings, when a long fly down the right field line arced foul. My son took off from his second base position to track it down. He ran it to the fence where the ball had carried foul. As he was placing his glove on the top bar of the chain link pre-

paring to jump the fence, he saw the dog race around the outside corner of the right field fence and toward the ball.



My son gave a little chase to getting the ball back from the dog, but the dog was playing "Finders keepers, losers..." "You should have brought more treats Dad!" he yelled as his returned to his position at second without the ball setting up for our final batter of the practice. As we packed up equipment I made another attempt to approach the dog, but he was on to me, and scooped up the slobbery ball and took to the woods.

I made sure to bring a whole bag of treats to our Thursday practice. When we arrived, our friend of the field and foul ball keeping dog was hanging out. He was holding the ball from the other day close, but didn't seem to be spirited enough to run away from us



this time. He let us all come up to him and whined a little as we gathered around him. Bryant "Big Bat" Dabbs asked, "Coach, is he sick? He looks sick." I put my hands on the dog's shoulder and could feel he was hot. Hotter than even the hot day would have made him - I instructed the boys to soak a towel in the ice water cooler that I bring to practices. I wrung out some of the water and used the towel to cool him some. I picked him up and carried him over to the shade of the dug-

out. I decided that I could probably make it to the veterinarian before they closed, as this dog who had barely let me feed him a treat must be really sick to let me now just pick him up. I made it in time, leaving the team to practice with the assistant coaches. I was really torn as we had three games between now and our next practice, but helping this dog was the right thing to do. The veterinarian advised that the dog was running a fever, was malnourished, but the most danger was from being badly dehydrated. Dr. Langford was administering fluids. She also recommended a thorough blood analysis to assess organ function and to make a good diagnosis of any underlying conditions requiring treatment. After staying about an hour past their close, Dr. Langford went over some at home instructions for me to care for the dog. She explained that she gave the dog a thorough physical exam, cleaned his incredibly dirty ears, administered a dewormer in addition to the fluids, and advised that there would be some at home nursing care necessary for the dog too. She told me that because the dog was malnourished that frequent small meals were the best plan to ease his gastrointestinal system back to normal function. Dr. Langford told me that she would have the blood results back in the morning and would call me to discuss the findings. Dr. Langford's technician then led the dog back into the exam room. He was looking a lot better already. I took the leash from the technician and gently scratched his bony backside.

I was able to make it back in time to pick up my son from practice. My Jeep was mobbed by the whole team as they clamored to see the dog sitting in the front seat, head out the window.



The team was all interested to pet and touch the dog, who amazingly had made a 180 and was now relishing the attention. I took the dog home and set him up in the air-conditioned sun room off the kitchen and went over the care instructions with my wife and children. They were wondering if we were going to keep him. I wasn't sure, but we were definitely going to take care of the guy. He warmed to us quickly and slept soundly through the night on the bed of blankets we had set out for him. We fed him small amounts as instructed and Dr. Langford went over the blood results with me in the morning. He had good organ function, was heartworm negative and the next day I took him back to the Animal Hospital to get some vaccines. After the game that afternoon, Bryant Dabb's mother came up and asked about the dog saying that she and Bryant were very interested in adopting him. We had in fact brought the dog to the park to watch the team play and Bryant was hugging on him at that moment. I brought my family together and we all quickly decided that he would be well cared for by the Dabbs. Bryant brought the dog to every practice and the rest of our games too. He was like our new mascot and we even trained him to be our bat boy. By the way, the Royals didn't lose again finishing the season 12 - 4. He may have intended to only steal a ball, but wound up stealing home.



# CYSTITIS: BLADDER MATTERS

Sometimes a dribble here or there isn't just a dribble, and it is fairly unlikely that our pets are just marking their turf. Urinary spotting can be due to inflammation of the bladder, or cystitis. Our pets' bodies are designed to wash bacteria away each time they void their bladders. Unfortunately, some situations can throw this system off, such as: bladder injury, trauma or bladder stones; urinary retention due to obstruction or neurologic problems; congenital malformations; glucose in the urine (common in pets with diabetes); or urinary tract cancer.

In dogs, cystitis is referred to as a urinary tract infection (UTI). Simple cases can occur once and are generally easy to resolve. Recurrent UTI's occur as a relapse of infection, or as a new infection with a different pathogen. Cystitis in cats is called feline lower urinary tract disease (FLUTD) or feline idio-

pathic cystitis (FIC). Bladder stones and urinary blockage (especially) in male cats are definitive cases, but only account for about 40% of cases in cats. Two other contributing factors can be environmental stress and defects in the mucous layer of the bladder. However, even with advanced diagnostics, a true cause is difficult to determine.

Although the causes of cystitis in dogs and cats are different, the clinical signs are very much the same: frequent urination, with only small amounts of urine produced each time; vocalization during urination; blood in the urine; straining to urinate; and excessive licking of the genitals.

Uncovering the cause of cystitis may be complicated, but diagnosing it usually isn't. A urinalysis can easily show the presence of infection and is generally sufficient for diagnosing simple UTI's.

For most cases of feline cystitis and for more complicated UTI's, your veterinarian may order some additional tests. A sterile urine sample may be obtained for a urine culture, which will tell us more about the organism causing the infection and which antibiotic is best for treatment. An x-ray can pick up the presence of bladder stones, and sometimes an ultrasound is used to visualize the bladder to diagnose congenital malformations or tumors.

The prognosis is excellent for dogs with simple UTI's. Once the underlying cause is found for more complex cases, the prognosis is good for them too. For cats with lower urinary tract disease, the prognosis is more complicated. Many cats will have multiple episodes of cystitis throughout their lifetimes, despite adequate treatment. But as we learn more about the causes of these episodes, we also learn how best to treat

them. For simple UTI's, a standard course of 10 -14 days of antibiotics is generally sufficient. For more complicated cases, antibiotics may need to be continued for a month or more. If bladder stones are to blame for the recurrent infections, they will need to be treated too and depending on the composition of the stones, either surgical removal or dissolving them with a diet that acidifies the urine will be recommended.

Your veterinarian has an arsenal of useful diagnostic tools and treatment plans to help soothe your pets inflamed bladder, and your frayed nerves.

**If you see symptoms of Cystitis, contact your veterinarian and get your pet the help he or she needs.**



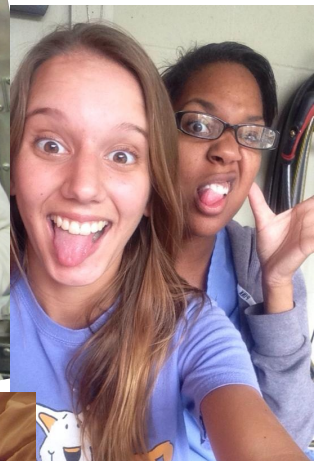
## Employee of the Month

Congratulations go out to Meagan Altamira as she earns recognition as our May 2015 Employee of the Month! Meagan serves as one of our Kennel Technicians and has been cross training to be a Veterinary Technician. She has been with the Animal Hospital of Cornelius since April of 2013. Meagan is a dependable worker and is willing to assist wherever she is needed in the hospital. She takes pride in her work and always keeps a positive attitude.

Meagan became interested in veterinary medicine from her love of horses - working and giving riding lessons at a local farm in Huntersville and from her volunteer

work with the Humane Society. She brings her caring nature here everyday to the benefit of our boarders and patients alike.

Thank you Meagan for the awesome effort!





# SUMMER PET SAFETY



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HOT!



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WET TOWEL\*



\*NO WET FEET ON HOT PAVEMENT!

PLEASE SHARE!