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Local News

December 5, 2011

State's first in-clinic equine stem cell treatment performed in Daleville

Procedure will help horse that was therapeutic to girl hurt in riding accident

By Melanie D. Hayes
 The Herald Bulletin

ANDERSON, Ind. — As veterinarian Joe Yocum stuck a large syringe into a show horse's thigh and removed 40 grams of fat, the horse's owner stood close by caressing her muzzle reassuringly.

Four years ago, Gracie, the now 11-year-old horse, helped Jessie Minneman learn to ride again as she recovered from a serious riding accident and coma. Now, Jessie, 15, stood by her horse as she underwent treatment for arthritis that had her limping in pain.

Indiana's first in-clinic equine stem cell procedure was performed on Gracie on Monday morning at King Veterinary Service in Daleville.

Brad King, an equine sports medicine veterinarian and owner of the clinic, has helped his animal patients through stem cell treatments before, but not in-house. King would gather cell samples with a syringe, send them to California where they were processed, and then they were mailed back so that King could re-inject his animals with the treated cells.

The in-house treatment offers quicker, more efficient results, he said. The cost to animal owners is \$1,600 to \$1,800.

Yocum owns his own vet clinic in Danville, Ky., and is also a traveling consultant for MediVet America, a stem cell therapy company in Kentucky. Yocum performs in-clinic stem cell treatments at his clinic and also travels and teaches other vets how to perform them on their own as well. On Monday, he was teaching King the tricks of the job by working on Gracie.

This treatment is not the controversial human embryonic treatment. It is an adult stem cell treatment that uses stem cells and natural healing factors from an animal's own body, Yocum said.


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Jessie Minneman, 15, comforts her horse Gracie as veterinarian Joe Yocum works to remove fat tissue to retrieve stem cells that he can separate, activate and then inject back into Gracie in her arthritic ankle.

John P. Cleary

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Fat is removed from the animal, and machines are used to break down the fat to release the cells. The cells are combined with blood plasma enriched with growth and healing chemicals and the liquid is activated with LED lights so that it can begin rebuilding cartilage quicker than it normally would. The stem cells are then injected back into the animal where it needs them to help make joints, ligaments and tendons stronger.

In Gracie's case that was the joint in her left rear ankle.

"I worked on this horse for six or eight months and I helped her, but I never fixed her," King said. "She was the first horse I thought of for this procedure."

King wanted Gracie to be his first horse he helped through the four-hour procedure because of her story and how crucial she was to her owner Jessie, a Milan High School sophomore.

In July 2007, Jessie was riding another horse during a competition, when the horse reared up and knocked her off. The horse fell and rolled on her.

Jessie had a broken femur, lost part of a finger and was in a coma for five days. After waking, she had to spend two weeks in a wheelchair and had to learn how to walk again.

Riding was also a challenge but Jessie didn't want to give up her passion. Her family decided it would be better to sell the other horse and buy a new one.

Three months after the accident, and while Jessie was still on crutches, they bought Gracie. When she had recovered, she learned to ride again on Gracie, taking it slowly, and appreciating how gentle Gracie was.

The pair created a strong bond, said Jessie's father, Jim Minneman, 50, Milan. No one can handle that horse the way Jessie can, he said.

"During her first show back, she won first place in her class," he said. "If she would have had a bad ride and if Gracie wasn't as good as she is, I'm not sure Jessie would have kept doing it. She's been therapeutic to Jessie."

Both he and Jessie said that getting the expensive stem cell treatment was worth it if it meant Jessie would be able to ride and compete with such a gentle horse as Gracie. The family drives more than two hours so that King can treat Gracie, and this was no exception.

King said that he has two extra stem cell injections at the clinic and Gracie will have to be brought back on three-week intervals for check-ups and possibly additional injections. He hopes that she will be healed and back to normal in about three months.

"Gracie has been wonderful," said Jesse, who wants to become an equine vet like King. "She's the horse that got my confidence back."

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City employee denies claims in defamation suit



On Monday, a city employee filed her response denying claims made in a lawsuit filed against her by Mayor Kris Ockomon.

December 5, 2011 1 Photo

Skip Ockomon attends court hearing



Anderson firefighter Skip Ockomon attended his initial hearing Monday morning, where his charges were read and formalized.

December 5, 2011 1 Photo

Police still investigating Muncie homicide



Tigers top Raiders 49-47

Photos from Alexandria as the Tigers hosted the Shenandoah Raiders on Saturday.

December 3, 2011

SLIDESHOW: 20 must-see films for the holiday season

Indians host Jay County

Arabians come from behind to beat Shamrocks 56-46

Anderson downs South Putnam 80-28

Details about what led to a Muncie woman being found wrapped in a covering and set ablaze Saturday morning remain hazy although the woman has been identified.

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December 5, 2011 1 Photo

Democrats discuss upcoming session

The Right to Work issue will take up most of the 2012 session, the three Democratic state legislators at Monday morning's Third House said.

December 5, 2011

Local Marine Corps to partner with Christian Center for Toys for Tots Event

The Mounds Detachment Marine Corps expects to serve over 2,000 children with an upcoming toy giveaway through a partnership with The Christian Center.

December 6, 2011

Arrest log: Dec. 6

Arrests made by Madison County law enforcement on Saturday, Sunday and Monday, based on Madison County Jail records.

December 5, 2011

Anderson has flood warning until Thursday



The White River at Anderson has a flood warning until Thursday morning, but, according to the National Weather Service in Indianapolis, it should be minor.

December 5, 2011 1 Photo

Plans for Super Celebration site announced

With 60 days to go until the 2012 Super Bowl in Indianapolis excitement about the "super" celebration is growing, local organizers involved with the event have said.

December 5, 2011

Local Briefs: Dec. 6

A compilation of news aof local and statewide interest, as published in the Tuesday edition of the Herald Bulletin.

December 5, 2011

More Local News Headlines

Photographer's pick



John P. Cleary

It was a damp walk around downtown Anderson Monday as a steady light rain fell over the area for a second straight day. More than an inch of precipitation has fallen since Sunday.

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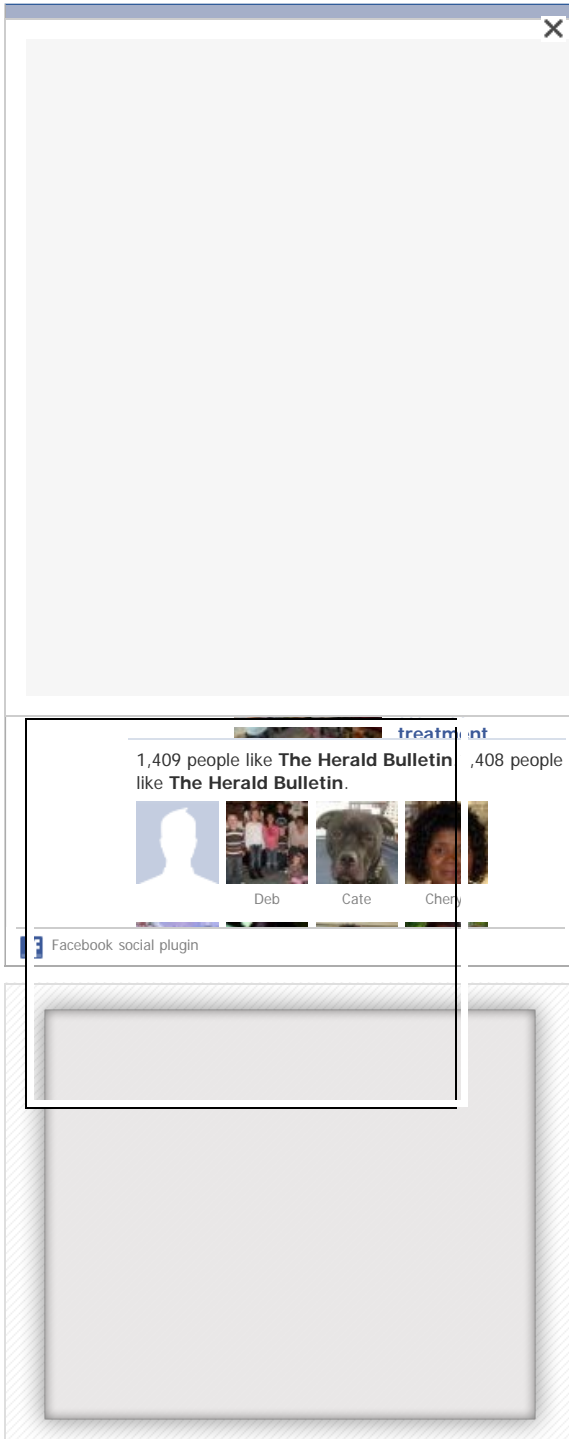
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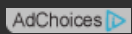
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