

April-June 2004

*A quarterly publication for the members of the
Cavalier King Charles Spaniel Club of Central Ohio*



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THE PRESIDENT'S MESSAGE

Welcome to the rainy (and that means muddy dog feet!) season in Ohio. After the resignation of Lamont Yoder as President of the club, the CKCSCCO did some reshuffling and I willingly took on the responsibility as President. My goals for the next year are to increase membership and solidify annual events. The Board feels strongly about the social and educational needs of the members. The AKC responded to our request to be considered a “club in progress” with recommendations to potentially start clubs in the Dayton and Cincinnati areas. This is due to the geographic makeup of our current formal membership.

WE NEED YOU!!! Creating and maintaining a new club or group requires commitment from many. We need volunteers to staff events, write stories for the newsletter, assist with the web page, donate items for prizes of Silent Auctions, bring food for humans, volunteer to transport or foster for rescue, and assist with fundraising and membership recruitment. We would love your ideas for events or educational seminars – please let us know if you have relevant information you would like to share in an educational venue.

BREEDERS: If you sell a puppy in the Ohio area, please let your buyers know about the club and the website. They may enjoy the events and will certainly benefit from membership in educational venues.

EMAIL LISTS : Many members enjoy the listservs that abound regarding cavalier spaniels. A visit to yahoo.com will certainly open your eyes as to the breadth of lists available such as breeders lists, feeding cavaliers naturally, agility lists, etc.. These lists can be a good way to keep up on current events and medical issues in the cavalier world – but be aware that posts from members are their “opinions”. Temper this information (or

disinformation) with common sense and check the sources and check with people you trust.

Try to be the great person your cavalier thinks you are ☺

Ellen Poti, President ndpoti@aol.com

Pooch Parade

Our latest club event was a success! Our club participated in the Worthington Pooch Parade on April 24, 2004. The club had a vendors spot where we sold club t-shirts, Cavalier travel bags, and other goodies. Our main goal for this event was to increase club awareness and membership, which we also achieved. Our club participated in the parade, holding our banner high and letting our beloved Cavaliers steal the show. Photos of this event, as well as parade, will be able at the club's next event (see attached invitation).

The Board members and Club would like to acknowledge and thank Phyllis Mahaney, the vendor of "Pammer's Petwear" for a donation of \$78 to the Cavalier King Charles Spaniel Club of Central Ohio. Ms. Mahaney allowed the club to sell her merchandise at our booth at the Pooch Parade. She has donated ½ of her proceeds to the club on this date.

As for the club itself, we sold approximately \$200 of other miscellaneous items. All club t-shirts and travel bags will be available for purchase at future club events.

Syringohydromyelia

There is a rapidly emerging awareness of an inherited condition in our Cavaliers.

Veterinary neurologist, Clare Rusbridge, and her team are conducting research into this condition and have found that 13 out of the 24 top stud dogs since 1998 have sired affected progeny. It is found in all colors, in all lines, and affects both sexes. While it remains unacknowledged it will continue to spread. This condition is called syringomyelia. This occurs when a Cavalier is born with not enough room in the space in the skull that contains the back of the brain. Damage is caused when fluid surrounding the brain is forced into the spinal cord.

The most common symptom is scratching on, or in the air near the shoulder when the dog is excited or walking on a lead. However this is not the only symptom and it is not always present. Affected dogs and bitches can be sensitive around the head, neck and front legs and often cry, yelp or scream for no apparent reason. They can develop a permanently twisted neck or have a wobbling gait in the hind legs and/or weakness in their front legs.

In severely affected cases the dog can suffer so badly that euthanasia becomes the only option.

Signs are usually noticed in dogs between 6 months and 3 years but it has been diagnosed in Cavaliers up to 10 years old.

At present the condition can only be identified by MRI scan or by clinical signs. There is not a test to identify carriers.

Studies of pedigrees suggest that Syringomyelia is caused by two genes that have to be carried by both parents for an affected dog to be born. Although dogs displaying signs of the problem were seen in the past, it is thought that the two genes came together in a significant way when descendants of two bitches, born in the 1950s, were mated together in the late 1970s.

Continual line breeding to the popular stud dogs of this era has increased the number of Cavaliers carrying both genes throughout the breed, and this includes many of the top stud dogs and brood bitches. It is these dogs whose genes dominate the pedigrees of the Cavaliers in our kennels, our homes and on our laps. No one is to blame because no one had the knowledge to identify the isolated cases as an inherited condition.

Information about individual dogs and bitches given to the Veterinary research team is confidential. Names have not and will not be passed on to anybody in the Cavalier Club or elsewhere

The problem is now widespread. There will be clear and carrier dogs and bitches in every line. Some breeders and stud dog owners may believe it is not their problem. In some cases they may not be aware that their dog or bitch has produced an affected Cavalier, and this is dangerous for the good of the breed. Owners are now being encouraged to inform the breeder if their Cavalier has a positive diagnosis. This problem, like MVD, is affecting us all.

It is what we do now that is so important. The researchers believe that it may be possible to develop a DNA test which will identify which Cavaliers are carriers of syringomyelia & which are clear.

DNA from extended families of dogs can be collected by blood sampling or, in some cases, cheek swab. Blood samples will be required from both clear and affected dogs and bitches. All donor dogs will be identified only by a code. It is hoped that it may also be possible to eventually produce a DNA for MVD from the same blood samples

The Cavalier Club hopes that any breeder asked to provide blood samples will cooperate with this vital research.

The search for a DNA test will take some time. The veterinary research team has provided what breeding advice they can (see below) At the moment we have no way of knowing whether our Cavaliers are clear or carriers unless they have already produced affected offspring.

This problem could continue to spread until there are very few clear dogs and bitches from which to breed. To act now to develop a DNA test will not only prevent pain & suffering, but will also make good commercial sense.

All dogs enjoy a good scratch. This may be because of a flea bite, ear mites or a skin condition. We must all resist the temptation of making ringside diagnosis. It is serious and it threatens all our Cavaliers.

Current Breeding Advice

Until we have a way of testing for the culprit recessive genes, this is what we recommend.

Affected Case

Identified by MRI (confirmed) or suspected on basis of clinical signs (scratching at shoulder area when walking on leash or when excited) ***Not to be used for breeding, stop breeding from affected cases now.***

Unaffected known carrier (sire/dam and all offspring of an affected case) will have both genes. If mated with same will produce affected offspring. ***Use very sparingly. Mate only to unrelated dogs that have had no extended family history of syringomyelia.*** Keep other Breeders informed.

Unaffected dog (it is possible that all Cavaliers will be carriers of one or more recessive genes)

Do not mate with closely related dogs. Keep track of all offspring The time of onset of symptoms varies greatly, from weeks to many years. If you breed an affected dog tell any other breeder involved.

WEBSITES FOR CAVALIER JUNKIES

The following websites are some sites compiled by our club members for the ultimate in Cavalier shopping. If you have any to add please contact our Secretary, Michelle Gerke by email: mgerke1@earthlink.net, so the club can put together an extraordinary list of online Cavalier shopping for our club members. BEWARE: These may affect your pocketbook and some sound effects may send your animals crazy! The club does not endorse and does not have any affiliation with any of the following websites:

- <http://www.barkersusa.com/index.html>
- <http://www.cavalierpetpourri.com/shop/>
- <http://www.fancypaw.com/>
- <http://www.samburu.com/default.asp>
- <http://www.thedog-clubs.com/home.html>
- <http://www.uarg.org/index.html>
- <http://www.dynastyforpetlovers.com/CAVALIER.HTM>

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