CVM Today

College of Veterinary Medicine & Biomedical Sciences
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TEXAS A&M UNIVERSITY

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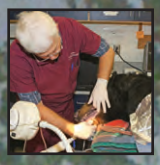

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DEAN'S Message

As the holidays arrive in Aggieland, I am filled with a sense of the season. At this time of year, more than any other, we pause to reflect on those that are less fortunate than ourselves—those that cannot help themselves. Tough economic times have meant hard decisions that have impacted people's ability to not only care for themselves, but also their pets. However, the holidays remind us to be thankful for the gifts that we have been given, and to share those gifts with others. Most importantly, the holidays are about hope, and hope is what we have chosen to fill the pages of this edition of *CVM Today*.

Dean Eleanor M. Green and Cohen

This fall we welcomed the 132-member class of 2013. Their enthusiasm and commitment have been evident and even infectious from the first day of orientation. As they have begun their journey to become veterinarians, I continue to be inspired by the conversations I hear in the hallways, the visions of students working in groups to prepare for class, and the dedication of our faculty as they help lead these students through veterinary medical school. I feel confident that we are doing what we can to develop the veterinary medical leaders of tomorrow, and that gives me great hope for the profession.

In addition, I am fortunate to witness the amazing discoveries that happen in our laboratories as we create new knowledge that benefits not only animals and humans, but also our environment. As the world continues to grow smaller, it becomes even more distinct how animal health, human health and the health of our environment are intrinsically intertwined, and we are committed to making a difference in each of these areas. Through collaborations and visionary leadership, our college is able to take the 'One Health' concept from the bench and share it around the globe. This gives me hope for our world.

How we accomplish these wonderful and amazing things in our college comes at a cost, and we would not be able to fulfill our role without the support of friends of the college—our donors. Their generosity enables students to fulfill dreams of a fully realized education and to open doors to a rewarding career. It also sustains research in the lab by allowing investigators to purchase the equipment needed to continue their search for new therapies and cures. I have had the opportunity to share our story with groups and individuals during my travels, and it has been important for me to let them know the full impact a gift can make to the programs and people in our college. Their commitment to our endeavors gives me hope for the future.

Most importantly, while I am filled with feelings of hope this holiday season, I also feel joy. It gives me great joy to work in such a wonderful place where everyone works together to make our world a better place for all of us. We invite you to share in our joy as you read through the magazine, and wish you hope, peace and love from all of the CVM family during this special time of year.

Eleanor M. Green, DVM, DACVIM, DABVP
Carl B. King Dean of Veterinary Medicine

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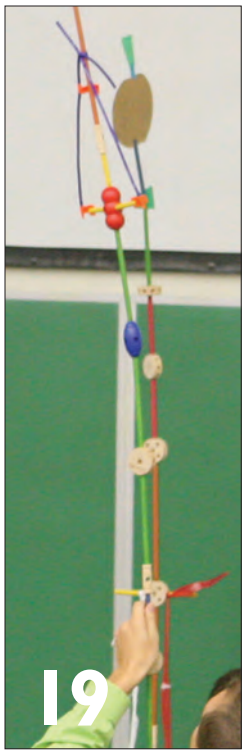

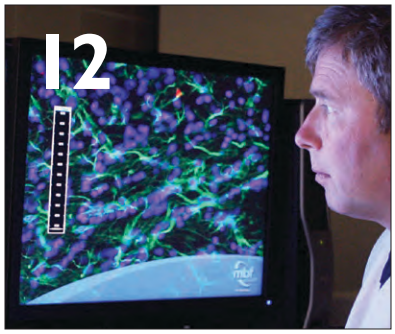

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Couple travels from Canada on horseback to see genetics expert

by Stacie Kopecki

Canadian film-makers Rick Blackburn and his wife Louise Leroux took a cross-country trip like no other. They rode two Canadian horses from Quebec, Canada to College Station, Texas to bring 50 samples of Canadian horse DNA to Dr. Gus Cothran, director of equine genetics at the Texas A&M University College of Veterinary Medicine & Biomedical Sciences.

The Canadian horse is a breed that goes back hundreds of years and has had a rich history in North America. Unfortunately, they are now one of the rarest horse breeds in the world with only about 2,500 pure-blood Canadian horses left. They are also listed as critical by the American Livestock Conservation Association.

Rick Blackburn walks his Canadian horses into Aggieland.

"We took the journey to Texas A&M to both enlist Dr. Cothran's help in mapping the horses' genes to find out how the Canadian horse has influenced the blood lines of other North American horses, and to raise awareness for this dying breed," explained Blackburn

An expert in population and conservation genetics, Cothran is only one of a few people in the world that does work on genetics of horses as it relates to breed conservation. Until recently he has had very little opportunity to study the Canadian horse because of its rarity.

"The diverse samples that Mr. Blackburn collected from top Canadian horse breeders across Canada will enable me to do a more comprehensive analysis of the breed. There is a strong probability that these horses are ancestors to a variety of common North American breeds such as the Morgan horse," stated Cothran. "This information should bring to light the genetic and historical importance of the Canadian horse and hopefully spark people's interest in conserving the breed."

These outcomes are the very reason that Blackburn and Leroux took on this four-month, 2,000 mile trail ride. Starting on May 11, 2009, they arrived in College Station on September 19.

"At 25 to 35 miles a day it was a long journey for sure," said Blackburn. "But the opportunity to highlight this breed and to demonstrate its legendary ruggedness by riding them cross-country has definitely been worth-while. There has been an incredible grass-roots interest from Americans in what we are doing and that gives us hope that we will be able to save these horses."

Blackburn and Leroux are also turning this unique experience into a film entitled, *"The Legend of the Canadian Horse"* that will air on Canadian network television. They hope that this film, along with Dr. Cothran's work, will raise awareness and help with conservation of the Canadian horse.

Once the duo arrived in College Station with their horses, they participated in a whirlwind of activities.

"We started our visit in College Station by speaking to the local news about our journey,"

Dr. Bhanu Chowdhary greets Blackburn and his horses outside the Large Animal Hospital.

explained Blackburn. "I think the combination of this coverage and the articles that were written about our arrival got us recognized all over campus."

While the publicity was helpful for the filmmakers' cause, they were most eager to meet with Dr. Cothran and present him with their samples.

"It was a privilege to meet with Dr. Cothran and tour his lab. Everyone in the lab was very excited about the possibilities that could come from researching the genes of the Canadian horse," noted Blackburn. "The researchers and the facilities are really world-leading in equine research and I think it's the perfect place to conduct this analysis."

Although the main purpose of their trip was to deliver the samples, Blackburn and Leroux also had an opportunity to experience Aggieland and show off their impressive horses.

"The Parson's Mounted Cavalry spent a lot of time with us and was very gracious. They let us ride with them while they were practicing for the upcoming game and even took us to yell practice, the game and a tailgate party," stated Blackburn. "I've never been to a college football game, but somehow I believe that A&M's games are a unique experience. We had a wonderful time and even got some footage for our film."

The Aggie hospitality did not stop with the Cavalry. While in College Station, Blackburn and Leroux were treated to a host of activities and met with a myriad of people.

"We were welcomed by just about everyone it seems. We went to dinner with members from your student Equine Practitioners club; we met with researchers, generals and students. It was just amazing how friendly everyone was. I was even invited to go riding and cut cattle with various faculty members," said Blackburn.

While the experience was satisfying for Blackburn and Leroux they were ready to get home after having been gone for over four and a half months.

"It's amazing that while it took four months to get to College Station on horseback it only took four days to get home with the horses in a trailer," noted Blackburn. "Everything about our experience at Texas A&M was positive, but we were definitely ready to get home and see our daughters."

Now back in Canada, the duo is continuing to work on their film by focusing on the history of the Canadian horse.

"We were actually just in Quebec City filming. We are trying to figure out exactly where the first horses came from in France and when it officially became the Canadian horse," explained Blackburn. "It has been and continues to be a project that is close to our heart."

"The Legend of the Canadian Horse" is currently in production and no air date has been set.

Bison's hooves require special care

by Marilyn Snell

For ranchers Beverly Brown and Donnis Baggett, "A good bison should have a strong frame, good feet and legs, and the appropriate masculine or feminine look." So… where do you take a bison for her pedicure? The Lucky B Bison Ranch, located in Brazos County, Texas, is lucky indeed as these ranchers know exactly where to find a needed hoof trim for one of their noble beasts.

"With the Texas A&M Large Animal Hospital right here—and a lot of very good private practitioner vets—we can get help whenever we need it," notes Baggett.

How do you give a bison a pedicure? It takes some know-how, of course, but the correct equipment is essential to perform the task so that the bison can be kept stable and as stress-free as possible.

"Bison are generally fairly docile in the pasture, but can never be taken for granted. You need to be cautious around them as they can be high strung in the corral and have to be handled carefully. The key is to work them with as little stress as possible," states Baggett.

At the Texas A&M College of Veterinary Medicine & Biomedical Sciences Large Animal Hospital, a clinical veterinarian, veterinary technicians, and veterinary medical students performed the bison pedicure. Dr. John Davidson, clinical assistant professor, coordinated and supervised the trimming of the bison's hooves.

"Reaganne, a mature bison cow, is accustomed to people and that made loading and unloading her in a trailer and placing her in the squeeze chute possible without getting her too excited," notes Davidson.

"The key to a successful foot trim is proper restraint. The hydraulic squeeze chute enabled Reaganne to be hoisted off her feet for a foot trim that required no sedation."

Veterinary Technicians C.W. Haynes and Melissa Welch used their experience and know-how to properly restrain the livestock patient.

"Once Reaganne was properly restrained, the rest of the hoof trimming procedure was similar to that routinely performed on our bovine patients here at the CVM. We used nippers, hoof knives, and a soft disk sander to complete the trimming procedure," notes Davidson. After fifteen minutes in the squeeze shoot, Reaganne's hooves were trimmed and sanded to give the old girl a new stride in her step.

Davidson explained that this was a prime teaching opportunity for the veterinary medical students. Students at the CVM Veterinary Medical Teaching Hospital are offered access to the best equipment available to our livestock industry today.

"Proper animal restraint, regardless of sp ecies, is a fundamental and critical skill in the practice of veterinary medicine," said Davidson. "It is underscored in our large animal species because of the potential for bodily harm when not taken seriously."

Reaganne's requirement for trimming resulted from the fact that she did not have as much wear on her claws as most bison do; which is common in older livestock who have conformation changes that come with age and declining use of the affected limbs.

Brown and Baggett sought health care for their bison at the CVM because as Baggett notes, "The CVM is a first-class operation, it's here at home, and we have an excellent relationship with the staff at the Large Animal Hospital and in Field Services."

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Dr. John Davidson gives Reaganne a pedicure.

Even bears need dental work

by Tiffany Friedrich

Dr. Johnathan Dodd gives Tibor a root canal.

Most of us hate going to the dentist—it's not typically a fanfare parade. But who knew that those bi-annual dental checkups could actually add years to your life?

Tibor, a seventeen year old North American black bear, is proof that you can't go on for long without some quality dental care. He is a trained circus animal, whose owner, Lana Steeples, began to notice signs that something was wrong.

"Tibor had shown signs of discomfort when he ate and drank," said Steeples. "So, I was worried that he needed some dental work done."

As the veterinarians at the Texas A&M College of Veterinary Medicine & Biomedical Sciences are well aware, it is not uncommon for captive animals to have dental work done and that is usually why they live longer than those out in the wild.

"It's not uncommon for wild animals to have dental problems, because of their aggressive nature," said Dr. Johnathan Dodd, clinical associate professor at the Texas A&M College of Veterinary Medicine & Biomedical Sciences. "They fight, they chew on things, they break teeth. Unfortunately they don't receive any dental care, so in the wild they often die at a younger age because of neglect and the systemic effects of a dental disease."

Although this is a common procedure, there are still several challenges that present themselves when treating an animal as large as a bear.

"It takes much larger equipment when dealing with such large teeth, so often a challenge is having the right equipment to perform the root canal," said Dodd. "Having portable radiograph equipment is also a problem as well as having enough working space to perform a procedure on an animal of this size, especially when so many people are involved doing their respective tasks."

Tibor's dental work was nothing short of a team effort.

"The zoo medicine, anesthesia and dental departments were all involved and had specific jobs to do," said Dodd. "Without such teamwork it would have been much more difficult and would have taken much longer."

With the care of Dr. Dodd, Tibor went under and received a root canal, as well as some other dental work. This procedure is not a first for the veterinarians at Texas A&M—they are quite experienced in treating wild animals and have worked on many different species including lions, kangaroos and reptiles.

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"The only frustrating thing is that there has been little scientific study of the health problems of bison," added Baggett. "Fortunately, they have few health issues compared to some other species."

The Lucky B Bison Ranch started their bison herd in 1991, when Beverly received a six month old bottle-fed bison heifer (No. 1 Beasy) as a Christmas present. When she was grown, Beasy was artificially inseminated using frozen semen, because Lucky B, at that time, did not have a bison bull. This was the first successful AI of a bison in Texas using frozen semen.

The Lucky B is a founding member of the Texas Bison Association and a member of the National Bison Association. Baggett is currently serving on the board of directors of the NBA. Today the Lucky B herd numbers around 75 animals.

Brown and Baggett are conscientious about their role as bison ranchers. "We enjoy being a part of the movement to preserve this magnificent animal. We also enjoy people's fascination with bison."

New developments at the Medical Sciences Library

by Roma Subramanian

The Texas A&M University Medical Sciences Library (MSL) will soon have two additional feathers in its resource cap: a rare veterinary book collection dating back to the 16th century and an online tool that will offer veterinary medical alumni of the Texas A&M University College of Veterinary Medicine & Biomedical Sciences (CVM) free access to VetMed Resource, a database of veterinary medical information.

The John G. P. Wood Veterinary Medicine Collection

A copy of the first published book on veterinary medicine ("*Vegetti Renati Artis Veterinariae*," published 1528) and a $15,000 book with beautiful woodcut illustrations ("*English Horseman and Farrier*," published 1673) are some of the highlights of the 900-title John G. P. Wood Veterinary Medicine Collection the MSL is aiming to purchase.

Gathered over a lifetime by 88-year-old British veterinarian John G. P. Wood, the collection of rare and expensive books is valued at $637,440.

"The collection will be a great match for the university," said Esther Carrigan, associate dean and director of the MSL.

"A number of books in the collection focus on equine sciences. These will be of great value to the university's College of Veterinary Medicine whose Large Animal Clinical Sciences department is one of the strongest of any veterinary school in the country. There are also some very early works on farming, animal husbandry and military science, reinforcing the collection's value to the university's strong agricultural sciences division and its outstanding military history collection."

A horse illustration from a book in the the John G. P. Wood Veterinary Medicine Collection.

Most of the collection will be housed in the MSL so that they can be easily accessed by faculty, researchers and students in the veterinary medicine and agricultural sciences fields. Rare materials will be kept in the university's Cushing Memorial Library and Archives.

"The MSL hopes to have a contract for purchase of this collection by the end of the calendar year," said Carrigan. "The collection will be purchased not through state dollars or student fees but only through endowment income and gifts to the library. We're hoping to find as many donors as possible."

To participate in bringing the John G. P. Wood Veterinary Medicine Collection to Texas A&M University, please contact the MSL Administration Office at 979-845-7748.

Alumni access to VetMed Resource

The MSL is offering CVM graduates of the years 2007, 2008 and 2009 free access for one year to VetMed Resource. This access is being provided through a collaborative pilot project with financial support from Pfizer, a pharmaceutical company; and Commonwealth Agricultural Bureau International (CABI), a nonprofit organization devoted to solving problems in the fields of agriculture and the environment.

Launched in 2007, VetMed Resource is described as the "most comprehensive source of information on all aspects of veterinary medicine and animal health available," by its developer, CABI. Until this project, access to VetMed Resource had been restricted to faculty and current students. In addition to abstracts, reviews and full-text articles of research papers, the resource offers datasheets on animal pathogens and diseases; links to conferences and courses; and breaking news, updates and news articles. It also contains CABI's Animal Health and Production Compendium, which includes a drug database, a glossary of veterinary terms and more than 2,000 pictures.

"The aim of the project is to determine whether offering alumni access to a resource they used when in school makes it easier for them to keep abreast of the latest advances in veterinary science and thus function as an effective continuing education tool," said Carrigan.

The MSL is one of six veterinary medical libraries in the United States participating in this pilot project.

"As the primary library partnering with CABI in this project, the MSL is taking a leadership role in mapping out action plans for the implementation of the project and in developing an evaluation instrument to determine the usefulness of this information access (for example, "Was the choice of a drug or procedure influenced by access to the resources?") to practicing veterinarians," said Carrigan.

The MSL is also developing training materials to help alumni use VetMed Resource.

"If the pilot is successful, it will be the first time the CVM will be able to offer an online tool for the practicing veterinarian," said Carrigan.

If you are among the group of CVM graduates covered by the pilot and have not received your logon information, please contact the MSL at AskMSL@medlib.tamu.edu or 979-845-7428.

Dr. James Heird brought on board to bridge A&M equine programs

by Stacie Kopecki

Internationally renowned equine scholar, Dr. Jim Heird has joined the Texas A&M family.

Heird was hired as a joint appointment between the College of Veterinary Medicine & Biomedical Sciences (CVM) and the College of Agriculture and Life Sciences as Executive Professor and Coordinator of the Equine Sciences Initiative.

"For many years, Texas A&M has been home to some of the finest equine scientists and clinicians in the nation," said Dr. Eleanor Green, dean of veterinary medicine. "We are so fortunate to be able to bring in another exceptional faculty member that will help to synergize the efforts between the CVM and the College of Agriculture and Life Sciences."

This new Equine Studies position has been established to bring the equine programs in the CVM and in the College of Agriculture and Life Sciences together to better leverage the assets and talents in both colleges.

"Each of these colleges has an excellent equine program," states Heird. "If we can combine the efforts of these two programs we will be able to improve teaching, outreach and research in equine sciences which would benefit both our students and the equine industry."

The first order of business for Heird will be to do a complete assessment of each program.

"We will look at what assets each program currently has and where we can grow greater collaborations," says Heird. "These might be anything from teaching integration to advanced facilities. We'll just have to see what's available."

Once Heird has analyzed the assets in both colleges, his challenge will be in helping faculty develop collaborative efforts and finding new ways to reach out to the equine industry.

"The equine industry is such a major contributor to the economy of our state," said Dr. Mark Hussey, vice chancellor and dean for agriculture and life sciences. "And Texas A&M is better positioned than any other institution to support this industry with research and teaching."

Heird came to Texas A&M from Colorado State University where he was director of teaching and outreach for the equine sciences program.

"Colorado State has an excellent equine program and I will definitely miss working there, but the number one reason I chose to come to Texas A&M is that it has the resources and faculty necessary to have the best equine program in the world," says Heird.

Along with the physical assets of Texas A&M, Heird also was attracted to the spirit of the University.

"Aggie spirit and pride and the history of excellence of the College of Veterinary Medicine & Biomedical Sciences and the Animal Science program really leads you to believe that there is a desire to be great," comments Heird. "I think with the resources and desire we have here we can not only be great, we can and will be the best."

Dr. James Heird

MSL & AAEP form unique partnership

This year, the Medical Sciences Library (MSL) forged a unique collaborative arrangement with the American Association of Equine Practitioners (AAEP)—The MSL is offering AAEP members based anywhere in the world access to the expertise of MSL librarians, enabling them to obtain valid information on veterinary medical topics in a timely manner to meet their professional needs. The MSL in turn will house every publication the AAEP produces, from newsletters to client education brochures to continuing education material.

The AAEP will promote this arrangement with the MSL at its annual convention in Las Vegas in December this year.

"The AAEP regards giving its members access to the expert librarians here as a way to promote lifelong learning for equine practitioners, that is, as a way to help them keep up with the latest developments in diseases and diagnostics," said Esther Carrigan, associate dean and director of the MSL.

"The arrangement is also special for the MSL because not only will AAEP publications be useful to veterinary practitioners but will also help chronicle the life cycle of the AAEP. Over time, this collection of AAEP publications will become an archival gem."

Day one core competencies list developed

by Dr. Kenita Rogers

A growing trend among colleges of veterinary medicine, often driven by ongoing curricular review and accreditation efforts, is to develop outcome assessments for the quality and scope of the educational process. Both as a response to requests from numerous Texas Veterianry Medial Association (TVMA) members and for compliance with American Veterinary Medical Association (AVMA) assessment standards, the college recently developed a list of Day One Core Competencies for our graduates.

As background, it is important to note the "Day One" portion of the document title. These lists are typically developed to assess the skill sets of entry level veterinarians or new graduates. In some settings, additional lists have been developed that capture the different skill sets that would be expected at Year One after graduation. The DVM curriculum must provide adequate opportunity for success for an item to be included on the list. This means that there should be adequate opportunity in the clinic, in classes or in laboratories for the skill to be performed during the four years of the curriculum. The number of times listed for a skill to be performed is to acheive competency. However, we expect students to have the opportunity to perform most of the listed skills many, many times during the four year professional program.

The Texas A&M University DVM list was developed as a staged process. The first draft was written by the Professional Programs Office utilizing ideas from two veterinary schools, the AAEP, two Texas practitioners, and our own clinical experiences. This first draft was given as a survey to all of the senior students graduating in May 2009. They were asked to tell us which of the four tracks in the curriculum (large animal, small animal, mixed animal, or alternative) they had followed and mark which of these competencies they had successfully completed during their four-year curriculum. Based on these survey results, the document was modified and sent to a selected group of clinicians in the large and small animal hospitals, as well as individuals from our service laboratories. The next draft was presented to approximately 70 faculty at the annual Curriculum Committee Retreat; the 21 members of the College Curriculum Committee had one additional opportunity for input. Finally, a set of TVMA members were asked to comment on the final draft, and their input is reflected in the current document.

The AVMA Council on Education lists a set of nine core competencies for which each accredited school must develop direct and indirect measures for its students. For ease of reporting to the COE in the future, our list was organized based on these nine competencies.

1.	Comprehensive Patient Diagnosis (Problem Solving Skills), Appropriate Use of Clinical Laboratory Testing, and Record Management
2.	Comprehensive Treatment Planning Including Patient Referral When Indicated
3.	Anesthesia, Pain Management, and Patient Welfare
4.	Basic Surgery Skills, Experience, and Case Management
5.	Basic Medicine Skills, Experience, and Case Management
6.	Emergency and Intensive Care Case Management
7.	Health Promotion, Disease Prevention/ Biosecurity, Zoonosis, and Food Safety
8.	Client Communication and Ethical Conduct
9.	Strong Appreciation for the Role of Research, Continuing Education, and Professional Participation in Furthering Veterinary Medicine

Each student in the current first-year class (Class of 2013) will be required to complete each competency at an acceptable level prior to graduation. An electronic system has been developed to track and report student progress. Initially, successful completion of a task must be verified by a university faculty member or technician. This step is important so that we can use this list as a curricular audit, i.e. are there gaps in what opportunities the college provides students' to learn Day One Core Competencies through the curriculum. Eventually, we hope to have veterinarians that are supervising extern students be able to "check off" on the student's lists. In the meantime, practitioners are quite welcome to use the list in their own setting for externs or students that are working at their hospitals on summer and holiday breaks. Although, we will not be updating the list more than one time per year, we will be very open to suggestions for changes to the following year's list.

We expect this list to evolve and become more refined over time, and welcome the input of our colleagues.

Welcome to the DVM class of 2013!

by Dr. Kenita Rogers

On August 19, 2009, 132 new veterinary students were welcomed to the Texas A&M College of Veterinary Medicine & Biomedical Sciences by Dean Eleanor Green and Associate Dean Kenita Rogers. This first-year class is comprised of 103 (78%) women and 29 (22%) men, with 28 individuals (21%) from under-represented minorities. They range in age from 18 to 31 years, with an average age of 21 years. The overall GPA of the 122 in-state residents is 3.65 while that of the 10 out-of-state students is 3.92. The class is diverse in terms of ethnicity, background, and career interests, but they share one common goal…graduating with a DVM degree from Texas A&M University in 2013.

Upon arrival, they immediately began team-building and mentorship activities under the direction of Dr. Dan Posey, Director of Special Programs. Each student in the class was assigned to a mentor group that will meet throughout the year with their faculty mentors. The faculty support for this program was so great this year that each of the 16 groups has two to three faculty mentors. After the afternoon activities were completed, each student group met with their mentors in the Educational Mall for an evening meal. To wind up the day, students were rotated through tours of the large animal hospital, small animal hospital, Medical Sciences Library, book and instrument supply store (VESST), college counseling services, and a session on completing the newly required Day One Core Competency List. The next two days of Orientation were spent discussing many of the opportunities that are available for veterinary students, student support services including financial aid, student organizations, and academic and honor code expectations for professional students. The students were also introduced to the TVMA through the presentation of medical dictionaries by Dr. Lori Teller, Dr. Janie Carpenter, Dr. Jed Ford, and Mr. Chris Copeland.

On Monday, August 24, 2009, the class officially began the DVM curriculum. During the first semester, they are taking 18 hours of coursework including Gross Anatomy, Microscopic Anatomy, Physiology, Immunology, Clinical Correlates, and Professional Development. We are exceptionally proud of these outstanding students; they are our future!

Memebers of the DVM class of 2013 participate in team-building exercises at orientation.

DVM Graduating Class of 2009*

Entering an AVMA recognized specialty	42
Average salary (including internships)	$44,900
Average debt on graduation	$84,130
Food Animal Predominant	1
Mixed Practice	17
Small Animal Predominant	6
Small Animal Exclusive	20
Equine Practice	3
Uniformed Service	1
Advanced Education/ Internship	21
No Answer	47

* based on 118 surveys returned

Research Spotlight

Understanding How Alcohol Damages the Fetal Brain

by Roma Subramanian

Every year, in the United States alone, 40,000 babies are born with fetal alcohol spectrum disorders (FASDs).

The tragedy is that these disorders are 100 percent preventable.

FASDs affect the children of mothers who drink alcohol during pregnancy. Children with these disorders may have a number of physical and mental abnormalities (for example, abnormal facial features, lower intellectual capacity and behavioral problems). These abnormalities range in severity from mild to extreme depending on the amount of alcohol consumed by the mother and when during gestation this alcohol exposure occurs. Many regions of the fetal brain are affected by alcohol exposure during pregnancy. However, the fetal cerebellum (the region of the brain involved in learning), especially the Purkinje cells of the cerebellum, is believed to be particularly sensitive to damage caused by prenatal alcohol exposure.

"Ever since the 1970s [when fetal alcohol syndrome, the most severe FASD, was first described by scientists], women have known, by and large, that they should not be consuming alcohol during pregnancy," said Dr. Timothy Cudd. A professor in the veterinary physiology & pharmacology department of the College of Veterinary Medicine & Biomedical Sciences, Cudd's research focuses on FASDs.

"However, the incidence of fetal alcohol spectrum disorders has not decreased in 30 years," he exclaimed.

Today, prenatal alcohol exposure is considered the leading cause of mental retardation in the Western world.

Since education campaigns have failed to reduce the incidence of FASDs, Cudd's approach to tackling these disorders is to prevent or ameliorate the devastating effects of alcohol exposure on the fetal brain. In a study published in the *American Journal of Physiology* last year, Cudd and his team showed that a drug called doxapram hydrochloride may be able to prevent the brain damage in the fetus caused by maternal alcohol consumption during pregnancy.

Preventing Purkinje Cell Damage: An Experiment

"They are the most beautiful cells in the body. They have the most complex dendritic structure. Their dendrites look like the branches of a giant wild oak tree," Cudd's eyes light up when he talks about his favorite cell—the Purkinje cell.

One of the largest neurons or nerve cells in the human brain, Purkinje cells are characterized by numerous branching extensions called dendrites (nerve structures via which a neuron receives signals) and a single long axon (nerve structures that transmit signals).

Cudd's interest in these cells lies not just in their aesthetics but also in determining why they are extremely vulnerable to alcohol exposure.

Studies have hinted at possible explanations for alcohol-mediated Purkinje cell damage.

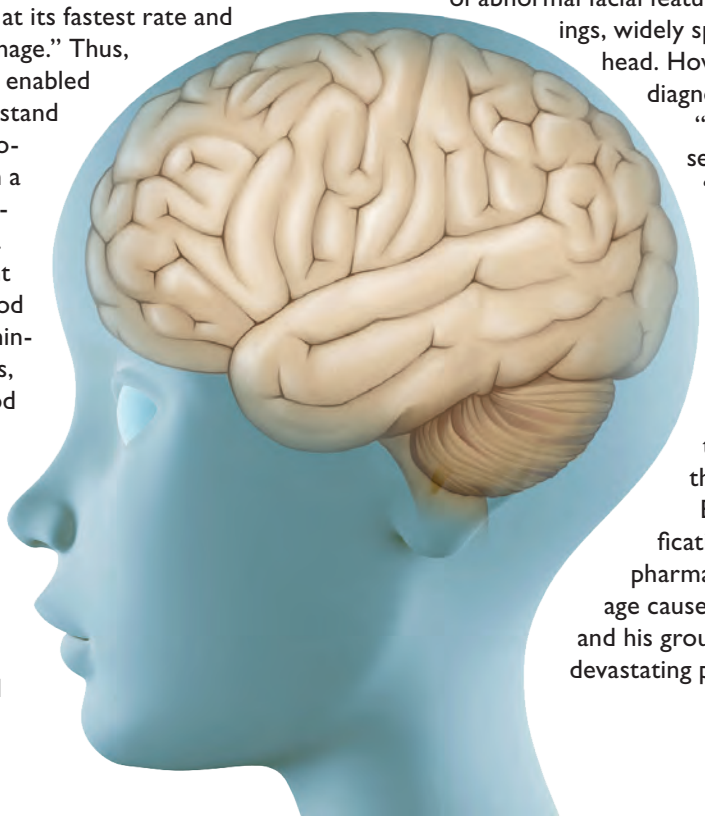
For example, Cudd's group has shown that administering ethanol to sheep during pregnancy increases the acidity of both the maternal and fetal blood by lowering its pH value. In humans as well, it has been observed that drinking alcohol causes a decrease in blood pH, and that this decrease in pH is directly proportional to the amount of alcohol consumed.

Based on these findings, Cudd and his group hypothesized that it is the decrease in fetal blood pH (and the resulting increase in blood acidity) caused by maternal ethanol exposure that causes the loss of fetal Purkinje cells. They also suggested that this decrease in pH affects pH-sensitive channels called TASK channels that are expressed in the cerebellum. By blocking these channels, the researchers proposed that they could prevent the loss of fetal Purkinje cells induced by ethanol exposure.

To investigate this hypothesis, the researchers designed a study using pregnant sheep as their test animals.

"The advantage of the sheep model," Cudd explained, "is that, unlike in rats [another animal model commonly used for research in this field], the third trimester equivalent of human brain development occurs before birth. This is the time when the fetal brain is growing at its fastest rate and is most vulnerable to damage." Thus, the use of a sheep model enabled the researchers to understand the effect of ethanol exposure during pregnancy on a critical period of development of the human brain.

In some of the pregnant sheep, a drop in fetal blood pH was produced by administering ethanol. In others, the decrease in fetal blood pH that maternal ethanol exposure induces was recreated without ethanol administration. The sheep were treated differently in this way so that it could be determined that it was specifically a drop in fetal blood pH and not the alcohol in itself that was damaging the cells of the fetal cerebellum.



An Unexpected Finding

Cudd and his group found that ethanol administration produced a 45 percent reduction in the total number of fetal Purkinje cells while a drop in fetal blood pH alone produced a 24 percent decrease in the number of these cells. This finding supported the group's hypothesis that a drop in fetal blood pH may be one of the mechanisms by which maternal alcohol exposure causes cerebellar damage.

Also, the group found that when doxapram hydrochloride, a drug that blocks TASK channels, was administered to the sheep, there was no loss of fetal Purkinje cells.

"For us, this was a eureka moment," Cudd said. "We expected the drug to only prevent cell loss caused by the decrease in pH [that is, prevent the loss of only 24 percent of the Purkinje cells], but instead we got 100 percent protection. This was an unexpected finding and very interesting for us."

"It's going to require quite a few experiments to determine the usefulness of this drug, but it's certain that this finding will lead us to a better understanding of the fundamental ways in which alcohol causes birth defects," Cudd added. The findings of the study also suggest that TASK channels may form the target of therapeutic interventions for FASDs.

Future Studies

"The most interesting part in the life of a scientist is asking the next question," Cudd said, reflecting on next steps in his research.

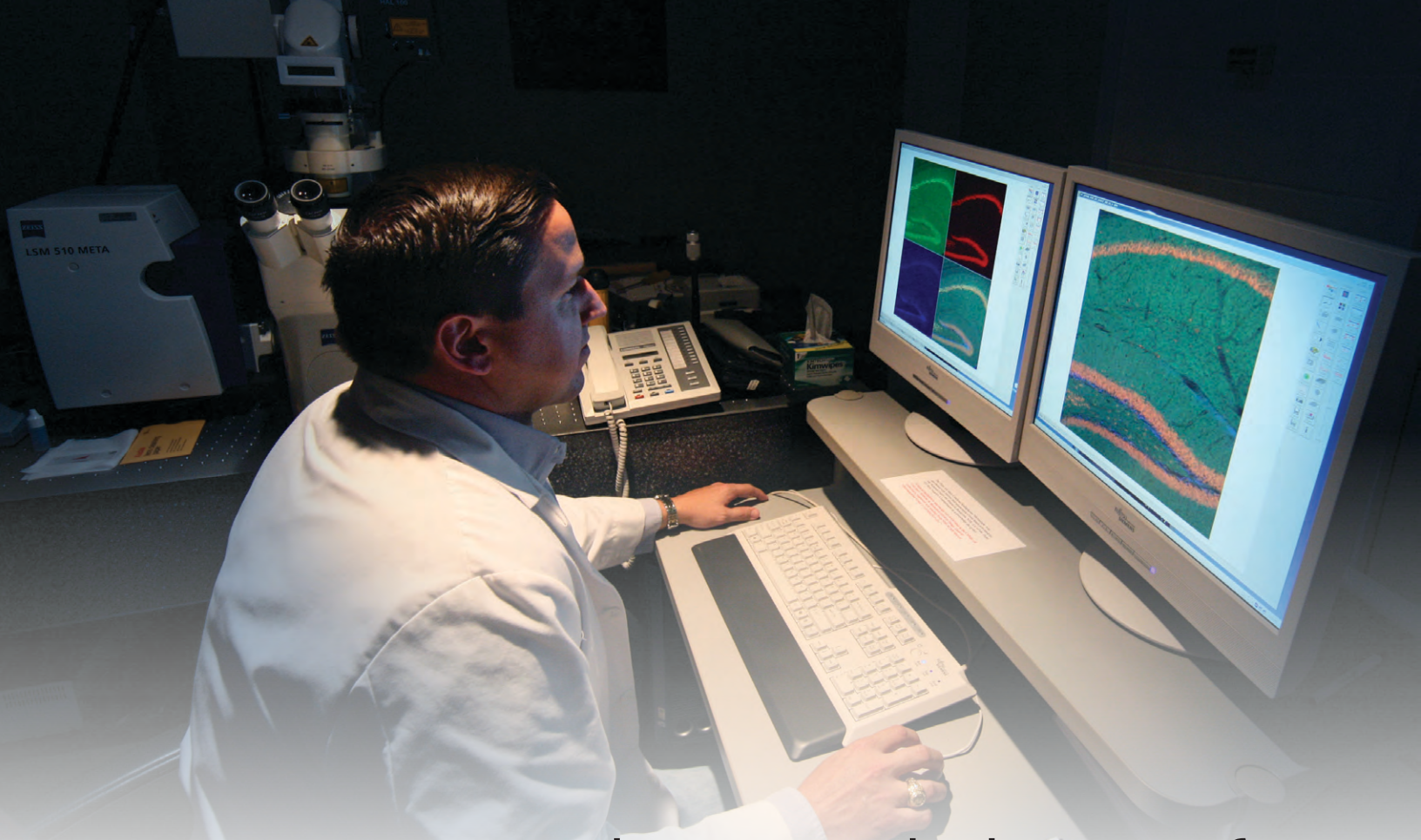
For Cudd, a question of immediate concern is how doxapram hydrochloride prevents fetal Purkinje cell loss. However, in addition to studying Purkinje cell damage, Cudd is interested in the early detection of children with FASDs.

Children with fetal alcohol syndrome, the most severe FASD, are diagnosed based on the presence of a specific set of abnormal facial features. These include narrow eye openings, widely spaced eyes, a thin upper lip, and a small head. However, not all FASDs are as easy to diagnose.

"Not all children with FASDs have severe facial abnormalities," Cudd said. "In most children, the damage caused by prenatal alcohol exposure is subtle. We would like to develop ways to identify minimally affected individuals early so that amelioration strategies can be more effective."

One approach toward this goal is using sheep to develop cognitive tests to evaluate how learning is affected by the loss of Purkinje cells.

By developing tests for the early identification of children with FASDs and creating pharmacological strategies to prevent damage caused by maternal alcohol exposure, Cudd and his group hope to combat these disorders, a devastating problem in the Western world.



Dindot awarded grant for Angelman syndrome research

by Roma Subramanian

Dr. Scott Dindot, assistant professor in the veterinary pathobiology department at the Texas A&M College of Veterinary Medicine & Biomedical Sciences (CVM) has been awarded a research grant totaling about $100,000 for Angelman syndrome (AS) research.

AS is a moderately rare disorder, affecting one in 12,000 individuals in the United States. It is characterized by mental retardation, speech impairment and motor dysfunction. It is caused by the absence or loss of function of the maternal copy of the UBE3A gene, which is present on chromosome 15 in humans. This gene encodes a protein called E6-AP. However, how the absence of this protein leads to the syndrome's clinical manifestations is not known.

As a step toward resolving this puzzle, Dindot is working on determining the function of this protein.

The one-year grant awarded by the Angelman Syndrome Foundation will fund a project Dindot will begin in January 2010 at the CVM.

The project will be the continuation of a study Dindot worked on as a postdoctoral researcher at the Baylor College of Medicine. In this study, his research group showed that the E6-AP protein may be essential for the normal development of nerve structures called dendritic spines.

Dendritic spines are components of synapses (or synaptic connections), which are junctions through which neurons (or nerve cells) communicate with each other.

It is believed that changes in the number, size and shape of dendritic spines affects cognitive functions, such as learning and memory, through a process called synaptic plasticity.

"As we learn, as we add information to our brain, we strengthen synaptic connections [this process is called synaptic plasticity], which is manifested by dendritic spines becoming larger," Dindot explained.

Dindot's previous study showed that in adult models of mice with AS (that did not produce the protein E6-AP in their neurons), dendritic spines were immature in morphology and number. Also, in mice without the syndrome, E6-AP was observed to be present in dendritic spines.

Taken together, these findings indicated that E6-AP plays a role in dendritic spine development.

The focus of Dindot's upcoming project will be on determining which of the three isoforms of the human E6-AP protein is associated with dendritic spine development.

"We will culture hippocampal neurons [which are involved in learning] from Angelman syndrome mice," Dindot said, explaining the experimental method of the project. "Then, we will express each of the three isoforms of the human E6-AP protein in these cultured neurons

and see which isoform of the protein can rescue or fix the dendritic spine defect in these mice."

According to Dindot, identifying which isoform of the E6-AP protein is associated with the dendritic spine defect can form the theoretical basis of some sort of therapeutic intervention for this disease, for example, gene therapy [replacing the defective UBE3A gene with a normal gene] or developing drugs that induce the expression of the E6-AP protein.

"What makes the E6-AP protein so important," Dindot said, "is that the gene that encodes it [that is, UBE3A] is a major player in neurodevelopmental disorders." He explained how this gene is involved in not only AS but also autism.

"Chromosome 15q duplication syndrome is the duplication of the UBE3A gene and the region on the chromosome in which it is present. When this defect is maternally inherited, it is the most common cytogenetic abnormality associated with autism. So not only does UBE3A give rise to AS when absent, when it is present in excess, presumably it gives rise to autism."

Another reason for Dindot's interest in AS is that it is a disorder that involves "genomic imprinting" and "epigenetics," two genetic phenomena he has been curious about since his PhD days.

"Angelman syndrome arises only through mutations [caused by changes in the DNA sequence of a gene] or epimutations [caused by changes in epigenetic modifications] inherited from the mother," Dindot said. "When these mutations are inherited from the father, there is either no disorder or a completely different disorder called Prader-Willi syndrome. This is due to a phenomenon called genetic [or genomic] imprinting."

Dindot elaborated on the epigenetic cause of the syndrome.

"Epigenetics has to do with the regulation of genes," he explained. "There are kids with AS that have no genetic mutation altogether. But instead they have abnormal epigenetic modifications at a regulatory element responsible for driving the expression of the [UBE3A] gene, which turns the gene off. So you end up with the Angelman syndrome despite not having a mutation in the UBE3A gene."

Commenting on the broader scope of his research, Dindot said that his lab is interested in "studying the epigenetic regulation of the gene that causes Angelman syndrome."

Grateful for being selected as one of the six recipients of grants awarded by the Angelman Syndrome Foundation this year for research on this disorder, Dindot said that the funds will be used for purchasing reagents and building his team. In the end, he hopes that his work will be a step toward achieving the goal of the foundation, which is to find a cure for this disease.

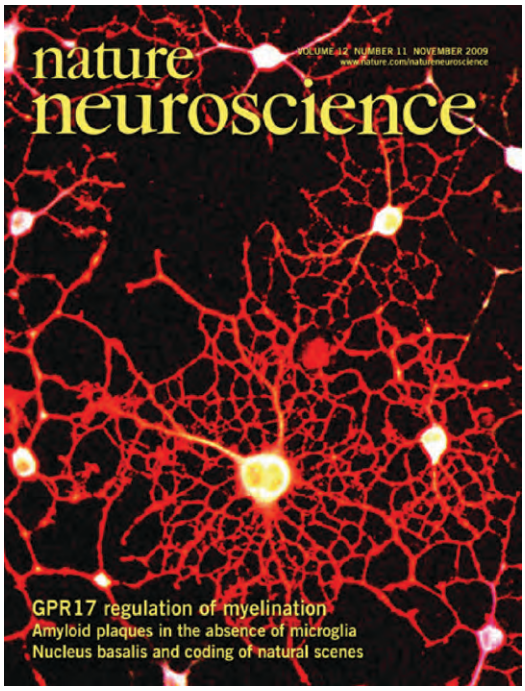
Li's research brings prestigious honor

by Roma Subramanian

A collaborative study in which Dr. Jianrong Li of the Texas A&M College of Veterinary Medicine & Biomedical Sciences (CVM) was one of the contributing authors has made the cover of this month's issue of the prestigious scientific journal *Nature Neuroscience*.

The study's main finding is the identification of a protein called GPR17 and its potential to serve as a therapeutic target for the treatment of demyelinating diseases such as multiple sclerosis (MS), which affects 2 million people worldwide and is characterized by damage to myelin, the insulating layer of axons (long, slender projections of nerve cells that transmit nerve impulses).

The study explains how GPR17 is involved in controlling the maturation of myelin-forming cells, oligodendrocytes, in the central nervous system (CNS), a process that is poorly understood. The main function of these cells is to produce a myelin sheath around axons. Myelin production or myelination is crucial for the normal functioning of the central nervous system (CNS).



"Myelin not only speeds up the conduction of nerve impulses along axons but also keeps axons healthy. Without myelin, axons will eventually degenerate," Li explained.

The study shows that GPR17 negatively regulates myelin development—that is, its overexpression inhibits myelination while its absence results in the early onset of myelination during CNS development.

"GPR17 is upregulated in human MS plaques and in animal models of MS," said Li. "In many MS cases, there are oligodendrocyte precursor cells in plaques, yet these cells fail to mature and myelinate axons. Therefore, it is of great interest to test whether blocking this receptor promotes myelin repair and functional recovery."

The study was funded by grants from the National Institutes of Health (NIH) and the National Multiple Sclerosis Society.

CVM Growing Partnership with Texas Deer Association

by Angela Clendenin

One of the fastest growing industries in the State of Texas, with an estimated annual economic impact of $652 million in 2007 and growing, the farmed deer industry has reached out to researchers at the Texas A&M College of Veterinary Medicine & Biomedical Sciences to help find solutions to some of the problems the industry faces.

"The support we have received from the Texas Deer Association (TDA) has enabled us to begin establishing much needed baselines for deer," said Dr. Don Davis, professor in the department of Pathobiology at the CVM. "We already have two ongoing studies and one to start soon that have been funded by the TDA. The first one is establishing baseline blood chemistry levels on more than 14 different variables."

It is Davis' hope that when the data is analyzed and the baselines have been established, that the information can then be shared with the Texas Veterinary Medical Diagnostic Lab (TVMDL) scientists and veterinarians around the country who treat cervids (deer).

"Our next project will be to study chemical residues," said Davis. "In certain situations, deer can be difficult to handle safely and humanely without using pharmaceuticals to sedate them, and there have been no definitive studies to determine how long these pharmaceuticals remain in the system, potentially in the meat. The members of the TDA have generously donated 30-40 deer for us to investigate the pharmaceutical process in these animals, which could in turn make a difference in how long farmed deer must remain pharmaceutical free prior to being hunted."

To date, the TDA has provided approximately $100,000 in research support to the CVM, but the biggest hope for the members of the organization is that the landmark Farm Bill which was approved last year will actually be funded. In the Farm Bill, there is a line item for the establishment of the Center for Infectious Diseases and Applied Genetics in Farmed Deer. The TDA, in conjunction with the North American Deer Farmers Association succeeded in advocating for the establishment of that center to be at the Texas A&M University CVM. If funding is appropriated, it could mean $5 million a year over five years, which opens many doors for expanded research and clinical service opportunities in cervid medicine.

"To take a Cervid Medicine Program to the next level would require most certainly a true deer veterinarian on faculty who would have both clinical and research responsibilities," said Davis. "There are really only eight or nine in the United States who could truly be defined as a deer veterinarian. To get one of them here, we'll have to have the facilities and the money to support the program."

In addition to facilities and funding, Davis acknowledged that there would also need to be continuing education opportunities, and at a recent meeting between the CVM, the TVMDL, and the TDA that was held on September 21, a new continuing education program was approved covering cervids.

"The CE program we discussed has been scheduled for Feb. 26–28," said Beth Johnson, continuing education coordinator for the CVM. "At this time, it is anticipated that registration will be open to farm managers, farm owners, veterinarians and veterinary technicians who have an interest in learning more about farmed deer."

Talks have also begun with a work group at the CVM about what specific equipment and facilities would be needed to offer deer medicine as a service through the Large Animal Hospital, and in addition, the TDA is working on building the resources necessary to create an Endowed Chair in Cervid Medicine at the CVM.

"These are exciting times at the CVM," said Dr. Eleanor Green, Carl B. King Dean of Veterinary Medicine. "To be at the forefront of developing such a unique and dynamic program with the tremendous support of partners such as the TDA is an opportunity for the CVM to provide a needed service to the State of Texas and beyond."

Even with the growing support and the potential for significant funding through the Farm Bill, Davis admits that the farmed deer industry still has many challenges to face.

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Biomedical Sciences Spotlight

by Marilyn Snell

Life is sweet...

for Roy Wilmeth, BIMS Major

For some, seeing is believing, and for others, experiencing is a true awakening. For one individual, seeing as well as experiencing has been the catalyst for a life-changing decision.

"While I originally planned to go to medical school, I had a change of heart after meeting Dr. Kody Kothmann, owner of Caprock Veterinary Clinic, Lubbock, Texas," explains Roy Wilmeth, senior Biomedical Science student at Texas A&M University.

"I was hired to do odd jobs, and after spending time with Dr. Kothmann, I became very interested in his profession." Roy says that after he began volunteering at the veterinary practice, he fell in love with veterinary medicine, and knew without a doubt that this was the only profession for him.

"While volunteering for Dr. Kothman, he convinced me to transfer to Texas A&M University to finish my undergraduate work; to better prepare for A&M's DVM program," explained Wilmeth. After counseling with Lydia Carrascosa, a BIMS advisor, Wilmeth knew this was the department where he needed to be.

"The BIMS program is very rigorous and designed to prepare students for the veterinary professional program as well as other medical professions," attests Wilmeth. "Many of my professors are DVMs and some teach veterinary students as well as undergraduate students. Who could better prepare me for veterinary school than a staff full of DVMs?"

Incidentally, Wilmeth prepared for his college career by enrolling in every honors course offered at Mt. Vernon High School. He took night classes and attended summer school at Northeast Texas Community College during his high school junior and senior years to get a head start before officially beginning his college career.

"I didn't expect to get accepted the first time I applied to the professional veterinary program," said Wilmeth. "However, I am very optimistic about the second go-round," Wilmeth has gained much more experience since last year and will graduate in May. If he doesn't get accepted for next fall, then he'll try again the following year.

"Once I pass state boards I expect to work under a veterinarian for several years to really get my feet wet," notes Wilmeth, who has had previous hands-on animal clinic operations exposure with the menagerie of animals at Dr. Cathy Cranmore's Tri Lakes Exotic Veterinary Clinic.

"Every day was an experience at Tri Lakes," states Wilmeth. "How could you not enjoy working when you get to bottle-feed baby zebras, camels, and kangaroos just to name a few of the animals needing daily care?"

"One of my favorite responsibilities was feeding apples to the ring-tailed lemurs. I loved how they reached out to you like a child reaching for a piece of candy and every now and then one would jump on my back and hitch a ride," exclaimed Wilmeth.

"There was one particular lemur that I became very fond of. She was a 14 month-old female that stayed in the clinic," recalled Wilmeth. "Dr. Cranmore named her Lazor because of the way she was always bouncing off the walls. Lazor knew no stranger, and loved jumping from person to person. She also loved eating dum dum suckers and so did I. Together we went through a lot of candy. Needless

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to say there was never a dull moment at Tri Lakes."

"The experience, however, proved to be much more than I could have ever imagined. Dr. Cranmore owns and breeds over 30 species of animals. Besides my everyday duties of feeding and caring for the exotics, I was also able to assist Dr. Cranmore in many surgeries involving a diverse range of animals, from otters to capuchin monkeys. Not a typical day at your average veterinary clinic," notes Wilmeth.

"I would definitely love to own a mixed animal practice. I enjoy working with large animals as much as I do small animals. Ideally, I would have several other veterinarians on staff and this would allow us to see more clients and treat a greater diversity of animals. After working for Dr. Cranmore, I am now considering working with exotics as well," says Wilmeth. Additionally, he wouldn't mind owning a small herd of zebra and camels.

"As for the future of veterinary medicine, there will always be a demand for large animal vets," states Wilmeth. He feels that technology and medical practices are only going to get better in the future and this will have a tremendous impact on large animal medicine.

"Working at several veterinary clinics has definitely broadened my outlook on veterinary medicine," notes Wilmeth. In addition, he has learned a little about the business aspect of the profession, and also how to deal with people in certain situations.

For Roy Wilmeth, receiving his Biomedical Science degree will bring him one step closer to what he believes will be the learning experience that will launch him into a career in veterinary medicine.

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"As of right now, the Texas Department of Parks and Wildlife recognizes white tailed deer as a public resource," notes Davis. "As the farmed deer industry grows, it will become difficult for the TDPW to manage as a public resource, so I foresee the migration of farmed deer to the Department of Agriculture where livestock is managed. In addition, I believe there will be a day when venison will be sold in a less regulated market just as beef and chicken are today. As our research continues, we will work to address the pharmaceutical problems by getting more therapeutics labeled for specifically for deer, and this could then make some of these other things possible."

"For now, the CVM-TDA partnership is strongly forged as both parties work to address the coming challenges of the future. The college is definitely on board, emphasizes Dean Green.

"The Texas Deer Association is happy with the way projects are progressing, and are very eager to see results and continue to extend collaboration between our organization and the CVM and the Texas Veterinary Medical Diagnostic Lab," said Dr. Dick Cain, chairman of the TDA Research Committee. "Through these collaborations we will create new opportunities that will encourage the sustainable growth of our industry. We're particularly excited about the continuing education short course for practicing veterinarians as we expect that it will provide additional business for those in rural counties where many deer breeders are located and large animal practitioners are few."

Leadership Lab

by Dr. Dan Posey

Leadership in a Profession of Constant Motion

There are many demands in our everyday lives, patients to see, clients to serve, employees to manage, children to nurture, families to visit, and numerous little mundane jobs like email, reading articles, etc.; numerous distractions that fill our day. Where does your leadership development fit in with all of this? We all acknowledge that leadership development is important and should be a lifelong pursuit because of the constantly changing topography of our profession. The issues that are facing the present and next generation of veterinarians are very complex, multi-factorial in nature and will not be easy to address: the attraction and retention of next generation of veterinarians in our profession, how we define and address our commitment to societal needs, how to maintain and expand our financial success, and the controversial issues, like differing views on how we address concerns surrounding animal care and welfare. These are just a few of the issues facing our diverse profession. The solutions lie in the development of effective leaders. We live in an ever changing world that demands for us to constantly improve our leadership skills. This challenge is for each one of us to take this charge and continually widen our own leadership potential. Like the great philosopher, my father, who commented on my poor performance in a basketball game: "This is a game of constant motion and if you are unwilling to constantly practice, develop your skills, learn the strategies of the game and play with determination then mediocrity is where you will find yourself." Veterinary medicine is more complicated than high school basketball, but the principles expressed by the philosopher

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holds true. We must be willing to continually develop and refine our leadership skills.

At the 15th Annual American Association of Veterinary Medical Colleges Symposium, there was a presentation of the skills that veterinary employers desire in hiring an associate veterinarian.

These twelve essential skills are:

1. Communication Skills
2. Team Building & Teamwork
3. Problem – Solving Abilities
4. Information Management
5. Leadership Skills
6. Emotional Stability/Resiliency
7. Intellectual & Cultural Sensitivity
8. Willing to Work Hard
9. Life-long Commitment to Learn
10. Business & Management Skills
11. Technical Veterinary Skills with Some More Narrow Species Skills
12. Income Generation Capability

As we examine this list, you can see that it is fairly comprehensive and ranges from the importance of communication skills and ends with income generation capability. As a clinical educator, the order is important, with the first half of the list addressed through the professional curricular educational process and the lower portion through private practice experience. There is no way that we can address the development of all twelve skills through the professional curricula, so we depend on educational partnerships to develop these professional skills. Where these skills should be learned is often a controversial topic, but there is a concurrence among everyone that all 12 skills are important.

As we travel on our pathway of leadership development, we should remember that we are on a journey of self-discovery and acknowledge that we will never arrive at our destination where expansion of understanding and building skills would ever cease.

Dr. Gary Burge wrote a commentary in the Journal of Veterinary Medical Education on "Six Barriers to Veterinary Career Success." He states that the barriers to success originate from the lack of some or all of the following key drivers:

1. Leadership and Management Skills
2. Client Service Skills necessary for producing long term client relationships
3. Productivity skills necessary for producing quality veterinary medicine efficiently
4. Knowledge of how to market veterinary services
5. Skills necessary for building high performing teams
6. Basic business and personal financial management skills

When we compare these two lists, it becomes evident the important role that leadership and interpersonal skills play in success. An essential fact is that we should continually develop our leadership potential and skill.

How is your leadership development progressing?

Leadership development is a very complex process. The most important method for leadership development is through our individual experiences. These leadership experiences can start early in our life through events like team sports or youth clubs like 4H and FFA. As we reach adulthood, the opportunities come in different forms throughout our lives from involvement in civic duties to working within a veterinary health team to a leadership position in our first veterinary job. This experiential learning accounts for 80 percent of how our leadership development is acquired. This makes perfect sense with the knowledge that most adult learners learn best through experiential methods. Just think about the ways we learn new techniques in veterinary training. We would rather learn in a wetlab versus the more passive methods like lecture. Most adult learners learn by doing. The second method for learning leadership skills is through being coached through a mentoring relationship. This mentoring relationship can range from being coached by your first employer, an advisor to an organization or a close family member. This method can help develop your decision-making ability and accounts for about ten percent of the way we learn leadership skills. The last method, which accounts for the remaining ten percent of your professional development, is through education efforts like books, continuing education courses, audio and visual aids. I know my bookcases are filled with leadership books from authors like Covey, Kouzes, Posner and Maxwell; my car console is bulging with compact discs and I have several continuing education certificates from some great leadership training events. So, why is it that I learn just ten percent using this method?

The single biggest obstacle in leadership development is a person's inability to know where they are in their leadership learning journey. In John Maxwell's book, *"Leadership 101,"* he explains that there are four phases of leadership growth. I made my first mistake in the first phase in leadership growth—I didn't know what I didn't know. So the first step towards true leadership growth starts with self-discovery, taking inventory of your strengths and weaknesses. There are numerous self assessment tests that are available that can help you reveal different aspects of your personality, how you like to communicate, what are your methods of learning and other helpful self-discovery methods. This first step is also a lifelong endeavor as our lives as well as our careers are in a constant state of change.

How many times have you gone to a CE event and discovered some new veterinary procedure or business practice or a management technique and Sunday night you are really excited about the new procedure. You go in on Monday morning ready to implement the "gold" you discovered while in the presence of the experts, only to have it disappear by Wednesday and you are back in the same routine? This same thing happens in leadership development. You go through the self-discovery step of finding out what you need to learn and how you are going to learn it. You sit down and read that great author's new book about that great new and improved method and it is the answer, exactly what you needed. You decide that you will implement the new techniques only to find yourself not using the newly found skill and you have fallen into your old comfortable ways of the past. These reccurring events of non-implementation are as normal as breathing. Non-implementation survives because of the two laws that support it. The first is the "Law of the Path of Least Resistance." We are compelled to take this path. It is hard for us to change our behavior, and when we get busy and stressed, it is easier to fall back on an old familiar technique that has gotten us by in the past than to get out of our comfort zone and implement a better unknown, unfamiliar method of behavior. Then as time passes, we are hit with the second law of non-implementation, the "Law of Diminishing Intent." We all have great intentions in life to do certain things, but as time passes our intent diminishes. For example, you might have the intent to read John Maxwell's book *"Leadership 101,"* and if that is your intent, you have about 48 hours to act towards that intent or it diminishes. It is the human condition to lose interest on a potential leadership behavioral change or the implementation of a new business plan if there isn't a sustainable effort made towards this new event within 48 hours of the mental commitment. This is why Monday's planned changes disappear by Wednesday, and we are gobbled up through life's demands.

So, in your professional journey, how do we evoke change that will improve our leadership potential? You have to make an implementation plan and utilize the "Law of Recognition." You must assess where and when is the best time to implement this leadership attribute. For example, in the self-discovery step, I learned that I need to be a better communicator and, I need to "first understand before seeking to be understood." For the next step, I need to implement the "Law of Recognition" and acknowledge to myself when I have implemented and displayed this attribute and celebrate the accomplishment of the utilization of the new leadership skill. The "Law of Recognition" is also evoked when I don't utilize the new skill and fall back into an old habit of arguing for the sake of arguing. Both uses of the "Law of Recognition" are really reinforcements of trying to change your leadership behavior. Self-analysis and personal reinforcement of these events will change one's behavior and will move you towards becoming a better and more effective leader… and as the great philosopher concluded "…constantly practice, develop your skills, learn the strategies…and play with determination."

'Tis the Season

Three Stories of Hope: Giving Animals a Second Chance

by Angela Clendenin

Hope is a funny word. For some, it can symbolize a cautious uncertainty about the future. But for many others, it provides a comforting and optimistic outlook of what's to come. However, at this time of year, so many are living without hope, and that's not just people, but animals as well.

Every year, the news is filled with animals that have been abused, neglected, unwanted, and abandoned. Yet even for these unwanted animals, there is hope. All across the nation there are networks of rescue organizations that are made up of people who take these animals in – either to care for them or to help find forever homes for them – but most of all giving them a chance at a future with a better quality of life.

"The veterinary profession is founded on a love of caring for animals," said Dr. Eleanor Green, Carl B. King dean of veterinary medicine at the Texas A&M College of Veterinary Medicine & Biomedical Sciences. "Our pets have a special place in our homes and in our lives, and I am so proud to work in a place where our faculty, staff and students all exemplify this commitment to providing another chance at a quality life for those that can't help themselves."

Serving as a foster home, or even a forever family, for an abused or abandoned animal is not an easy task. Many of these unfortunate victims have long term physical, mental and emotional damage that can make caring for them difficult. Giving these animals a shelter from the storms of life can be challenging, requiring a great deal of patience and understanding. In addition, the care they need to return to a better level of health can require a significant financial commitment as well.

In spite of all the obstacles, there are many rewards, and fortunately for the animals in need, there are those that are willing to take them on. Right here at the CVM there are an uncounted number of stories of people making the decision to provide hope for some special animal friends. What follows are a few examples of giving and hope, just in time for the holiday season.

More Than A Horse

In the summer of 2008, fourth year veterinary student Nicole Lamora became a member of the Bluebonnet Equine Humane Society. Shortly after joining, Lamora applied to become a foster home for the agency. As a foster home, Lamora would provide a temporary shelter for a horse or horses that had been rescued from truly bad situations.

Lamora, who admits to wanting to be a veterinarian since fifth grade, has a long history of helping animals, and knew she had a calling to help those that couldn't help themselves.

Loki

"I always brought home injured animals, wanting to help them," recalled Lamora. "There is something rewarding about taking something with no trust of humans and helping it to have faith in humans again, or give it another chance at a good life. That's why I was eagerly waiting for my chance to foster a horse, and in October we had our chance. My husband and I drove to Austin to BEHS' annual horse expo, a large fundraiser where the group works to match foster horses that need a permanent home."

That day, Lamora and her husband left with two horses, Sitka and Kenai. They had been seized by sheriff's deputies along with four other horses when their owner walked away and abandoned them. They had been at the expo in the hopes they would e adopted, but they also needed a foster home. The horses had nothing to eat and were quickly losing weight. When the sheriff's office contacted BEHS, the organization stepped into action and agreed to take custody of the horses.

"Sitka and Kenai adjusted very well to their new environment," said Lamora. "They began thriving with the addition of a better diet which included pelleted feed and a round bale."

Lamora realized that Sitka was fairly rideable, but still green and would require some work with her ground manners. Kenai had better ground manners, but was very untrusting of humans.

"Kenai would go into a complete panic if any stick-like object was carried near her in the hand of a human," said Lamora. "My husband and I began working with them right away, and both horses improved dramatically over the next couple of months."

As the horses continued to gain weight over time, Lamora noticed that they were rounding out a bit bigger than they should, and wondered if these two mares might be pregnant.

"Even though I am tracking mixed practice at veterinary school," adds Lamora, "I had very little horse experience and sought an outsider's opinion. I asked two separate

Loki and Sitka

people to come over—people that had more experience with horses. Both said that the horses had hay bellies from putting on weight fast and from having free access to a round bale. I relaxed a little and let it go for about another month before having a veterinarian to check them out."

Lamora remembered that even as Sitka was led into the examination area, the veterinarian commented that it looked like she was suffering hay belly. As the veterinarian began palpating Sitka, she mumbled to Lamora something about being bred.

"I was so convinced that Sitka had hay belly, that I didn't hear her right and asked her to repeat herself," said Lamora. "She repeated herself and said this mare is bred, about six months along. Imagine my husband's surprise as I called him on the way home to tell him that we were having two babies! He took a minute to remember that I had taken the horses to the veterinarian."

In March and April, Sitka and Kenai both delivered what turn out to be beautiful colts. Lamora and her husband named them Tigger and Loki. Unfortunately, when her baby turned 2½ months old, Kenai colicked.

Loki

"The BEHS provided financial support for Kenai to go through surgery to fix her large colon, however she died the day after surgery," said Lamora. "It was hard to lose her, but even harder to see her colt off to the side of the other horses by himself."

On a good note, Sitka and both colts are doing well now, and Lamora and her husband hope to have both colts turned into some really great trail horses someday. They also recently adopted the two colts, shortly after Kenai's death.

"Even though Kenai was only with us a short while, in the last eight months of her life, she was happy and healthy and loved probably way more than she ever had been in her entire life," said Lamora when asked what made her want to volunteer in a rescue organization. "It makes me feel good that I could at least make the last part of her life joyful."

coninued on page 24

coninued from page 23

From Critical Condition to Celebrity Status

Dr. Catherine Pfent, a resident in veterinary pathobiology, had no idea that her time volunteering in a rescue organization would help a celebrity in the making. Her time with a labradoodle named Harlan would be a story of epic proportions.


Harlan

"While I was in veterinary medical school in Michigan," recalled Pfent, "I was involved in leading the Neopolitan Mastiff Rescue in Michigan. It was at this time that many of the rescue groups began to realize that we could accomplish so much more for many more animals if we could work together."

Out of this spirit of collaboration, a transportation group was formed that helped create a network of helping shelter animals in one area get to foster homes or forever families in other areas that were a little further away.

"By working together, we were able to get more animals into homes than each organization by itself," said Pfent. "In addition, since the volunteers that actually picked up the animals at the shelter began to pick up more than one animal at a time, the shelters often gave discounts or waived fees altogether."

Enter Harlan. Harlan was a labradoodle that had been sent to a shelter in Ohio, and only had a day or two left before he was to be euthanized. He had become too big and active for his family, and they decided they could no longer keep him. A volunteer from one of the rescue organization could not leave Harlan to certain doom, so he was rescued with other dogs from the Ohio shelter.

In the mean time, a Hollywood company that provides animal actors to production companies was looking for a big, white shaggy dog. They located Harlan through a picture of his that had been posted on *PetFinder.org*, and it was a match. However, getting Harlan from Ohio to Hollywood was going to be a big challenge.

"The network of rescue organizations stepped up to meet this challenge," said Pfent. Volunteers were found that could drive different legs of the journey to California."

Once Harlan arrived in Hollywood, he joined the company Paws for Effect. On October 27th, Harlan was featured in an episode of *"The Forgotten."* Since that time, he has been seen in a Puperoni commercial and is on the Puperoni website. His busy actor's schedule now has him filming a movie on the set with Adam Sandler and Salma Hayek that is due out next year.

"It is sad that we have a society where people get puppies without thinking it through," noted Pfent. "The lives of animals are not always valued like they should be, and while rescue groups are not the solution for the problem, they are at least able to help make it better."

Pfent added that many of the animals in shelters are put there because of behavioral problems, which often directly stem from how they were treated in their first home. One of the rewarding things about rescuing animals she has found is being able to help those animals that she has fostered work on their behavior while they are in her care.

"When animals are given the chance," said Pfent, "many of the problems they had before can be worked out, and they can become a loving and productive pet for the right home."

When Harlan is not busy burning up the silver screen, he, like Pfent, finds a way to help others. He often spends time going to hospitals and visiting patients, returning the favor that saved his life, by giving hope to humans that can't help themselves.

Reptile Respect

Teresa Shisk-Saling, a registered veterinary technician at the Small Animal Hospital, hasn't always loved reptiles, but a commitment to saving animals has led her and her husband, Frank, to create a reptile rescue sanctuary that is home to 50 iguanas, 125–150 snakes, and quite a few tortoises and turtles.

"I remember it began about 20 years ago," said Shisk-Saling. "It all began with a lowly iguana that had been pretty beat up buy a weedwhacker when it startled a person in their garage. They didn't want it, but didn't want it to die."

Like the person who brought the iguana into the clinic where Shisk-Saling was working, Teresa didn't necessarily want the iguana, but felt sorry for the animal. They treated the wounds the best they could at the clinic, and then Teresa took it home to see if it would survive.

"From that first iguana, I began to develop a real fascination and appreciation for them," said Shisk-Saling. "Their care is so specialized. They are the #1 sold reptile pet because they are relatively cheap, and they are really cute when they are small. But as they get bigger, they tend to get mean, so people give them away or let them go."

Shisk-Saling pointed out that iguanas are prey animals so they can't afford to be nice. Coupled with the specialized care which requires high humidity, warm temperatures, and a varied diet, as the iguanas grow bigger, they become more "disposable" as pets. This can be witnessed in their life expectancy. According to Shisk-Saling, iguanas in the

wild have an average life expectancy of 25 years, while those that live in captivity rarely live past two years. In the State of Texas, Shisk-Saling is one of a few reptile rescue operations that can take in iguanas because every other one is full.

Iguanas aren't the only reptiles that Shisk-Saling has taken on. Overcoming a fear of snakes was a big challenge for her, but now she gives them a home, as well.

"I had a really big fear of snakes," said Shisk-Saling. "One was brought into the clinic where I worked in San Antonio, and the veterinarian I worked for basically told me to get over the fear or find another job. After handling the snake while it was in our care, my sympathy for it as a living creature began to override my fear."

One of the more common injuries that Shisk-Saling sees in snakes is bite wounds from having been fed live prey.

"People often say that their snake won't eat anything but live prey, but it can be dangerous for the snake to do so," advised Shisk-Saling. "If the snake is full or is not ready to feed, putting live prey in the snake's environment puts it at risk for getting eaten itself."

A snake that had been chewed up by a live mouse is a story that Shisk-Saling tells to teach others the importance of knowing how to care for a pet.

"If you're going to take on any kind of pet," added Shisk-Saling, "you need to be prepared to take care of it. It means doing some research to understand the special needs that unique pets often have. The snake we took in that had been chewed up by live prey is a perfect example. The owner said it wouldn't eat anything else, but after it healed from its injuries, and under proper care, it ate whatever we put in front of it."

Miss B is that first snake to arrive at Shisk-Saling's reptile rescue. Through proper care and diet, she is now 15 years old, is nine feet long, and weighs in at 45 pounds.

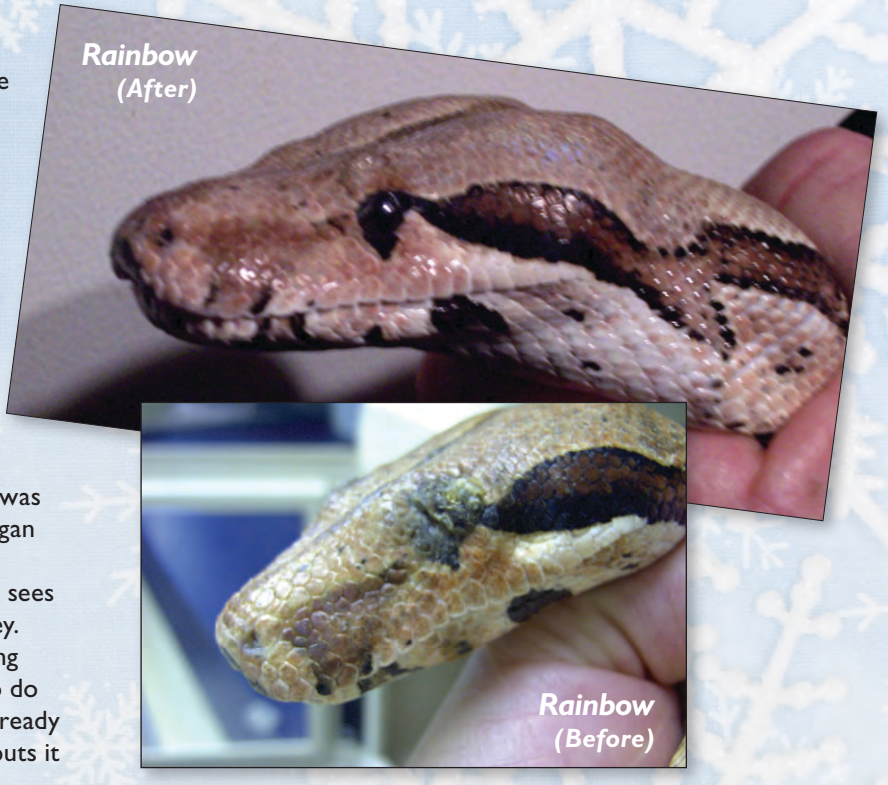
"The prognosis for snakes that have been injured or sick due to neglect and abuse really depends on the severity of the injuries, and how long they have been sick," said Shisk-Saling. "While we have seen many success stories in our rescue, there are also many that didn't make it."

Shisk-Saling also applies the same philosophy she uses when talking about snakes and iguanas to how she treats her tortoises and turtles. She purchased Rover, a sulcata tortoise in '01, and now he is able to carry small animals or children on his back.

"Turtles and tortoises are another animal that people love to buy because they are small and cute, much like the iguanas," said Shisk-Saling. "People don't think about how big they are going to become, and eventually they end up just letting them go."

The ones that end up coming through the doors of the Small Animal Hospital are usually ones that have been found in the outdoors – injured and left for dead. With the expertise of the veterinarians at the CVM, many of these are given a second chance.

"Most turtles and tortoises are usually releasable into the wild if they survive treatment," said Shisk-Saling. "The typical ones we see are water turtles, and they get messy and are a lot of work, so we try to release these when we can. Scooter was the first non-releasable turtle we kept because he had a back leg that doesn't work and needs help getting to food, etc."



Before finding her way into Shisk-Saling's care, Rainbow was kept in a chicken-wire cage and it seemed as though she had lost her eyes. After several months of shedding and medical care, her eyes were rediscovered .

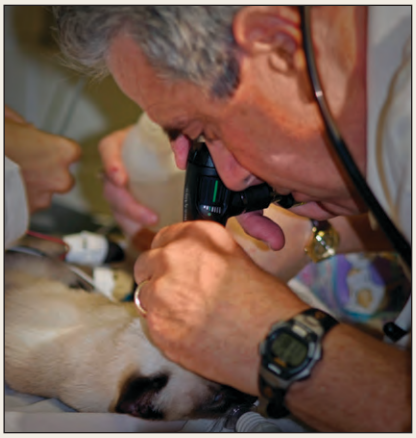
With all of her special residents, Shisk-Saling has some very good stories to tell, but one of the best is a story of giving. A local group of Girl Scouts from College Station, Texas (where Shisk-Saling's rescue is located) came to Shisk-Saling with an offer to help build up her backyard to turn it into a sanctuary for her reptilian and amphibian friends. The work included creating a pond, and helping to improve fencing and housing for the outdoor animals. By volunteering their time, these young girls became a crucial part of Shisk-Saling's commitment to improve the quality of life for those that are often tossed aside.

The Greatest Gift

Three people. Three stories of commitment, love and hope. Testament to the power one person can have when working with others. By someon who cares, giving of their time out of their devotion for animals everywhere, the special animals in these stories have been given the gift of a better life. There are so many stories, and so many people who unselfishly provide a shelter for animals in need. It is only prudent that at this time of year we give thanks to them and recognize their dedication. From the CVM faculty, staff and students, we thank those that help those who can't help themselves—for giving them hope for a brighter future.

(Photos of Harlan on page 24 and the cover are courtesy of Paws for Effect.)

CONTINUING EDUCATION Calendar



2010 Schedule

February 5–7, 2010
17th Annual Veterinary Technician Seminar
Chairs: Lori Atkins & Candise McKay

February 26–28, 2010
Veterinary Opportunities with Farmed Deer
Chair: Dr. Don Davis

April 23–25, 2010
Annual Feline Medicine Conference
Chair: Dr. John August

June 4–6, 2010
19th Annual Food Animal Conference
Chair: Drs. John Davidson & Glennon Mays

June 18–20, 2010
2nd Annual Pain Management
& Physical Rehabilitation
Chair: Dr. Gwen Carroll

July 10–11, 2010
Dentistry for the Small Animal Practitioner
Chair: Dr. Bert Dodd

July 23–25, 2010
Donkey & Mule Conference
Chair: Dr. Nora Matthews

August 27–29, 2010
2nd Annual Canine Conference
Chair: Dr. Audrey Cook

July–December 2010
Feline Internal Medicine
Monthly Grand Rounds
(Web Conferences)

All dates are subject to change.

Office of Veterinary Continuing Education

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CVM and TVMA enjoy strong partnership

It would be hard to imagine another state veterinary association proactively supporting their college of veterinary medicine as strongly and faithfully as the Texas Veterinary Medical Association (TVMA). In recent years, the ties between the college and the TVMA have grown stronger and the two groups work well together on many important issues facing veterinary medicine. The TVMA Executive Director and the TVMA/CVM liaison meet with the Associate Dean for Professional Programs three times yearly and the dean of the college is asked to give a College Update report to the Board of Directors twice yearly. The TVMA facilitates twice annual meetings of the TVMA/CVM Liaison Committee, two students are on the Board of Directors, and a veterinary student is invited to be on all working committees. A TVMA member sits as an ex officio of the College Selections Committee and several TVMA members actively participated in the development of the new Day One Core Competency List that will be required of all new incoming students prior to graduation. A list outlining the support of the TVMA and TVMF (see below), is passed out to the students regularly so that they can see, understand, and appreciate the many ways that organized veterinary medicine directly benefits them. The college is especially appreciative of the involvement and collegial relationship that has developed with the leadership and membership of the TVMA and would like to say, "Thanks!"

~ Dr. Kenita Rogers

Areas of TVMA Support to the CVM

First year orientation: TVMA/TVMF officers attend, serve on the Honor Code panel, and distribute veterinary dictionaries

Veterinary Ethics program: TVMA provides dinner for 1st year students and presenters

Veterinary Scrubs: TVMA provides scrubs to 2nd year students

Provides Plumb's Veterinary Formulary to 2nd year students

Sponsor dinner for practice management seminars for 3rd year students

Graduation activities: TVMA sponsors breakfast for graduates and TVMA President participates in graduation program

Open House: TVMA provides monetary sponsorship and one or more officers attend

Student Research: TVMF sponsors two student summer research projects

Mark Francis Ball: TVMA provides sponsorship support

AVMA Government Affairs Intern: TVMA provides financial support for a CVM student intern at AVMA (if requested)

Faculty Awards: TVMA provides two CVM Faculty Awards presented at annual Honors Convocation

Gentle Doctor Auction: TVMA purchases a table for TVMA officers at the auction event

Support student job fairs (SCAAEP, SCAABP, and TVMA Spring meeting)

Sponsor college-to-work transition meetings

Support Texas A&M Food Animal Veterinary Recruiters student group

Emergency Financial Assistance through the Professional Programs Office

Student section on TVMA website

SVSRF Program:

A Summer of Veterinary Research

This summer, 16 veterinary students at the Texas A&M College of Veterinary Medicine & Biomedical Sciences (CVM) got a chance to explore an alternative career to clinical practice—veterinary medical research.

As participants of the Summer Veterinary Student Research Fellows (SVSRF) Program, the students each worked with a CVM faculty member for 12 weeks on a research project. The projects covered a wide range of research fields and included studies on companion animal health (e.g., equine breeding), infectious animal diseases (e.g., bovine babesiosis) and the development of transgenic animals and biomedical devices.

From preparing a research proposal to collecting and analyzing data to presenting study results in front of peers and mentors, the students got to experience the world of research and academia during the program. By giving students a feel for research work, the program, which has been held at Texas A&M since the 1980s, aims to encourage veterinary students to pursue careers in research.

"A very small percentage of veterinary students go into research," said Dr. Roger Smith, professor of pathobiology and program coordinator, explaining the basis for the SVSRF program. "The National Academy of Sciences published a report some years ago on the need for more veterinarians in biomedical research. It is important to get these students interested in research, especially since they bring a unique perspective to the research table."

This unique perspective stems from the comparative nature of veterinary science (which involves studying and comparing the biology and pathology of various animal species).

"The veterinary curriculum gives students a broad understanding of health and disease that a strictly graduate curriculum lacks and that medical students, who are trained to consider only a single species, miss out on," explained Smith.

This broad understanding of disease processes and disease spread both within and across species means that veterinary students are uniquely positioned to carry out not only research pertaining to animal health but also biomedical research in fields such as the treatment and control of emerging infectious diseases (e.g., novel H1N1 flu) and animal modeling of human diseases. The program hopes to encourage veterinary students to look beyond clinical practice and make them aware of these research opportunities.

For some students like John Brinkerhoff, the SVSRF program has been successful in achieving its goal: "I enjoyed the research program this summer. Working with, and learning from, my mentor and lab group was a privilege. Also, the field trips to research institutes helped me see how veterinarians successfully apply their knowledge in research areas, and the program provided an opportunity to practice reading and discussing scientific papers. Research is an option that remains open to me after veterinary school or after practicing for a few years."

"I think it's good that students are given the opportunity early in their career to decide if research is something in which they would be interested," said program mentor and assistant professor Dr. Charles Long. "Even if the students decide not to be research scientists by training, I hope that the program will open the door for them to work with researchers and help them realize that a strong collaborative relationship between clinical and research science is beneficial for the development of the next generation of new drugs or therapies."

The SVSRF Program is funded by the College of Veterinary Medicine & Biomedical Sciences and by awards from the Texas Veterinary Medical Foundation, the National Institutes of Health, the Merck-Merial Veterinary Scholars Program and the William & Dorothy Klemm Fellowship.

CVM on Facebook!

The Texas A&M College of Veterinary Medicine & Biomedical Sciences now has a fan page on Facebook! As a fan of the CVM, you will receive a notice in your news feed when new news is posted to the page. In addition, you can keep up with all the upcoming events and even purchase CVM merchandise.

To become a fan search for the "Official College of Veterinary Medicine & Biomedical Sciences Facebook Page" and click on "Become a Fan."

A pretty patch of green thanks to Green Vets

Aggie maroon benches, blooms of pink and purple and a pathway lined with fresh green bushes—the Texas A&M College of Veterinary Medicine & Biomedical Sciences now has its very own garden.

Tucked into a nook between the Veterinary Medical Sciences (VMS) and the Veterinary Medical Administration (VMA) buildings, the garden was created through the joint efforts of a veterinary student organization with a concern for the environment—Green Vets—and a veterinarian with a passion for plants—Dr. Alice Blue-McLendon. Both aimed to develop the garden as a green retreat for students.

"Students spend hours every day in class. The garden will provide them with an outdoor space that is good for their mind, body and spirit," said Blue-McLendon, faculty representative of Green Vets. "Also, the garden is right outside the Fishbowl, which is a popular student lounge area. So students can come out there and study if they would like instead of being inside."

Former president of Green Vets and a major driving force behind the garden, Shawn McCorkle, hopes that the plants will attract wildlife such as birds and butterflies to the area.

In addition to being an environmental endeavor, the creation of the garden has been an exercise in persistence and partnership. While Green Vets raised funds for the garden through a garage sale, Blue-McLendon designed the garden plan and selected plants from local nurseries. This service-learning project also attracted help from other areas. The Texas A&M University landscape department helped Green Vets modify the sprinkler system and student employees of the Winnie Carter Wildlife Center used "Aggie Engineering" to pressure wash the concrete area (previously a bike parking lot) and place a 700-pound boulder in the garden. Also, a service grant from the Student Chapter of the American Veterinary Medical Association contributed to funding support.

Besides Green Vets members and student volunteers, McCorkle is especially grateful to faculty for their help in seeing this year-long project through.

"We hit several bumps along the way. But Dr. Blue-McLendon and Dr. Rogers, associate dean for professional programs, were always there to lend Green Vets their support. We couldn't have done it without them," expressed McCorkle.

The garden, which will be dedicated as the "Green Vets Native Garden" or the "Green Vets Native and Adapted Garden," has about 25 plants such as Homestead Verbena, crape myrtle and New Gold Lantana. Most of the plants are native to Texas, while the few non-native ones are adapted to withstand a very hot climate.

"I would like to personally thank the Green Vets and Dr. Alice Blue-McLendon for beautifying our campus," said Dean Green. "When the idea was presented to te CVM Development Council, Dr. and Mrs. Charles Cocanougher and General and Mrs. Ed Solymosy immediately wanted to donate two maroon benches to accent the garden area."

Future plans for the garden include a rock border. Also, in the courtyard just in front of the garden, two additional benches will be placed.

Small-group teaching is another use for the garden that the organization envisions.

"Anything we can do to get students outside where there is fresh air is a good thing," remarked Blue-McLendon.

The garden is currently being looked after by Green Vets members. The organization is looking for volunteers to work in the garden on a regular basis.

If you would like to sign up as a garden volunteer, please contact Christine Cao, Secretary/Garden Chair of Green Vets, at CKCao@cvm.tamu.edu.

Students enjoy the new garde at the CVM made possible by the Green Vets student organization.

Researchers attend RM Kenney Symposium

Dr. Terry Blanchard

Dr. Katrin Hinrichs

Dr. Charles Love

Researchers from Texas A&M College of Veterinary Medicine & Biomedical Sciences (CVM), Drs. Terry Blanchard, Katrin Hinrichs and Charles Love, were invited to present lectures and wet labs at the "R. M. Kenney Equine Reproduction Symposium" held from September 24 to 27 at the University of Pennsylvania. Organized in memory of Dr. Robert M. Kenney (1924–2008), a luminary in the field of equine fertility and reproduction, the symposium is a four-day continuing education program for veterinarians and animal scientists.

All three faculty members completed their veterinary residencies under Kenney at the University of Pennsylvania and share fond memories of a mentor who guided by excellence and example.

"Bob served as a font of knowledge before there were search engines," said Hinrichs. "He was familiar with both the latest research in horse reproduction and related areas in other species as well as with the researchers involved. He held out a high standard for intellectual thought and interpretation of the literature."

Blanchard echoed Hinrichs' praise for Kenney: "Bob was unique in that he took a great interest in you not just as a veterinarian but also as a person. The symposium is a great way to honor him."

The three researchers have followed in Kenney's footsteps, developing an international reputation for their research, and the symposium was an opportunity to showcase this work.

In her wet lab on embryo and oocyte transfer, Hinrichs discussed techniques developed at the CVM for processes such as post mortem transportation of ovaries and oocyte collection from isolated ovaries and live mares.

Love's presentation on "Measures of semen quality" highlighted the CVM's expertise in this field.

"We're pretty much the only lab in the world that has developed a battery of tests to evaluate stallion sperm quality," said Love.

The CVM was also represented by veterinary residents Dr. Shelby Hayden and Dr. Semira Mancill who gave presentations on the topics "Deep horn insemination" and "Sperm separation with Equipure" in addition to assisting with wet labs.

The event also offered a chance to forge research collaborations.

"The meeting was a good opportunity to talk to other speakers about new findings, possible new studies, and new techniques in assisted reproduction in the horse," said Hinrichs.

CVM hosts inaugural small ruminant meeting

The Texas A&M University College of Veterinary Medicine & Biomedical Sciences (CVM) Food Animal Section hosted its Inaugural Small Ruminant Meeting on Wednesday, September 30, 2009, at the Brazos County Exposition Complex.

The purpose of this event was to educate producers and the local community about health and welfare issues affecting small ruminant populations.

During the meeting a guest speaker, Thomas Craig, DVM, PhD, spoke about parasite management and faculty from the Food Animal Medicine & Surgery Faculty of the CVM spoke about Urolithiasis and early pregnancy determination in small ruminants.

Farrier makes welcome addition to hospital

Jason Wilson-Maki has a double certification from the American Farrier's Association and the Farrier's Guild.

A certain specialization that is often overlooked or unknown by many people today is that of a farrier. A farrier's job is to provide shoes for horses made to work with their hoof problems. The Texas A&M College of Veterinary Medicine & Biomedical Sciences does a lot of work on lame horses, and a big part of treatment for horses' hooves often requires therapeutic shoeing, and a specialist who knows what to do.

"For years, Texas A&M has had a farrier contract on an 'as needed' basis," said Dr. Kent Carter, professor of Equine Lameness and chief of Medicine at the Large Animal Hospital. "The problem with this type of contract is that we don't always know when we are going to need a farrier and that makes us unable to provide full service to our clients."

One year ago the faculty decided to do more towards pursuing a full time farrier to provide a better resource for clients as well as a better teaching and learning environment for professional veterinary students.

"We set out on a national search for a full-time farrier and received a tremendous response," said Carter. "There were 30 or 40 applicants who were narrowed down to 12, and finally we interviewed five of them. Jason Wilson-Maki had the most outstanding interview."

For Wilson-Maki, there had always been the future goal of working at a vet hospital, but finding the farrier job opportunity at the CVM came about by accident.

"My family and I were originally just looking at relocating to a warmer climate," said Wilson-Maki.

A native of Ohio and a 1997 graduate of the Heartland Horseshoeing School, Jason was qualified for the job because of his previous experience and teaching. He also has a double certification in the American Farrier's Association and the Farrier's Guild. He showed great enthusiasm about horses and teaching during his interview and began work at the CVM during October of 2008.

Wilson-Maki feels that one of the greatest benefits of working as a farrier at a vet hospital, as opposed to being self-employed, is that working with so many veterinarians eliminates the guesswork, and is of greater benefit to the horses.

"Having a diagnosis and a prescription reduces the amount of trial and error required to improve an animal's performance or soundness," said Wilson-Maki. "Moreover, the direct communication between the clinicians and myself benefits the animal by reducing the risk of a miscommunication. If I have any technical or application concerns, these issues can be discussed. This facilitates an individualized, comprehensive treatment for the animal which accomplishes the goals of the attending clinician and stays in step with the fundamental principles of sound farriery. This team approach is a great joy for me."

Since such a huge part of an equine veterinarian's career has to do with providing the physical skills needed to handle problematic hooves, Wilson-Maki's expertise has taken the veterinary medical students' education to the next level.

"It has been such an enjoyable experience interacting with the vet students," said Wilson-Maki. "It is great to be able to see the light go on in their heads when applying certain aspects that they have been taught, but have not been able to apply until now. The students are constantly challenging me with questions that I must sometimes pause to think about the answer! Working at the CVM has truly been the best experience of my life."

From enhancing veterinary medical education to providing value added service for clients, the farrier service at the Veterinary Medical Teaching Hospital has given the clinicians another tool for helping their patients.

"Having a full-time farrier on staff has been extremely beneficial," said Carter. "We are able to provide a more consistent and thorough job for clients, as well as a better learning experience for students pursuing their veterinary degrees."

Wilson-Maki and Dr. Carter with veterinary medical students.

TIPS now housed in state-of-the-art facility

The Texas A&M Institute for Preclinical Studies has moved into their brand new building on the veterinary campus. The new facility is 112,000 square feet and includes indoor long-term animal housing for approximately 240 large animals, technologically advanced surgical and imaging suites, clinical diagnostic lab space, intensive care suites, incubator space for startup companies, conference rooms, sponsor workrooms and a large auditorium for meetings and training. The new building allows TIPS to accommodate additional research projects, and provide state-of-the-art imaging support.

Dr. Theresa Fossum is the director of the Texas Institute for Preclinical Studies at Texas A&M University and a board certified surgeon specializing in cardiothoracic surgery. Fossum's background has enabled a large focus of work in TIPS to be on cardiovascular and biomedical devices. Current areas of research for TIPS include the treatment of cardiovascular disease, through fostering the development of cardiac assist devices and vascular stents, as well as new therapies for arteriosclerosis, obesity drugs, diabetes and bone regeneration. The TIPS Core Imaging Center is essential to these preclinical studies, and includes digital X-ray, ultrasounds, fluoroscopy, PET/CT and MRI equipment.

"Right now we are working on moving in our imaging equipment and validating laboratory equipment for GLP (Good Laboratory Practices) studies," said Dr. Vicky L. Haines, laboratory animal veterinarian and a 1980 graduate of Texas A&M College of Veterinary Medicine & Biomedical Sciences.

"The most exciting part of having this new building is that we are able to combine our efforts with the CVM's to incorporate the use of spontaneous animal models into clinical trials of new drugs and devices," Dr. Haines said. "Many diseases in humans are also seen in animals and they develop in much the similar way. For example, animal and human cancer is extremely similar, so what we learn from studying companion animals not only helps them, but also the knowledge gained can be used to the benefit of humans as well. Cardiovascular device work is also a major focus at the new TIPS research building. The goal is to test new technology and apply results to both pets and people. Being at Texas A&M allows the TIPS staff the opportunity for increased collaboration. We are able to work with the CVM, the Texas A&M Health Science Center, the Engineering Department and others here at Texas A&M, as well as other academic and private institutions throughout the state and nation."

"We are very excited about the completion of the TIPS facility on the Texas A&M campus," said Fossum. "This building will help us more quickly progress towards our goal of the inclusion of companion animals with spontaneously occurring disease into preclinical studies that will benefit both human and animal patients."

Dr. Theresa Fossum stands in fromt of the new TIPS building at the CVM campus.

Innovative technology is keystone for Cancer Center

Teamwork is one of the core values of Texas A&M University and one of the reasons the College of Veterinary Medicine & Biomedical Sciences has been at the forefront of clinical research and care delivery. Teamwork is also behind recent technological developments which promise to revolutionize the treatment of cancer and neurological disease. Drs. Heather Wilson, Jonathan Levine, and radiologist Ben Young, have combined their professional efforts to bring this innovative technology to the college.

Dr. Jonathan Levine, assistant professor at the Texas A&M College of Veterinary Medicine & Biomedical Sciences, discussed the new MRI imaging equipment which is sure to put the college head and shoulders above the competition.

"The three tesla (3T) MRI is an extremely rapid, highly detailed means to obtain magnetic resonance images," said Levine. "In Texas, veterinary MRI centers currently use 1T or 1.5T scanners. Compared to what is currently available in this region of the US, the Texas A&M 3T would be capable of producing much more detailed images more quickly and for a similar cost. In some instances, the improved detail might be akin to the difference between traditional TV and HDTV, and of course, better clinical data equals better patient treatment and research."

Another technologically innovative machine that will be introduced is the tomotherapy unit for radiation therapy. Tomotherapy is a marriage between a CT scanner and a linear accelerator, which allows for image guided radiation therapy (IGRT) and image modulated radiation therapy (IMRT).

"What we can do with the tomotherapy unit is line up soft tissues and we can line up sinuses with the brain, so we're hitting it perfectly. That way we're hitting within two millimeters of normal tissue rather than two inches, which is what we're doing now," said Dr. Heather Wilson, clinical assistant professor at the CVM. "With this type of equipment, only one other vet school will be able to match us in radiation, but they're still behind us in imaging. This technology will put us ahead and let us be a true veterinary oncology center."

Since there is such a tremendous exchange between human and veterinary medicine, the discoveries that result from this technology will also benefit the human medical field. Funding still needs to be raised for the major equipment items which are estimated to cost seven million dollars.

"The cancer imaging center ties in with the 'One Health' initiative" said Dr. Eleanor Green, dean of veterinary medicine. "It will advance not only the health of animals but also the health of humans."

The building design has just been completed and a contractor will be chosen by early March of 2010, just in time for construction to begin on March 29, 2010. Five million dollars has been raised which is enough to complete the building project. The college feels it is important to have the imaging center located in central Texas, as it will be the only veterinary practice in the area that can combine the efforts of research as well as the treatment of clinical cancer patients.

Conceptual rendering of the Imaging and Cancer Treatment Center.

Open House 2010

Saturday, March 27th

For more information, visit us at www.cvm.tamu.edu/openhouse. Mark your calendars now!

VMTH receives AAHA specialty accreditation

A student lets a horse feed in front of the Large Animal Hospital.

The Texas A&M Veterinary Medical Teaching Hospital (VMTH) at the College of Veterinary Medicine & Biomedical Sciences has received specialty accreditation following a comprehensive evaluation by the American Animal Hospital Association (AAHA).

Texas A&M's VMTH is the first veterinary teaching hospital to receive this specialty accreditation that is designed to be more stringent and more appropriate for academic/specialty facilities. It is only the third facility of any kind to receive this recognition.

"This specialty accreditation from AAHA demonstrates our commitment to achieving and maintaining the best quality veterinary medicine," said Dana Heath, Assistant Hospital Administrator, VMTH.

The VMTH is also the first facility to use AAHA's web-based accreditation process. This process consists of self-scoring the facility with a follow-up from AAHA to confirm their standards have been met.

"The accreditation process involves a great deal of time and effort, and the fact that we passed with such high marks is a tribute to our faculty and staff who work diligently to ensure that we maintain the highest quality standards," stated W. Terry Stiles, Director, VMTH.

An AAHA-accredited referral practice is required to have a board-certified veterinary specialist for each accredited specialty. The evaluation includes a quality assessment review of the hospital's facility, medical equipment, practice methods and standards of patient care. In order to maintain accredited status, the VMTH must continue to be evaluated regularly by the association's trained consultants.

"The VMTH belongs to a select group of practices that are committed to meeting the highest standards in veterinary medicine," says Anna Worth, VMD, AAHA president. "AAHA hospitals pass a stringent evaluation of standards covering patient care, client service, pain management, and medical protocols. By attaining accreditation, the VMTH is demonstrating its dedication to offering the best care to its patients and clients."

The American Animal Hospital Association is an international organization of more than 40,000 veterinary care providers who treat companion animals. Established in 1933, the association is well known among veterinarians for its high standards for hospitals and pet health care. For pet care information or a referral to an AAHA hospital, pet owners can visit the AAHA website at *www.healthypet.com*.

For more information on the Veterinary Medical Teaching Hospital at the Texas A&M College of Veterinary Medicine & Biomedical Sciences, please visit: vmth.tamu.edu.

CVM makes a good 'showing' at Reliant Park

This past summer, representatives from the Texas A&M College of Veterinary Medicine & Biomedical Sciences were delighted to attend the 32nd annual Reliant Park World Series of Dog Shows, which was held July 16 through 19th. Dogs from all over Texas participated and were judged in various events including conformation, agility, flyball and obedience. The show also hosted seminars on different breeds, as well as demonstrations of Canine Frisbee and Canine Musical Freestyle.

David Sessum RVT, rehabilitation technician for the CVM, attended the Reliant Park dog show in order to make people aware of the new and exciting things happening at the college.

"The dog show was an excellent public relations opportunity for the college," said Sessum. "It was a chance to educate people on what is happening at the college and the services we offer. We spoke to many former clients who have been very happy with our service and also to teachers and students who were there to learn about the world of veterinary medicine."

A very special highlight for the Texas A&M College of Veterinary Medicine & Biomedical Sciences is that their very own "Stump," the Westminster Dog Show's 2009 Best in Show, made an appearance at the Reliant Park Dog Show. "Stump" is a Sussex spaniel who first presented at Texas A&M as a very sick pup with a severe heart infection. With the help of CVM's attentive care, "Stump" made a full recovery and went on to be the oldest "Top Dog" in the history of Westminster.

David Sessum talks with visitors to the CVM booth.

The annual Reliant Park World Series Dog Show is currently the largest in the nation, and was a great opportunity to let the public know more about the services available at the CVM.

Guide Dog organizations meet at the CVM

Texas A&M's student-run organization Aggie Guide Dogs and Service Dogs (AGS) recently hosted a get together between some of their members and members of the Houston and Central Texas chapters of Southeastern Guide Dogs. The two groups came together with some of their puppies-in-training to get to know each other and share information about how they operate, how they train their dogs, fundraising ideas, etc.

Dr. Leon Russell–A Lifetime of Achievement

For many people, 50 years can seem like a lifetime. For Dr. Leon H. Russell, it has been a lifetime of achievement. Russell, a professor in the veterinary integrative sciences department at the Texas A&M College of Veterinary Medicine & Biomedical Sciences, has been working at the CVM since 1959 where his passion for science and relentless hard work have won him wide recognition as an excellent teacher, researcher and leader.

Dr. Russell received his DVM from the University of Missouri in 1956. After graduating from Tulane University with an MPH in Epidemiology in 1958, Russell accepted a position working for the United Sates government. In 1959, he left that position to take an appointment as an assistant professor in the Department of Veterinary Public Health at Texas A&M University. Six years later, he received his Ph.D. in veterinary microbiology.

For Dr. Russell, who has taught and developed many courses, part of the reward of teaching is getting involved with the students, which is why they are so important to him. Every semester, the first thing he does is take photos of all the students in his class.

"He wants to remember every student's name so that he can communicate with them better. He really cares about his students," says Glenda Bingham, who has been a teaching assistant for Russell for two years. "He puts a lot of effort into his teaching, and he is very patient with the students."

This dedication to teaching and students has earned Dr. Russell many awards, including the Norden Distinguished Teaching Award (1977), the Former Students Association Faculty Distinguished Achievement Award in Student Relationships (1979), and the Texas A&M University System Deputy Chancellor's Award for Excellence in Graduate Teaching (1990).

Not only has Dr. Russell been recognized as an excellent teacher, he is also noted for his contributions in the laboratory with research that spans many fields, including epidemiology, toxicology, zoonoses and food safety.

Dr. Russell leads a discussion with students.

One of the research areas Dr. Russell is most known for is rabies. His accomplishments with this disease include chairing the Rabies Committee of the U.S. Animal Health Association from 1982 to 1990 and serving for the National Working Group on Rabies Prevention & Control of the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) from 1995 to 1999.

Success in the classroom and the laboratory do not happen without solid leadership, and Dr. Russell has truly established himself as a leader in public health and veterinary medicine worldwide through his active involvement in many professional organizations. He was the president of the Texas Veterinary Medical Association (TVMA) from 1984–1985, the president of American Veterinary Medical Association (AVMA) from 1993–1994 and became the first American elected president of the World Veterinary Association (WVA) in 2005 representing almost 100 member countries.

The long and distinguished list of awards Russell has received from these organizations and others firmly establishes him as a worldwide leader in veterinary public health, among them the AAVMC Senator John Melcher DVM Public Policy Leadership Award in 2008. In addition, it demonstrates a dedication to service and a commitment to the 'One Health' initiative. The 'One Health' concept is the recognition that animal health, human health and environmental health are all integrated together. During his term as WVA president, Dr. Russell helped to strengthen that concept by creating the joint WVA/WHO collaborative working plan with the World Health Organization.

"This national and international level of service provides a clear indication of the acceptance by his peers in recognition of his scholarship," said Dr. Evelyn Tiffany-Castiglioni, department head for veterinary integrative biosciences. "His considerable service makes a positive contribution to the reputation of Texas A&M University, and also makes a positive impact in our world. We are so fortunate to have Dr. Russell as a part of our faculty."

~Lu Wenhua

August introduces Vol. 6 of acclaimed textbook

Dr. John August, professor of feline internal medicine at the Texas A&M College of Veterinary Medicine & Biomedical Sciences, has just completed volume six of his book, *Consultations in Feline Internal Medicine*, a series that is widely used in feline medicine around the world. The construction of this volume would not have been completed in the timely fashion that it was without the faithful help of the 110 contributors, the 11 section editors, and other proof readers and project managers at the publishing company. Volume Six is absolutely beautiful, the first one to have such stunning art and graphic design.

"I am quite proud of the content and design in Volume Six because it is such a distinct improvement from the design in volume five," said August. "Also, if you read through the book you will notice the different colors that coordinate with the different sections of the book, which we have done for the first time. It is designed this way to make the book more user-friendly and accessible."

A volume of this magnitude goes through seven stages of editing, and some of the challenges include dealing with the 80 manuscripts, multiple figures and diagrams and paying attention to the details so that everything is put in the right place.

"Keeping 110 people organized and feeling involved in the project and a part of the team is quite a challenging task in itself," said August. "The deadline for the book is in October, which is a very important deadline to make since all the major veterinary meetings begin in January. These meetings are a huge opportunity for the book to be exhibited, thus the reason for the October deadline being so important."

There were many different authors, including several of the other highly esteemed veterinarians at Texas A&M, who worked towards the completion of the book. With so many different authors and writing styles, a major part of Dr. August's job was to review the volume and smooth out the grammatical style in order for it to flow.

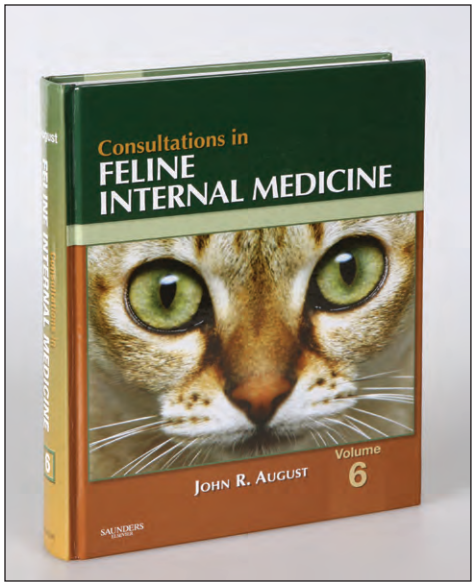
"In order to develop content for these volumes we cannot give information on what is currently important since there is a four year time span in the writing of the book," said August. "So I ask my contributors to look for what will be important to veterinarians in the field of feline health and disease in the future three years, because that is when the book will be published."

Consultations in Feline Internal Medicine is targeted toward small animal practitioners with a particular interest in cats. This volume is an exceptional work that Dr. August and the veterinarians at Texas A&M are thoroughly proud of, and one which August hopes will help people recognize the commitment to feline medicine that can be found at Texas A&M.

"I believe that the preparation of this volume has gone the most smoothly due to the extra time I was able to take away from clinic duty to focus on writing and editing, which was also made easier by all of the editing that is now done electronically," said August. "Everything is very digital which made editing much simpler than it has been in previous years. We also had some outstanding contributions made by authors from universities in England and Australia, and I am very pleased with these chapters. I am hoping these authors will contribute to Volume Seven, as well."

With the book completed, August will now take a one-year break from the project before beginning on the next volume.

Dr. John August and Fiona



College staff recognized for leadership, commitment, loyalty and excellence

The Texas A&M University College of Veterinary Medicine & Biomedical Sciences honored a number of employees at its annual staff awards ceremony for their years of service and commitment to the college.

In addition to recognizing the 61 staff members who had reached anniversaries of five to 40 years, awards were also presented to 11 people who were honored for their exceptional dedication and passion for their jobs. Entertainment was provided by Dr. Bert Dodd and David Sessum. The MC for the morning ceremony was Dr. Kenita Rogers.

The first award presented was the 2009 Pearl Enfield Staff Leadership Award. This annual award was given to Dean's Assistant Martha Huebner for her leadership not only in the dean's office, but throughout the college.

When presenting the awards Dean Eleanor Green commented, "I always say if I don't come to work nobody would notice, but if staff members like Martha are not here, the world would come to a screeching halt."

The 2009 Staff Awards were presented to employees based on nominations from their peers. The recipients were: Jenny Chen, Leslie Fiechtner, Sherri Hermes, Beth Johnson, Dana Parks, Gay Perry, Heather Quiram, Ken Turner, Katy Waddell and Larry Wadsworth.

Each recipient was presented with a plaque along with a monetary award.

Dr. H. Richard Adams presents the Pearl Enfield award to Martha Huebner.

Larry Wadsworth receives the CVM Staff Award from Dean Eleanor Green.

Cynthia Voelker presents the CVM Staff Award to Ken Turner.

Joel Hammand nominated Jenny Chen for the CVM Staff Award.

Leslie Fiechtner receives his CVM Staff Award from Dr. Kenita Rogers.

Dr. Sandee Hartsfield presents the CVM Staff Award to Sherri Hermes.

From left to right. Back Row: Leslie Fiechtner, Beth Johnson, Larry Wadsworth, Martha Huebner, and Ken Turner. Middle Row: Gay Perry, Dana Parks, Katy Waddell, and Sherri Hermes. Bottom Row: Heather Quiram and Jenny Chen.

Beth Johnson receives the CVM Staff Award from Sherry Adams and Dean Eleanor Green.

Dr. Ashley Saunders presents the CVM Staff Award to Katy Waddell.

Galen Pahl nominated Heather Quiram for the CVM Staff Award.

Gay Perry receives her CVM Staff Award from Deborah Daniel.

Dr. Evelyn tiffany-Castiglioni presents the CVM Staff Award to Dana Parks.

Faculty recognized for excellence in teaching

Four exceptional members of the faculty at the Texas A&M College of Veterinary Medicine & Biomedical Sciences (CVM) were recently honored with awards recognizing their commitment to students and to the profession of veterinary medicine.

The first awards presented were the Association of Former Students College-Level Teaching Awards. These awards are given yearly and are chosen by both faculty members and students. The honorees are presented with a plaque and a stipend.

Marty Holmes, Vice President of Marketing for the Association of Former Students was on hand to present the awards.

"We believe that it is of utmost importance to recognize faculty at Texas A&M University. Faculty shape and mold our students and therefore are an integral part of the Aggie Network. We are so thankful for all you do," remarked Holmes.

The winners of these awards were Dr. Louise Abbott and Dr. Debra Zoran.

Abbott is an associate professor in veterinary integrated biosciences and has been with the CVM for 15 years. Her award was presented by her department head Dr. Evelyn Tiffany-Castiglioni.

"Louise Abbott is really a triple threat," notes Castiglioni. "She excels in research, service and teaching. One of the things I admire most about her is that she is a wonderful mentor to graduate students, as well an outstanding teacher for veterinary students. For this and many other reasons I believe she is highly deserving of this award."

Zoran is an associate professor in small animal clinical services. Her award was presented by her department head, Dr. Sandee Hartsfield.

"Dr. Zoran is an outstanding teacher in our department," states Hartsfield. "She is the kind of person you can count on to step up to any role. Through her participation in continuing education lectures across the country as well as her commitment to her students, I believe that she is elevating our reputation as a veterinary medical school every day."

The next awards presented were the Western Veterinary Conference Continuing Educator

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Dr. Louise Abbott, Dr. Debra Zoran, Dr. Ashley Saunders and Dr. William Moyer

New small animal surgeon makes a home at CVM

The College of Veterinary Medicine & Biomedical Sciences at Texas A&M University is known for being a leader in veterinary medicine and research, as well as being a clinic that takes extraordinary care of our small animal patients. Dr. Jacqueline Davidson, small animal orthopedic and soft tissue surgeon, has recently been added to our staff to provide the particular type of care that some of these small animal patients need.

"I have been in a Clinical Track position in the Department of Veterinary Small Animal Clinical Sciences at the college since September 1, 2009," said Davidson. "As a clinical-track full-professor, my appointment is designated to be approximately 70 percent instruction, 20 percent service, and ten percent scholarly activity. The instructional effort is a combination of clinical, didactic and laboratory instruction of professional students, interns and residents. The service effort includes all non-student teaching and non-scholarly related activities required to enable and enhance the activities of the department, hospital, school and university. The scholarly activity effort includes publishing book chapters, case reports, journal articles, and presenting continuing education programs that demonstrate my clinical expertise and experience with large numbers of cases."

Dr. Davidson was at Louisiana State University for the past fifteen years before coming to Texas A&M. She has been especially focused on rehabilitation in small animals as a sub interest for the past few years. As well as her work in surgery, Dr. Davidson works with small animals in pain management and postoperative care, and is also trained in acupuncture and spinal manipulation for both small and large animals.

"The veterinary medical college at Texas A&M is such a collegial place," said Davidson. "It is current and progressing. They have a clear vision for where they want to go in the future and are active in taking strides toward that goal. The atmosphere in the whole Bryan and College Station area is also friendly; it makes mundane things such as going to the grocery store a pleasant task."

Dr. Jacqueline Davidson and Amadeus

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of the Year Awards. These awards, presented to Dr. William Moyer and Dr. Debra Zoran, recognizing the recipients' distinguished communication talents and outstanding commitment to the veterinary profession. Each recipient was presented with a plaque recognizing their achievement.

The final award presented was the 2009–2010 Montague-Center for Teaching Excellence (CTE) Scholars Award. This yearly award recognizes one tenure-track faculty member in each college who has shown early ability and interest in teaching. The winner receives a grant to encourage further development of teaching excellence.

This year's recipient at the CVM is Dr. Ashley Saunders. Saunders is an assistant professor and fellow of the Michael E. DeBakey Institute in the College of Veterinary Medicine & Biomedical Sciences.

"I just want to say that I have been able to be a good teacher because of all the faculty here who taught me and continue to mentor me," expressed Saunders. "A large part of why I chose an academic position was to have the opportunity to teach, and I am privileged to be able to teach in all four years of the veterinary curriculum."

Dr. Kenita Rogers, associate dean of professional programs, expressed her congratulations and gratitude to the teachers who make a difference at the CVM.

"We really can't do anything here without good teachers. I think it says a lot that these faculty members are not only recognized as exceptional by their colleagues, but also by the students they teach," said Rogers.

Clinicians bring critical care to small animal hospital

The Texas A&M College of Veterinary Medicine & Biomedical Sciences has recently added two doctors to the faculty who promise to bring innovation to the college by adding a Small Animal Critical Care Unit fully staffed and equipped to work on animals in need of critical care.

Dr. Dorothy Black, clinical assistant professor, is a native of the sunny California shores. She received her degree in veterinary medicine at the University of California, Davis. Dr. Black is the new criticalist here at the CVM and is excited to have joined such a hardworking team here at Texas A&M. Dr. Black's main points of interest and study are sepsis, SIRS and coagulation.

"Coming to the Texas A&M College of Veterinary Medicine was wonderful because everything is already so well established," said Black. "A criticalist can't ask for a better thing to step into. Right now I am working with a full staff of criticalist/ICU specialists and we are hoping to add the next unit of critical care as soon as possible. My ultimate goal is to add an entire small animal critical care unit, that is fully staffed, has its own patients and interns."

Dr. Dorothy Black

Dr. James Barr, clinical assistant professor, received his degree in veterinary medicine from Louisiana State University and has been living in Florida for the past several years while working in private specialty practice. His goals are very similar to Dr. Black's, in that he plans to work with her in creating a critical care unit where they will manage the service and cases in the ICU.

Dr. James Barr

"Arriving at the Texas A&M College of Veterinary Medicine & Biomedical Sciences, where so many prestigious veterinarians are employed, is very humbling, yet exciting. I hope to fit the standard that Texas A&M has set for the world of veterinary medicine," said Barr. "My work here will be particularly focused on treating clinical cases, research, and being of service to other areas in the hospital. We will also be working to establish a residency program to teach residents and interns surgery and internal medical residence concepts as well as teaching some cardiology students."

Dr. Black and Dr. Barr are both pushing for early goal directed therapy with the addition of the new critical care and ICU department. They want to be able to meet the needs of patients even before they are in a crisis. The doctors would like the new department to do a better job in maintaining heart stability and fluid therapy, so that the patient sustains an acceptable level of blood pressure and heart rate during surgery. Sepsis patients come in quite frequently, which is the main reason for Dr. Barr and Dr. Black's desire to get this new critical care unit up and running as soon as possible.

Dr. Anton Hoffman recognized with SLATE Award

Dr. Anton Hoffman, clinical professor at the Texas A&M College of Veterinary Medicine & Biomedical Sciences, is the first faculty member at the CVM to have won a SLATE Award. The Student Led Award for Teaching Excellence is a relatively new award that began in the fall of 2008 and is awarded from the Chancellor's office. The award is granted to eligible professors based solely on the student's opinion of their class.

"One of the concerns they originally had about giving this award, is fear that it might become a 'popularity contest' among professors or that professors might ease up on the rigor of their courses to win favor from the students," noted Hoffman, "but this has not happened, and should not be of concern."

Dr. Hoffman works with one of his students, Lauren Rivera.

Among several other courses, Dr. Hoffman teaches VIBS 913 which is the neuroanatomy and clinical neurology course taught in the first year professional curriculum, and it is not an easy one!

"As most teachers know, the rewards for quality teaching are primarily intrinsic," said Hoffman. "While seeing 'ah-hah' moments on my students' faces and giving them hugs on graduation day are my greatest intrinsic rewards, I am both humbled and honored that my students have formally recognized my teaching abilities and accomplishments through this award."

Patterson joins small animal clinical sciences department

Adam P. Patterson, DVM, DACVD, has joined the Texas A&M College of Veterinary Medicine & Biomedical Sciences Department of Small Animal Clinical Sciences as Clinical Assistant Professor and Chief of Dermatology.

Patterson comes to the CVM after serving as a private practice dermatologist in Maryland from 2005–2009. He notes that his practice philosophy is to talk with clients, not to them.

"You can know a lot, but if you do not address the client's concerns, you are worthless to them and ultimately their pet," said Patterson.

While in private practice, Patterson supervised the dermatological training of interns. As a part of his dermatology residency program, he developed educational materials featuring problem-oriented approach worksheets and lecture presentations.In transitioning from private practice to the academic environment at Texas A&M, Patterson noted the positive relationship that the college has with its faculty.

"This CVM appreciates and supports the responsibilities of its clinical faculty," said Patterson, "in training entry and specialty level veterinarians while concurrently providing a service for the Texas animal-owning population."

Patterson's clinical areas of interest include allergic skin disease, and autoimmune dermatoses.

As a Diplomate of the American College of Dermatology (ACVD), Dr. Patterson is certified as a veterinarian who has expertise and specialized training in the diagnosis and treatment of animals with skin, mouth, hair, ear and nail disorders. He has significant training and experience in the treatment of allergic disorders including diagnosis and treatment of infectious and non-infectious skin diseases, parasitic skin diseases, autoimmune diseases, and chronic infections and inflammatory conditions of the ears.

Dr. Adam Patterson and Henry

Patterson received his BS and DVM from Mississippi State University, interned at The University of Tennessee, and completed his residency at the University of Illinois.

Dr. Bonnie Beaver selected for Newsmaker Award

Jason Cook, Director of Communication and Marketing for Texas A&M University, presents the Newsmaker Award to Dr. Bonnie Beaver. (Photo courtesy of Texas A&M University, Marketing and Communications.)

You could say that being a veterinarian has been the purr-fect career choice for Bonnie Beaver. The nationally recognized and internationally known professor who specializes in animal behavior has been honored for her communication skills and cooperation in working with the media by Texas A&M University's Division of Marketing and Communications, which presented her the 2009 Newsmaker Image Award.

The award, created in 2006, recognizes a "highly deserving member of the administration, faculty or staff who has made particularly noteworthy contributions in helping create a positive image of Texas A&M University," according to criteria outlined for presentation of the award. In addition, the criteria state, "Such contributions must clearly exceed expectations that go far beyond an individual's regular duties and unquestionably convey to the public the highest ideals and goals of the university."

In addition to being one of the country's foremost animal behavior experts, Beaver also is an authority on animal welfare and the human-animal bond. She has authored eight books, more than 200 scientific papers and has presented more than 400 seminars all over the world.

Because of her experience and expertise, she has been interviewed numerous times by CNN, the New York Times, CBS, NBC, ABC and FOX news, Time and Newsweek, the BBC, National Public Radio and every major Texas media outlet.

Dealing with the media is a role she takes seriously.

"We need to educate the public and even members of our own profession about who veterinarians are and what we do," Beaver says.

"Communicating with the public has never been more important than it is today. As veterinarians, we need to become advocates for all segments of our profession."

As a former president of the American Veterinary Medical Association, Beaver made communication efforts a priority to the 145-year-old AVMA and its 72,000-plus members. She served as its president in 2004-05, becoming only the second woman ever to hold that post.

A Minnesota native, Beaver recalls that, "I never wanted to be anything other than a veterinarian. It's such an interesting field, and it's changing faster than at any time in its history.

"Animal behavior always intrigued me," she adds. "You can't ask a dog or a cat what the problem is, so you have to do some detective work and find out what's wrong. We may never know 100 percent of the time what is causing the problem, but we can usually get a pretty good idea.

"This is the most exciting time in history to be a veterinarian," she says.

"There are more opportunities today for veterinarians than ever before. For me, veterinary medicine has been a real thrill. I have loved every minute and I would recommend this profession to anyone."

~ Keith Randall,
Texas A&M University
Marketing and Communications

2009–A busy and exciting year for Development

It has been a busy but exciting year for the Development Office. We have welcomed Dean Eleanor Green, and she has hit the ground running with a whirlwind of activity. In addition to visiting with numerous charitable foundations and potential donors for the new Imaging and Cancer Treatment Center, which is scheduled for groundbreaking this spring, we have worked very hard for the multitude of other development opportunities within the College of Veterinary Medicine & Biomedical Sciences. Speaking of the Imaging and Cancer Treatment Center, you might want to view a video on the subject produced for us by Brian Wright and his team at the Texas A&M Marketing and Communications Department. To view the video go to, *www.cvm.tamu.edu/news/videos/imaging_cancer.html*.

Thanks to the generosity of our wonderful donors, and despite an economic downturn, we have had a great year in 2009. We have been able to add several new endowed scholarships, and we have also added the first graduate student endowed fellowship in the history of the college, thanks to the generosity of Dr. Joe '50 and Elaine Coulter of Brownsville. The Dr. Fred A. '69 and Vola N. Palmer Endowed Chair in Comparative Oncology was also added in the last fiscal year.

Speaking of endowed scholarships, several veterinary graduating classes are getting close to reaching the level of endowment in their class scholarship accounts. If you would like to check the status of your class scholarship, or if you would volunteer to contact your classmates and encourage them to give to your class scholarship fund, please feel free to contact us. We would be very pleased to assist you as we do our best to help offset the burdensome student debt through the endowed scholarship program.

Dr. Guy Sheppard and Dr. O.J. "Bubba" Woytek

Other development projects that are underway include an effort to create more useful conference and meeting space at the college. Our list of friends has grown significantly through the years, and we have simply outgrown the current public meeting space available to us in the Mark Francis Room. We are also extremely excited to be partnering with the Cushing Library, the archival and historical library of Texas A&M University, to obtain a rare collection of equine veterinary literature, some of which dates to the 1600s. This project is a great opportunity to enhance the Texas A&M Library collection and the College of Veterinary Medicine & Biomedical Sciences.

Another change that you may have noticed is the improvement in the College website. The renovations to the website are not yet complete, but the improvement thus far is tremendous. If it has been some time since you have visited the website, please visit again very soon. The web address is *www.cvm.tamu.edu*. You will find frequently updated news and information regarding the college, and you will also find an updated Development and Giv-

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ing Opportunities site. The online giving mechanism is much more user friendly, allowing donors to peruse the exciting and varied giving opportunities at the college and to make online gifts at their convenience.

For those who are considering creating or updating your wills, you will also find a convenient downloadable "Bequest Language Packet" that can be utilized to assist you and your attorney in the process. Please keep in mind, if you are considering the College of Veterinary Medicine & Biomedical Sciences for inclusion in your will, gifts of almost any asset, including real estate, are gratefully accepted. We are very happy to consult with you on this process, and we have access to a staff of experts in the planned giving process at our disposal through the Texas A&M Foundation.

The website is also being upgraded to feature an "Aggie Vets in the News" section. If you come across any media coverage of an Aggie veterinarian; yourself, a family member or a colleague, please let us know. We would like to include this information in this new feature.

As always, please let us know if you have grateful clients or friends who have an interest in enhancing the world of our animal friends and the veterinary students who will take care of them. We would be pleased to visit with you and your friends to discuss the possibilities.

We will be hosting a number of Aggie Alumni Receptions this year at the North American Veterinary Conference, Western Veterinary Conference, TVMA Annual Meeting, AVMA Annual Conference, Southwest Veterinary Symposium, and AAEP Annual Conference. Please make plans to attend these receptions if you are at one of these meetings.

Thanks and Gig 'em!

O. J. "Bubba" Woytek
Senior Director, Development and Alumni Relations

Guy A. Sheppard
Director, Development and Alumni Relations

Coulters create graduate education endowment

One of the top development priorities identified by Dean Eleanor Green is the need for more endowments to support graduate student education. Dr. Joe Coulter '50 and his wife, Elaine, have answered that call.

Dr. and Mrs. Coulter recently created the first endowment for graduate student education at the College of Veterinary Medicine & Biomedical Sciences. Dr. Coulter has practiced veterinary medicine in Brownsville, Texas since his graduation.

"Texas A&M gave me an opportunity after I returned from World War II. I have a debt at Texas A&M that I can never repay," Dr. Coulter stated, "but, hopefully, this will be a start."

The endowment established by the Coulters was created through the use of charitable gift annuities. These annuities will pay earnings to the Coulters and their children for several years, after which, the earnings from the endowment will be utilized to fund graduate fellowships or residency programs in cardiovascular studies.

Dr. Coulter is very humble in accepting gratitude for this generous gift. "I've always had a philosophy about money that enough is plenty, and I've always had plenty. I can use the rest to help someone else."

Dr. Coulter and his wife are prime examples of the wonderful benefactors of the College of Veterinary Medicine & Biomedical Sciences.

Dr. Joe and Mrs. Elaine Coulter are the benefactors of the first ever endowment at the CVM dedicated to supporting graduate student education. Dr. Coulter received his DVM from Texas A&M University in 1950.

Development Council conducts strategic planning session

The Development Council for the College of Veterinary Medicine & Biomedical Sciences is made up of a variety of members who share one common characteristic; they love animals and they love the institution that provides care for animals and educates those who will continue providing animal care. The council members have been extremely generous to the College of Veterinary Medicine & Biomedical Sciences with their time, talents, and money, with tenures for many of these members of more than ten years.

At the introduction of Dr. Eleanor Green to the Council at a meeting last May, several of the members expressed a desire to do more for the college through their service on the Development Council. Dr. Green wasted no time in setting up a strategic planning session for the Council that was conducted at the late November meeting.

The Council members began their activities by convening for a time of fellowship and dinner on November 19th. Faculty members and students were invited to attend, and they were seated with Development Council members. Of course, the exciting work of our faculty, as well as the energy and enthusiasm of our students, was imparted to the Development Council members, and they were later treated to some very gracious remarks by Texas A&M Interim President, Dr. Bowen Loftin.

Dr. William Moyer and Dean Eleanor Green take a moment to discuss the agenda at the Development Council Strategic Planning Session.

"The College of Veterinary Medicine & Biomedical Sciences is the best in the United States," remarked Dr. Loftin, "and that means it is the best in the world." He continued by thanking the council members for their service and challenged them to enter the next day's planning session with the idea of fanning the flames of passion for animals that motivates each of them. Dr. Green encouraged the Council members to get a good night's sleep and to "come prepared to work hard."

Development Council members brainstorm during the strategic planning session.

And work they did. Under the direction of Dr. Elbert "Hutch" Hutchins, educator and former executive director of the Texas Veterinary Medical Association (TVMA), the council members brainstormed and strategized on ways to share their passion with others and to harness the energy and abilities of council members for the benefit of the CVM.

Gauging from the responses of participants, the meeting was well received.

"It's been a lot more fun and a lot more meaningful than previous meetings," offered Dr. Jim Ward offered. And in the words of Vola Palmer: "We needed this; this has been good."

The true measure of any strategic planning activity is whether or not the energy cultivated during the process can be maintained and whether or not any of the good ideas that emerged can be implemented. With the track record of these devoted council members, and under the leadership of Dean Eleanor Green, it should yield long-lasting effects.

~ Dr. Guy Sheppard

MARK FRANCIS Fellows

The Mark Francis Fellows recognizes donors who have given $1,000 or more to the College of Veterinary Medicine & Biomedical Sciences. The following donors were honored on October 17th for their generous contributions. Donors are grouped into two alphabetical lists: New Members and Members Advancing to Higher Levels of Giving.

New Members:

Dr. & Mrs. Chris Abee
Bastrop, TX

Dr. & Mrs. Lyndon K. Almand
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College Station, TX

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Members Advancing to Higher Level of Giving:

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Dr. Janice D. Boyd
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2010 Outstanding Alumni Call for Nominations

The Texas A&M University College of Veterinary Medicine & Biomedical Sciences Outstanding Alumni Awards have been presented since 1980 to recognize graduates of the college who have reached a level of success in their professional careers that brings credit to both the individual and the CVM. Outstanding alumni exemplify the ideals, character strengths and principles of conduct that make the veterinary medical profession one of the highest callings.

Nominations are now being accepted for the 2010 College of Veterinary Medicine & Biomedical Sciences Outstanding Alumni. Graduates from Texas A&M University's College of Veterinary Medicine & Biomedical Sciences may be nominated for this honor. Nominations are welcome through January 8, 2010. For each nominee, a resume or curriculum vitae that summarizes major career accomplishments, and two letters of support are required, as well as any additional information or letters that may be helpful to the selection committee. Awards will be presented at the annual reception and dinner to be held Friday, April 9, 2010, at Miramont Country Club in Bryan, TX.

Nomination packets can be found on our website at *www.cvm.tamu.edu/alumni* or you may call Noell Vance at (979) 845-9043 to receive one by mail.

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College Station, TX 77843-4461
www.cvm.tamu.edu

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Development Office:
(979) 8455-9043

Continuing Education/Public Relations Office:
(979) 845-9102

Biomedical Sciences Undergraduate Office:
(979) 845-4941

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Veterinary Integrative Biociences:
(979) 845-2828

Department of
Veterinary Pathobiology:
(979) 845-5941

Department of
Veterinary Physiology and Pharmacology:
(979) 845-7261

Department of
Veterinary Small Animal Clinical Sciences:
(979) 845-9053

Department of
Veterinary Large Animal Clinical Sciences:
(979) 845-9127

Veterinary Medical Teaching Hospital
Administrative Office:
(979) 845-9026

Small Animal Hospital:
(979) 845-2351

Large Animal Hospital:
(979) 845-3541

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In MEMORIAM

Class of 1937
Frank W. Burdett, 96, of Tool, TX, died November 19, 2009.

H.R. Willard, 95, of Giddings, TX, died October 10, 2009.
A memorial scholarship has been established at the Texas A&M University College of Veterinary Medicine & Biomedical Sciences. Contributions to the Dr. and Mrs. H.R. Willard Endowed Scholarship in Veterinary Medicine should be sent to the College of Veterinary Medicine & Biomedical Sciences, Office of the Dean, 4461 TAMU, College Station, TX 77843-4461. Please make checks payable to the Texas A&M Foundation and write "H.R. Willard Scholarship" in the memo section.

Class of 1944
Alan H. Edmondson, 85, of Huntington Beach, CA, died June 9, 2006.

Class of 1946
Robert G. Raplee, 84, of Lebanon, TN, died August 18, 2009.

Verne Albertson Scott, 84, of Stephenville, TX, died October 17, 2009.

Class of 1947
William D. Cornelius, Jr., 88, of Markham, TX, died August 26, 2009.

Class of 1949
Joseph N. Beasley, 85, of Farmington, AR, died May 14, 2009.

Class of 1951
Jamie Thompson Dawson, 86, of Longview, TX, died May 30, 2009.

Class of 1954
Robert Ed Curbello, 84, of Texas City, TX, died June 18, 2009.

Class of 1955
Charles Wesley Livingston, 85, of San Angelo, TX, died June 16, 2009.
Dr. Livingston was a long-time investigator with the Texas Agriculture Experiment Station.

Class of 1957
Eugene Harper Williams, 89, of Bandera, TX, died May 22, 2009.

Class of 1958
Jimmy Smith, Sr., 74, of Denham Springs, LA, died May 21, 2009.

Class of 1960
Col. Richard E. Whitmire, Jr., 72, of San Antonio, TX, died September 12, 2009.

Class of 1962
Barry Steward Philipp, 77, of Wimberley, TX, died June 8, 2009.

Class of 1963
Virgil E. Kummero, Jr., of St. Augustine, FL, died July 22, 2009.

Class of 1971
Robert Raymond Selcer, 60, of Louisville, TN, died June 13, 2009.

Class of 1973
James Layne Lybyer, 58, of Lebanon, MO, died June 6, 2009.

Robert B. Wiggs, 61, of Dallas, TX, died November 30, 2009.
The Dr. Robert B. Wiggs Veterinary Dental Scholarship has been established at the Texas A&M University College of Veterinary Medicine & Biomedical Sciences in his memory. Contributions to this scholarship should be sent to the College of Veterinary Medicine & Biomedical Sciences, Office of the Dean, 4461 TAMU, College Station, TX 77843-4461. Please make checks payable to the Texas A&M Foundation and write "Dr. Robert Wiggs Scholarship" in the memo section.

Class of 1980
Howard E. (Skip) Tewell, III, 55, of San Benito, TX, died October 6, 2009.
The family requests that memorial donations be made to the Texas A&M University College of Veterinary Medicine & Biomedical Sciences in memory of Dr. Tewell. Checks should be sent to the College of Veterinary Medicine & Biomedical Sciences, Office of the Dean, 4461 TAMU, College Station, TX 77843-4461. Please make checks payable to Texas A&M Foundation and write "In memory of Dr. Howard E. Tewell, III" in the memo section.

Class of 1990
Jane Michelle Salsbery (Fischer), 57, of Espanola, NM, died August 27, 2009.

Class of 1995
Kathy Christian, 52, of Southlake, TX, died June 3, 2009.

Class of 2004
Heather Sizemore, of Dallas, TX, died July 8, 2009.

CVM Today

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COLLEGE OF
VETERINARY MEDICINE
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CHANGE SERVICE
REQUESTED

A Galápagos giant tortoise (*Geochelone nigra*) undergos a CT scan at the Veterinary Medical Teaching Hospital.

PARTING Shot