

# THE Irish Wolfhound Foundation



# Focus

Winter 2015

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*Focus*

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# CHRISTMAS GREETINGS

*With many fond wishes  
by this faithful messenger*



# Heart Testing IWADV

Frances Abrams

October 2015

The weather predictions sounded dire. Mariellen Dentino was home with new puppies. We had 38 (instead of 25) dogs signed up for heart testing and Bill had to drive home Sunday night. I got on the road late and the weather on the drive lived up (or down) to prediction. It sounded like a tough weekend.

Fortunately Joanne Buehner-Brown stepped in to take over the EKGs in addition to her usual help with blood draws. Joanne and Bill took over my hotel room Saturday night and tested 7-8 dogs. Suddenly Sunday's numbers looked more manageable. Our final stroke of luck was the hurricane that decided to go elsewhere. In the end, the weather was fine on Sunday and the testing went well. Joanne and Debbie Chastain brought us munchies to supplement the delicious food from the concession stand. And did I say that Beth Chastain took my little Bo to Best in Sweeps! I never had a better day of testing.

Thanks to everyone for bringing your dogs and especially thanks to Joanne!

Irish Wolfhound Association of Delaware Valley 2015			
Age	Male	Female	Total
<2	0	1	1
2-3 yrs	3	5	8
3-4 yrs	0	2	2
4-5 yrs	4	2	6
5-6 yrs	3	1	4
6-7 yrs	2	1	3
>7yrs	6	8	14
Totals	18	20	38
Normals	10	15	25
Atrial Fibrillation, Equivocal IWH Type DCM	2	3	5
IWH Type DCM	3	3	6
VPCs	0	1	1
Pericardial effusion/aortic tumor	0	0	0
Equivocal aortic stenosis	0	1	1
Moderate valve disease	0	1	1
Tricuspid Valve disease	1	0	1
	16	24	
Degenerative valve disease/incidental findings (norm)	7	9	16

## Trends in IW Health from the Life Time Cardiac Study Data

submitted by Dr Mariellen Dentino

Data from the last 15 years of cardiac health testing will be presented at the National Specialty this May and then will be published in Focus and available on the web site.

The Lifetime Cardiac Study collected a tremendous amount of data. Much of the owner reported data lacked consistent follow-up and statistical analysis was not possible. However much of this is very INTERESTING even if not statistically validated and trends are noted.

### NUTRITION

In data collected from 1990-1992 for a musculoskeletal disease survey only 2% of 192 respondents fed raw diets with another 10% adding some fruits, vegetables and meat on a non-regular basis. 80% of the hounds were on Vitamin C. The dose was 1000 mg in most cases. Other supplements were used sporadically and consisted of algae, kelp, Vit E, garlic and yeast.

The LCS data, collected from 2000-2006 had detailed diet history from 124 dogs and 19.3% of hounds were fed a raw diet with another 45% adding some fresh meat/vegetables/fruits daily.

Supplements provided changed over the years with only 28% reporting Vit C supplementation and the usual dose being 500mg. However 37% of these 124 hounds were on multiple supplements with fish oil,

glucosamine, Vit E, COQ10, green lip mussel leading the pack. Hounds with AFib were often on Hawthorne, carnitine, and taurine.

There is a difference in the survival time and progression of cardiac disease in hounds described in Germany and in the United States. It was noted in one of the German publications that all hounds had been fed a kibble diet and no supplements were used which is a different nutritional history than found in our study hounds.

Owners reported 14.7% of their hounds were overweight and 18% reported their hounds were underweight. There were not enough hounds consistently reported over or under weight to see if this was reflected in cancer incidence or length of life. This is certainly a difficult call for owners who often think their hound is substantial instead of overweight. The Irish Wolfhound Foundation is now working with Dr. Lisa Freeman of Tufts University to address these interesting questions. You may have noticed Dr Tyrrell adding another measurement to your hounds data at the EKG/echo clinic at Delaware Valley. And you will be asked to note diet/physical description of body weight with yearly updates for the LCS 11 study.

### EXERCISE

The IW is the largest of the galloping hounds and exercise patterns were reported for 68 hounds. All these hounds had regular exercise 3 to 7 days a week with 40 hounds engaging in galloping on a regular basis. Exercise duration averaged from 15 to 45 minutes per session. No hound

under 7 years was unable to walk at least a mile. This is a very small number of hounds but the number engaging in routine strenuous exercise is impressive. Certainly there is a bias as owners who value this are more likely to report on this parameter.

Twenty two hounds in this cohort were in AFib at entry into the study or went into AFib during follow up. Eight hounds with atrial fibrillation reported a rapid decrease in exercise tolerance after the onset of heart failure symptoms while 14 reported a gradual decrease in exercise tolerance. The numbers are too small to advocate fitness leading to a less rapid decline in exercise capacity in hounds developing atrial fib.

### BLOOD TESTS

Published data for the Greyhound, our close relative, documents blood test results outside the normal ranges for many commonly run laboratory tests. Results for thyroid blood levels in the IW are published and are lower than in most other breeds. A lower than usual platelet count and white blood cell count have been suggested in the IW. Results for blood tests in the LCS show 110 hounds had a cbc with only 8 showing any abnormality.

Seventy six hounds had electrolyte panels run with only 4 abnormalities reported.

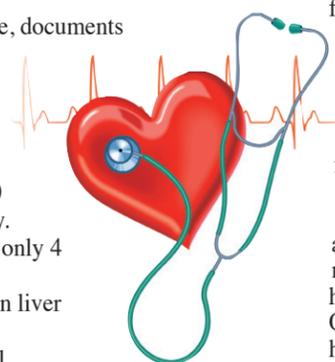
Only 8 of 85 hounds had an abnormality reported on liver enzyme tests.

69 hounds had a calcium check and all were normal.

Sixteen of 61 urinalysis were abnormal (a test more often done for symptoms) and 13 of 81 blood tests for kidney function were abnormal.

This preliminary data did not note if these blood tests results were from routine screening or done to evaluate illness. With the low percentage of abnormal electrolyte, complete blood count, liver enzyme and calcium values it appears the IW falls within normal parameters for these routine blood tests.

The highest incidence of abnormality was for renal function tests- kidney failure is asymptomatic until severe disease is present and it is in the top 10 causes of death for the IW. It seems more likely these numbers reflect the incidence of kidney dysfunction rather than suggesting the IW does not fall in normal range for these blood tests - remembering the creatinine may be high normal due to the relative large muscle mass.



### SYMPTOMS and HEREDITY of CONGESTIVE HEART FAILURE in the IW

Heart failure in the IW is different than in the Great Dane, Doberman, or Boxer. Atrial fibrillation is the first sign of heart disease in the great majority of IWs and only about half the dogs with AFib actually die of heart failure.

The incidence of swelling of the abdomen or legs was low compared to other breeds - only 6% of owners noticed this. 33.8% of the hounds had gradual worsening of fatigue and decreased appetite. 4% had coughing and 30.9% of owners noted increased panting with mild activity progressing to panting at rest.

61% of the hounds in AFib and all the hounds with congestive heart failure were on some form of heart medication- most commonly digitalis. Hounds lived longer with heart failure in the latter half of the study but there were not enough hounds followed to learn anything about time to start these meds or if some meds are better than others. Certainly extrapolating from human treatment of congestive heart failure, medication reduces symptoms and extends life.

Atrial fibrillation is an inherited problem in the IW. An autosomal dominant pattern has been suggested, but also modifiers must be present as some hounds are found to have AFib at 3 while littermates are unaffected until 7 or 8. Only 9 hounds with atrial fibrillation whose owners reported health knowledge of relatives did not have known relatives with Afib. As the study progressed more and more hounds had parents or siblings develop AFib. This data will help with efforts to locate genes for atrial fib as we continue to generate longitudinal health data and store blood for DNA on as many hounds as possible.

### STRESS

In humans stress is a known risk factor for heart disease. Some hounds are obviously more stressed by heart testing/ by traveling etc.

We looked at data from hounds with a normal EKG except for a heart rate of greater than 160 on screening EKG - this can be a sign of stress. There were 38 of these hounds. They did not have a premature death with age at death being 7.6 years for the group.( 7.7 years for bitches and 7.6 years for dogs). It is postulated that humans perpetuate their stress and maintain this abnormal state while our hounds go home and chill.

## Presidents Message

Winter 2015

Just a quick note thanking all the Foundation supporters; the good work we do with health, education, and rescue could not be possible without the generosity of our donors. In the same vein, I would like to thank all the volunteer's that come together to help orchestrate the events that we as a community enjoy each year.

Merry Christmas, Happy Holidays and have a Happy and Healthy New Year!

Best Regards,  
Doug Marx – IWF President



Give the Gift  
That Keeps on Giving....

An IWF Donation is a great gift idea for "the hard to buy for". Designate it In Honor Of or In Memory Of that special person or hound. Remember your generosity is tax deductible! Use the donation form on page 8.

# Rescue Update From Texas, One Year Later

by Ann Sury, SCIWC, Rescue Chair

September 12th of this year marked the one year anniversary of the seizure that has been referred to as The Texas 72. Out of such a tragic event the wolfhound community came together and has continued to support the ongoing efforts of this rescue. For over fourteen months, you have followed the journey through articles submitted, presentations given, and first hand accounts shared. There were many challenging aspects due to the number of hounds. We were faced with unknowns and uncertainty on short and long term expectations. Such is the nature of Rescue. I have written updates on some of the more endearing stories that pulled at our hearts when they were first introduced, as well as made comments on several hounds at different stages of progress. It is hard to fathom that some hounds can still not be touched but it is even more difficult to comprehend where they started.

The one year anniversary was first recognized on the private facebook page for the Texas 72 to acknowledge my thanks and appreciation for the committed foster and adoptive homes and the progress made, the mentors for their contributions, as well as the volunteers and SCIWC Rescue Committee who were key in this success story. I acknowledged the ongoing support from the IWF and the IWCA who's financial support made this rescue possible.

Members of the South Central Irish Wolfhound Rescue committee traveled to Houston on September 19th for a reception hosted by the HSPCA. These committed staff members were able to see the product of their labors with two rescue hounds in attendance and also see the involvement of people across the country through a pictorial display. Many shared their involvement with the rescue operation. Tara Yurkshat, Vice President of Animal Welfare at the HSPCA, accepted a framed print commissioned by the IWCA and created by Margie Milne. The piece recognized the HSPCA's service and partnership with the IWCA, IWF Foundation and SCIWC. A check for \$1,000 from the Irish Wolfhound Club of America was also presented.

On October 10th an outdoor event was held at Prestonwood Kennels to recognize the contributions of Guinnette Peebles, her staff and the Poodle Rescue volunteers. Local hound owners, rescue volunteers and SCIWC Rescue committee members enjoyed social time. A stone bench, funded by donations from the committee, was presented to Guinnette. It will reside on her property close to the building where over 30 hounds were housed.



Dedicated bench to Guinnette Peebles and Prestonwood Kennels commemorating One Year Anniversary of 2014 Texas 72 Seizure.

In September and October, appointments were scheduled to visit and administer veterinary care to the Texas rescues still unable to travel. Members of the rescue committee logged over 2000 miles and covered major metropolitan areas in the state. Care included exams, chipping, vaccinations, medications and shaving. Our initial concern was this could be a setback for the hounds. Surprisingly, it was not and in some cases initiated further progress. While under sedation, it was the first time some owners were able to touch and love on their hounds. Having known this breed for many years, you take for granted the little things. Nothing could be taken for granted with this group as we celebrated progress: coming into the house or moving out of a corner, venturing into a new room, playing with another dog, getting into a car, allowing a gentle touch of a hand, accepting a collar or leash, or even going for a walk. I am grateful for every small step, the support system we've nurtured, the many relationships we've built and the amazing outpouring of public support that enabled success. I can't thank you enough.

As I continue to monitor behavior and health of these hounds I want to recognize not only the continued need for committed people but also the need for planning and communication. We had tools that helped: the IWF Help survey that allowed us to tap into a database of volunteers, a private facebook page and assigned mentors that allowed fosters to share, documents that outlined processes and procedures, and forged relationships with experts and suppliers. My hope is that no group ever has to go through an event like this, but sadly, that is not realistic. My wish is that we are better prepared next time by strengthening our rescue network, sharing best practices of processes and procedures, and having an action plan in place. I'll always be committed to rescue; that's what I do. The role is, at times, misunderstood, and under constant scrutiny or criticism. To all those that do rescue work, I understand and you have my support.

At this writing, there are only four challenging hounds of the Texas 72 left to place. A few updates and comments follow, on those you've met and a few maybe you haven't. All of the homes have expressed thanks for the support they have been given and the opportunity to be involved in the lives of their hounds.

## #681 Quincy

In September 2014, Quincy left the HSPCA with her foster family that had also been volunteering time after the seizure. Originally named Squinty due to her facial expression, she was very thin and shy but affectionate. She would cower near the doorway at her foster home not knowing what to do with outdoor space. She gradually started to accept her newly found freedom and made great strides with house training. Her infected ears were treated with antibiotics and ear cleaning solution. Early on it was noted that she showed



Quincy at HSPCA one year later

difficulty eating and had bouts of diarrhea. Her teeth were dirty, infected and broken. She became one of the first recipients of a palette of Royal Canin donated by Food Bank. Dental surgery was scheduled, and after her recovery, she was placed in her foster-to-forever home. She joined the Miles' household February 2015, along with their beloved sheepdog, Bella, and Milo, a ten pound Maltese. Soon after the loss of Bella to cancer, Quincy started having symptoms including vomiting, lethargy and fever. A diagnosis of advanced pyometra was followed by an emergency spay. To complicate things further, a gastropexy was performed to remove an obstruction.

Quincy is a resilient girl, has fully recovered and has also moved out of her "safe room". She has more energy, seeks out pets, and greets both canines and humans on her highly anticipated evening walks. She was one of the special guests that attended the One Year Presentation at the HSPCA and Prestonwood Kennels. She has finally settled in, started to truly enjoy life as it should be, and most importantly, she is home.

## #687 Albert

Albert was in the first group of hounds that left the Houston SPCA bound for Dr. Mercer's residence. This group included those needing more extensive medical attention. Albert was one of the few at the HSPCA that actually liked people. He was under weight with little muscle tone, skin and ear infections, low thyroid, a weak immune system, arthritis and hip dysplasia. It took months of treatment before his ears were clear and his infected and swollen feet took on a more normal appearance.



Due to his thyroid meds, Albert is quite the hairy guy. His face is shaved due to chronic skin issues and makes him more comfortable.



Bairre



Ginny

## #745 Bairre and #746 Ginny

I remember visiting Ginny at Prestonwood Kennels in Houston. I never saw her stand or even move. I would sit in her kennel like the other volunteers in hopes she would become more comfortable to alien beings. Originally fostered by a wonderful couple in Austin that does Great Dane Rescue, Bairre was unlike Ginny who had challenges to overcome. While Bairre quickly adapted to his environment, Ginny remained hidden or against a wall, wanting to be invisible. Bairre enjoyed walks with his Dane buddies while Ginny hid behind a chair and had to be carried outside.

Both Bairre and Ginny now reside in their forever homes with rescued

Golden Retrievers as playmates. Bairre is a goodwill ambassador and doesn't know a stranger. He has accompanied his owner, Eileen, to softball games, festivals and the state capital. During Ginny's one year check, Bairre came for a visit and the two were reunited. It was a good day.

Ginny continues to make her own progress at the Biba's but a car ride or leash are still too daunting. She will accept a collar, sleeps in her owner's bedroom, joins the family to watch TV and wants to be close. Ginny is happy, will come sniff her owners but remains uncomfortable about being touched. Her owner told me it was "love at first sight". Even though they could not make comfortable eye contact, Ginny gave her a lick on the hand at their first meeting. They realize it will take time before Ginny is entirely comfortable with her strange new world. That is all right with them. They have the time, and the patience. Ginny is worth waiting for.

## #704 Brendan

Brendan left Prestonwood Kennels for San Antonio with the Prices October 2014. At that time, he was quite thin and heartworm positive. His disposition was very calm and there were no initial challenges with getting him into a vehicle or enduring the four hour ride from Houston to San Antonio. Brendan is at ease with his new playmates, Scottie - a mixed breed Scottish Deerhound, and Quinn - a mixed breed Irish Wolfhound. In the first few weeks, Brendan learned to go up and down the five stairs from the house to the backyard. He was easily housebroken and has always enjoyed meals. Not a big toy or snack dog, he was quite content to eat, have his ears scratched, and lay down in the family room.

Over the last year, Brendan has learned to play and interact with Scottie and Quinn, although he is less energetic than they are. On his recent heartworm test, he came up negative, which was wonderful news. Brendan enjoys walks and rides in the car and is always a big hit wherever he goes. From time to time there are get-togethers with the other Houston rescues living in San Antonio and Brendan seems to recognize them. We think Dougal and Brendan might be brothers.

The Prices are happy to have Brendan sharing their lives. They know it's been a tough road for Brendan, but are convinced that he is happy to be with them. They are doing their very best to ensure he gets the love and attention he has always deserved.



The group shot at Prestonwood Kennel is when Brendan was picked up to be fostered and ultimately adopted. Picture includes Robin Smith, Monica Black and Ben Price with Brendan.

# National Parent Club CHF Conference

The national parent club canine health conference was held August 7-9 in St Louis. Investigators reported on multiple topics and areas of research being sponsored by the Canine Health Foundation which provides matching funds for breed club supported research. Drs. Frances Abrams and Mariellen Dentino attended representing the IWCA and IWF.

The first talk discussed stem cell therapy for supraspinatus tendonopathy and introduced concepts of regenerative medicine. This was very informative and there are already practical applications to canine injuries.

Dr. Yuanlong Pan presented an excellent talk on canine dementia and nutritional therapy for this. Control groups to evaluate response to the supplement and standardized cognitive testing was used and results are promising.

Dr. Bruce Smith discussed the use of viral immune system stimulation to aid survival in osteosarcoma. Thus far only one dog has benefitted significantly but there is much promise in this area. Both the IWF and the IWCA are supporting this study.

It was exciting to hear the story of epigenetics and future implications in cancer treatment. Dr. Jeffry Bryan explained the permanent nature of epigenetic changes. Damage from environmental exposures can not only affect your bitch but her puppies and also the next generation.

There is considerable variation in the response of individual dogs to cancer treatment. Dr. Douglas Thamm talked about precision medicine in oncology stressing the targeted therapy that is presently available. Most of this work has been done in lymphoma.

In a change of pace the keynote speaker Dr. Alice Villalobos spoke to the strengths and benefits of the human animal bond and how it influences end of life decisions. She talked of the quality of life scale and gave a frank discussion about terminal disease, futile medicine, and providing a kind and gentle death for our dogs.

The next two talks discussed the incredible complexity of the canine and human microbiome and possible help for dogs with pyoderma and extreme itching problems. With the increase in antibiotic resistance, cultures and the use of targeted antibiotics are becoming more necessary.

Dr. Laura Nelson presented a discussion of GDV risk, treatment, and prognosis (an improvement in mortality has been demonstrated). There seems to be no consensus on causation except the known added risk with deep chested and giant breed dogs and stress. The earlier the diagnosis the better the prognosis.

An Irritable bowel susceptible genome+ an environmental trigger+ enteric bacteria = irritable bowel syndrome. Thankfully at this time IWs are not on the list of commonly affected breeds.

Dr Josh Stern was next on the agenda with a discussion of subvalvular aortic stenosis and mitral valve disease. These are rare in IWs. Dr. Stern is joining the IWF cardiology team to use our donated blood and EKGs to add genetic research as well as the ongoing clinical work to lessen heart

disease in the IW.

There have been recent reports of infectious outbreaks, and draft recommendations to reduce and control infectious disease in canine group settings were presented by Dr. Jason Stull, from the Dept of Preventative Veterinary Medicine at Ohio State University. At the present time there is no central body to take reports of canine illness that occurs 7-10 days after a show or competition so the problem may be much greater than suspected.

Brucellosis may be increasing and the havoc it can create in breeding programs is significant. Dr. Matthew Krecic provided information on the many tests available for brucellosis and recommendations as to the timing of testing. Each of the breeding pair should be tested.

Cognitive problems in aging canines was discussed by Dr. Gary Landsberg, a diplomat of both the American and European Colleges of Veterinary Behaviour. The cognitive dysfunction syndrome can begin around age 6-8, when defects in learning and memory can be documented in the laboratory environment. Diet, supplements, drugs, and improvement in the environment can all be helpful. The IWF plans to add a short section to the lifetime cardiac study11 form to evaluate if this is a not yet discussed problem in IWs.

Osteochondrosis is one of the most common reasons for vet visits in large breed dogs. Dr. Brian Saunders presented new considerations for treatment using osteochondral plugs. These are hydrogels seeded with adult mesenchymal stem cells. The initial study will determine which stem cells more effectively reconstruct native cartilage, or bone. This may be a significant new therapy for osteoarthritis.

The following presentation by Dr. Dominique Griffon reviewed cranial cruciate ligament disease- very commonly seen in Labrador retrievers but also known to afflict large breeds including Iws. She has reported a non invasive evaluation technique to predict risk of this problem which is felt to be 25% genetically influenced but 75% influenced by diet/exercise/environment.

Dr. Joan Coates presented a very impressive body of work on degenerative myelopathy with discussion on the clinical presentation and progression of this dreadful disease. This is similar to ALS in humans and has been the basis for important advances in understanding and treatment.

Over 500,000 dogs were seen by a veterinarian with seizures and Dr. Ned Patterson discussed the difficulties in identifying dogs at high risk of developing seizures by genetic testing. They are working on devices to predict seizures and thus decrease the amount of sedating medications dogs must take.

Dr. Holger Volk gave an overview of current available seizure medications and their possible side effects. He also discussed the role of diet and supplements in controlling epilepsy and the need for more research in this area.



The four puppies of Lily a TX 72 Rescue born about a month after she was placed in her forever home.

*The Irish Wolfhound Foundation gratefully acknowledges contributions from the following supporters*

This list includes only the donations received since the last publication.

- |  |  |  |   |
|--|--|--|---|
| Liz Barningham<br>IMO: Briggs and Sheehan  | Mariellen Dentino<br>IMO: Jonathan, Puzzle,<br>and Colin                               | Linda King<br>IMO: Mary Ryan's "Luke"-<br>CH Erinwood Baritone,<br>Jean Roland, & Lynn<br>O'Leary; also IHO: Anne<br>Janis | Mary Ryan<br>Linda Savage<br>Susan Shebelsky            |
| Karen Becker   | Kathleen Dykstra   | Margaret LaRosa  | Donna Shultz<br>IMO: CH Hound Hill Val-<br>ley of Aerie |
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|  | Tricia Kelley  | Rocky Mountain Irish<br>Wolfhound Association  |   |
|  | Frances Kindred  | Chery Rolle  |   |



## Irish Wolfhound Foundation - Rescue Grant Report

Rescue Reimbursements from January 1st 2015 thru November 17th, 2015  
(The figures below are strictly regular reimbursements shared  
between the IWCA & the IWF.  
They are not reflective of any Houston, TX rescue charges.)

Date	IW	Amount	State
February 16, 2015	Female	\$323.80	MI
June 27, 2015	Female	\$340.00	MI
August 4, 2015	Female	\$241.75	GA
August 4, 2015	Female	\$241.75	GA
November 1, 2015	Female	\$245.00	TX
November 16, 2015	Male	\$357.50	TX

Reimbursement Total - \$1,749.80

Update on the Houston, TX rescue hounds: Out of the six hounds still needing new homes, one female hound was euthanized due to kidney disease. Another female has been placed in her forever home. So, the total left is now down to four - 2 intact males and 2 spayed females. To all of you who have adopted one of these rescues or donated funds for their care. ..many thanks!  
Jean A. Minnier - IWCA & IW Foundation - Rescue Chair

## The Irish Wolfhound Foundation, Inc.

### Treasurer's Report

Balances are as of 10/19/15

**\$187,237.96 General Fund**

**\$121,168.15 General Endowment Fund**

**\$24,384.72 Rescue Endowment Fund**

**Disbursements: \$13,298.28**

**\$10,541.41 - Health Research**

**\$2,756.87 - Rescue (including TX-72)**



The Irish Wolfhound Foundation, Inc.

*Focus*

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**THE Irish Wolfhound Foundation**



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