

### Animals as Performance Athletes—Part 1 of 3



## Bull Terrier through a Fence

By John J. Haburjak, DVM, Diplomate ACVS

This past week a good buddy of mine and I went down to Indian Wells to watch the world's best men and women beat a tennis ball back and forth across a net in the desert at the BNP Paribas Open. Good fun, tension, intrigue and talent! This experience of sharing both fellowship with a good friend, and viewing some of the most highly athletic players has to rank as one

of my all-time favorite bucket list tick offs. One of the details of my trip that I seemed to really reflect on while it all played out is the simplicity of tennis as a game that adds artistry and

technique to athleticism to yield literally hours of enjoyment. As I got to thinking about it more, from experiences with my own dogs and those of my colleagues from veterinary school, we spent our years in veterinary school watching some of the most competitive, athletic and highlight-reel-worthy feats on the fields of dog parks, the causeway water works and

the back forty of the Davis municipal cemetery. Such feats that would be considered worthy of any audience of any world-class sporting event imaginable.

In particular, one Saturday afternoon we were having a BBQ with a number of Vet School classmates. Of course, as veterinary students we were all incapable of going anywhere without our dogs. This naturally lead to the mash pit in the back yard of several retrievers, herding dogs, Boston terriers, Jack Russel terriers, a doberman, dalmatian, an English bull dog and a Roman Nosed bull terrier—all running again and again after a Frisbee. While several of our aproned classmates took the lead on the BBQ, the rest

of us gathered around this motley crew of dogs as they chased a Frisbee over and over again. Of course, the retrievers and border collies took turns being first to the disc, and the terriers and Doberman paced around the limits of everyone's patience yapping and barking while the heelers were busy nipping at back ends of the travelling gang of happy hounds. While all of us watched this group of dogs chasing the Frisbee over again it was clear to all observers, as the dogs took turns getting to the Frisbee first, that the back end of the pack was always made up of the bull terrier. Yes, it is true, even the English bull dog would consistently beat the bull terrier to the disc every time!

Then, the most amazing thing occurred: one of my other classmates decided to take a turn throwing the disc for the dogs and accidentally let it fly over the fence. The pack of dogs all ran as hard as they could to the edge of the fence and stopped. They all stopped but the bull terrier who ran, waddled and chugged right up to the fence like the other dogs, but instead of stopping simply kept going, right through the fence! Yeah way! The bull terrier ran right through the fence, wobbled a bit and shook his head but ripped through the fence and actually retrieved the Frisbee. This dog overcame a lack of talent and made like a bull dozer rather than a bull terrier to get his prey!

Whether shredding the gnar, spiking the ball, throwing cheddar or heaving a Hail Mary perhaps it is just my opinion, but none of these human Sport Center tributes capture as effectively the majesty, beauty and talent of a retriever hitting a pond in pursuit of a bird or a Malinois on an agility A-frame...or perhaps a bull terrier going through a fence board!

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*This dog overcame a lack of talent and made like a bull dozer rather than a bull terrier to get his prey!*

## NOTABLE NEWS

### A Helping Hand

Veterinary Surgical Centers believes in the importance of giving back to the community and helping those in need. Accordingly, each year we make several charitable donations to registered 501(c)(3) non-profit organizations. Last year's recipients were the Montclair Pet & Wildlife Fund, The Food Bank of Contra Costa & Solano County, Love & Respect Ministries, NorCal Aids Cycle, and Shepherd's Gate.

We'd also like to give special thanks to our staff for their generous individual contributions included with our donations. For more information about these organizations, or to donate, please visit [www.petandwildlifefund.org](http://www.petandwildlifefund.org), [www.foodbankccs.org](http://www.foodbankccs.org), [www.loveandrespect.com](http://www.loveandrespect.com), [www.norcalaidscycle.org](http://www.norcalaidscycle.org), and [www.shepherdsgate.org](http://www.shepherdsgate.org).



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## Featured Medical Case

# Feline Nasopharyngeal Polyps

By Mark Dosch, DVM, DACVS



Nasopharyngeal polyps are benign growths that originate from the middle ear or Eustachian tubes and may extend into the oropharynx via the auditory tube or into the horizontal/vertical ear canals via rupture of the tympanic membrane. The underlying etiology is unknown but theories exist that there may be an infectious (bacterial origin vs. viral—feline calicivirus) or a congenital origin.

Typically patients are young (<2 yrs of age), but have been reported up to 15 years of age. Polyps tend to be unilateral. Other differential diagnoses include nasopharyngeal neoplasia (LSA), foreign body, chronic otitis, and chronic rhinitis.

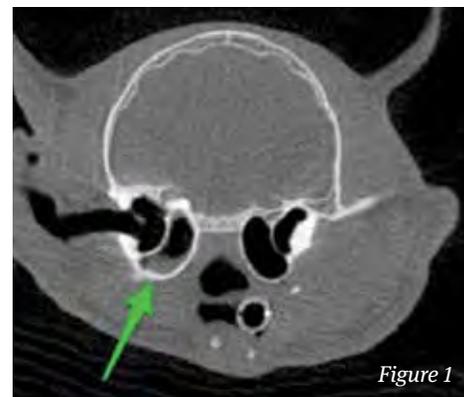
Clinical signs include recurrent otitis externa/media (typically dark ceruminous discharge, +/- purulent, +/- hemorrhagic discharge), head shaking, respiratory signs (stertor, tachypnea, dyspnea), voice change, nasal changes (sneezing, nasal discharge – serous, purulent, +/-hemorrhagic), coughing, dysphagia, vestibular signs, and Horner's syndrome.

Otoscopic examination and sedated oral exam are typically the first approach to the diagnostic process. Radiographs of the skull have variable success in identification of bulla and/or soft tissue lesions in the oropharynx. Advanced imaging with CT is recommended in all cases (especially those considering VBO or those who have failed traction and avulsion intervention); MRI can also be performed but is seldom done due to cost. The surgeons of the Veterinary Surgical Centers of the Delta (Berkeley at PETS Referral Center and in Dublin at IronHorse VetCare) collaborate with CT imaging at the Dublin facility prior to surgical intervention.

Treatment options are broken down into medical vs. surgical intervention. Medical management with traction and avulsion therapy is an appropriate first step as this may result in cure. Histopathology should be submitted. Traction and avulsion from the oropharynx or ear canal needs to be followed by medical management. This typically includes analgesia (Buprenorphine), Antibiotics such as Clavamox or a fluoroquinolone (i.e. Pradofloxacin or Marbofloxacin) for a month, and a tapering dose of steroids (prednisalone) over 3-4 weeks.

Surgical intervention with a ventral bulla osteotomy (VBO) is reserved for medical management failure, cases where overt tissue is left behind with traction and avulsion, or can be considered a first-line treatment for the best chance of resolution with one procedure. Histopathology and culture are submitted with this treatment and antibiotics are used for 3-4 weeks based on culture results.

Patients with nasopharyngeal polyps ultimately can do well depending on the treatment methods performed and complications, albeit common, are generally temporary. Traction and avulsion of nasopharyngeal polyps with medical management has a success rate of 89-100%; traction and avulsion of external ear canal with medical management carries a 50% success rate. The VBO procedure is highly successful with recurrence rates reported at <2%. Horner's



syndrome is seen in about 40-43% of cats undergoing traction and avulsion while 57-80% of cats with a VBO will develop this syndrome. This typically resolves within days to weeks and is rarely permanent. Vestibular signs are uncommon and typically resolve within a few days. Owners often ask about hearing after the VBO procedure. This procedure is unlikely to result in hearing loss.

The surgeons at the Veterinary Surgery Centers of the Delta (Berkeley and Dublin) are glad to speak with you about this condition and help facilitate diagnostic and surgical management when indicated.

### References:

- Anderson DM, Robinson RK, White RAS. Management of inflammatory polyps in 37 cats. *Vet Rec* 2000;147:684-7.
- Muilenburg RK, Fry TR: Feline nasopharyngeal polyps. *Vet Clin North Am Small Anim Pract* 32(4):839-849, 2002.

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## THE SURGEONS OF VSC



John J.  
Haburjak



Tracy N.  
Frey



Andrew M.  
Grange



Mark L.  
Dosch

*VSC is proud to introduce the most recent additions to the VSC team*

**AIMEE LEVIA**



Aimee was born and raised in the East Bay and says she will always hold Oakland dearest to her heart. Growing up caring for animals has always been an intrinsic part of her nature, and she loved to nurture the street cats that roamed the neighborhood.

After an unsatisfying stint in office settings to start her career she decided to follow her passion for animal care, taking an entry level position at an emergency clinic in Antioch. She was immediately hooked and wanted to pursue a career in the profession! Over Aimee's nine years in the veterinary field she has worked in General Practice, Emergency Critical Care, Spay/Neuter Shelter Care with a focus on community outreach, and joined the VSC surgical nursing team this past June.

Aimee shares her time with her boyfriend, a USMC veteran and their fur family, a one-eyed "bat-huahua" Rocko, "chunky monkey" Yorkie Julian, a gorgeous were-cat named SmokeStack, and their two betta fish Dracul and Odysseus. Aimee loves to explore the Bay Area by hiking around with her boyfriend and dogs, eating diverse types of food, and curling up on the couch watching movies.

**ANA CAMPOS, RVT**



Ana is a San Francisco native who's been living in Oakland for 8 years. She lives with her super bright & silly 5-year-old daughter, Naomi. They have two pets; a 10-year-old Border Collie mix named Anola, and a 9-year-old Burmese mix cat named Nike. She is very family oriented and values creating memories with her loved ones.

Ana has been in the veterinary field for 10 years. She earned her Associate of Science in Veterinary Technology from Western Career College in 2007 and became a Registered Veterinary Technician in 2009. She has experience working in multiple veterinary fields; shelter medicine, high volume spay/neuter clinic, exotics (pocket pets), veterinary dentistry (her favorite) and general practice. She is thrilled to continue her career with VSC as a surgical nurse. She joined the team in August.

In her spare time, she loves biking, attending San Francisco Giants baseball games, going to festivals & farmers markets, hiking, listening to pop & alternative music, and being close to the ocean. She also loves playing catcher for her softball team (SF SPCA Kittens) in the spring & summer.

**HALLE MERRILL**



Halle grew up loving animals, so much so she vividly remembers having to be removed from a bull fight in Spain when she was five years old because she got physically sick about it.

Halle graduated from The American Institute of Foreign Study, London, with honors, and then earned her Bachelor degree from UC Santa Cruz. She joined the VSC Customer Service Representative team in April of last year, and brings over a decade of experience in the veterinary field.

Halle and her husband share their Berkeley home with their four furry canine kids and their daughter, who Halle affectionately refers to as her "small, not so furry, feral critter." This exemplifies the great sense of humor that anyone who knows Halle has come to cherish. Halle's passions include photography, art appreciation, and gardening.

**RESOURCE CORNER**



The A's will host their 11th annual "Bark at the Park" event, presented by AvoDerm, Nylabone, and PetSmart on Friday, July 22 when the A's take on the Tampa Bay Rays. The event includes a pre game "Activities Center," "Pup Parade on the Field," and the "Bark at the Park Photo Contest." Afterwards, dogs and their owners can take their seats and enjoy an evening of A's baseball.

Remember, all participants need to register for a special event ticket which can be done on the webpage listed. Regular game tickets do not permit admission of dogs.

A portion of the proceeds from the A's Bark at the Park will benefit Dogs4Diabetics & the Animal Rescue Foundation (ARF).

**FEATURED BROCHURE**

**The Disc – Intervertebral Disc Disease**

This issue features our "Disc" brochure, which describes breeds at risk for disc disease as well as common clinical presentations. A brief review of disc anatomy and pathology is followed by a discussion of diagnostic tools and two common surgical interventions: the hemilaminectomy and ventral slot procedures. Finally, it summarizes expectations of post-operative recovery.

This is an excellent tool to supplement the information and materials you already provide your clients. Furthermore, many hospitals are using this brochure internally, to help their staff achieve greater understanding of this condition as well as to develop a common language to use with their clientele. This and other brochures can be found at and downloaded from our website [www.vscdsurgerycenters.com](http://www.vscdsurgerycenters.com) by clicking the "Resources" tab. For complimentary copies of any of our brochures or business cards email us any time at [contact@vscdsurgerycenters.com](mailto:contact@vscdsurgerycenters.com).



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This newsletter is dedicated to Reece Howard Heimbach, newborn son of VSC Operations Officer Zoen Heimbach, and his wife Jenna. Reece was born at 3:54pm on 2/7/16 (Super Bowl baby!), weighing in at 7 lbs 3 oz, and measuring 20 inches long. Mom and baby are happy and healthy. Reece is the couple's first child. Veterinary Surgical Centers wishes Reece and his parents a long life full of happiness, health, and service to those causes they find worthy.



## Veterinary Behavior Specialists



This issue's Professional Interest Article features Dr. Meredith Stepita, DVM, DACVB. She helps pet owners achieve the best possible resolution of their pet's undesirable behavior out of IronHorse Vet-Care in Dublin.

Dr. Stepita grew up in Maryland, but now calls Northern California home. She received her DVM from the University of Tennessee in 2006. After completing an internship and working in general practice in Arizona she entered into the Clinical Veterinary Behavior Residency Program at the University of California-Davis, becoming a Board-Certified Veterinary Behaviorist in 2011. She spends most of her time in her San Francisco Bay Area-based practice, Veterinary Behavior Specialists, helping pet owners improve their pet's behavior problems, and finds working

with dedicated pet owners to be highly rewarding. Dr. Stepita's research involves the frequency of parvovirus in puppies attending puppy socialization classes. Results of this study showed that vaccinated puppies attending these classes were no more likely to be diagnosed with parvovirus than those not attending these classes. She has authored chapters on canine aggression, feline anxiety, feline house soiling, and canine and feline mourning in veterinary texts. Dr. Stepita is also a local and national speaker. Her areas of interest include canine and feline anxiety and aggression, the human-animal bond, and animal welfare. She shares her life with her husband Chris and their dogs (Chewy and Snoopy), cats (Maddie, Cali, and Tarzan), and the occasional foster dog.

Dr. Stepita also counsels soon to be parents about preparing for and introducing their new baby to their pets and she sees pre-adoption appointments to advise owners as to the best type of pet for their household.

Please visit Dr. Stepita's website [vetbehavioristspecialists.com](http://vetbehavioristspecialists.com) for more information or to schedule an appointment.

### What behavior problems does Dr. Stepita treat?

- ✓ Aggression
- ✓ Separation anxiety
- ✓ Destructive & escape behavior
- ✓ Compulsive disorders
- ✓ Noise phobias
- ✓ Fear of the veterinary hospital, car rides, nail trims, children, people, more
- ✓ House soiling, spraying
- ✓ Unruly behavior (pulling on leash, play mouthing, jumping on people)
- ✓ Pica (eating non-food items)
- ✓ Acral lick dermatitis (dogs continually licking non-healing wounds on their legs)
- ✓ Excessive vocalization
- ✓ Senior pet behavior problems (including senility/cognitive dysfunction)

...and more!



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