



CVM Today

ews from the College of Veterinary Medicine at Texas A&M University

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Snow Dogs



Scoping in Alaska

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A Time of Challenge, A World of Change

Not a day goes by that I do not reflect on how fortunate I am to be living in the Great State of Texas, while working in the most noble of all professions. I have been dean of your college for five years now, and time is literally flying by as exciting challenges appear on our horizon. In fact, we live in a time of challenge, within a world of change that constantly reminds us that we must work diligently in the present to plan for the future. This dynamic must be viewed as a tremendous opportunity to focus on excellence in everything the college does as our academic mission.

The college is very appreciative of our elected representatives and university officials for their hard work and dedication to higher education during the 78th legislative session. The reality of our economic downturn, even a momentary one, is that we need to find unique ways to do more, with fewer state resources. Despite immense fiscal hurdles, our state and university leaders have completed their leg of the race; it is now up to us to take the baton and finish the course.

To that end, and in anticipation of the state's budget reductions, your College of Veterinary Medicine began an early process of evaluating areas where we can increase efficiency. Indeed, beginning over a decade ago, the college consolidated academic programs and departments so that operational costs could be reduced. Evaluation and prioritization of college programs is an ongoing measure. I am pleased to report that through the combined efforts of faculty and staff, the college has reallocated a number of additional functions that will enable us to maintain the strength of our academic programs and services for

the sons and daughters of Texas.

For example, the Veterinary Medical Teaching Hospital recently replaced cell phones for key personnel with cell phone/two-way radio combinations. External calls can be made using the cell phone feature while internal calls can be made more economically via two-way radio. Additionally, the hospital instituted a program soliciting cost reduction suggestions from faculty and staff. A cash award, from a private donor, is being given to those making the most significant suggestions. One suggestion, reducing the Small Animal Clinic's extended service time by only one hour each night, is estimated to save the college several thousands of dollars.

Furthermore, our previously separate continuing education and public relations offices were combined recently to improve productivity of both programs, while reducing expenditures. Staff positions have been combined in the dean's office and other efficiency-based steps have been taken throughout the college through a critical evaluation of how today's resources are being invested for tomorrow's progress.

As we look to the future, the importance of personal gift endowments from college alumni and friends is becoming even more critical. The need for student scholarships is increasing dramatically because of the rising cost of tuition and living expenses. The sophistication of veterinary medical and surgical treatment and procedures continue to grow exponentially, requiring the Veterinary Medical Teaching Hospital to upgrade facilities and purchase new equipment almost daily! The efforts to attract quality faculty in a variety

of clinical specialties that are essential for end chairs an professorship essential.

As the university has just of the "Capital to announce Wiseman to co-chair Spirit One Vision Campaign Leadership Committee. This committee will play an integral role in the college's ability to meet future funding needs.

The advancements that are being made in veterinary medicine would not be possible without you and the continual support of friends of the college and Texas A&M University. Please accept our sincere gratitude for all you have done to strengthen the teaching, research and service missions of the College of Veterinary Medicine.

As always, I welcome your ideas and suggestions on how to better serve the citizens of Texas and their animals. I send my best regards to our friends at home and abroad and hope that you will join us for the College of Veterinary Medicine's Homecoming in College Station on August 29-31.



Dean H. Richard Adams

Sincerely,



H. Richard Adams
H. RICHARD ADAMS
DEAN

Snow Dogs

“How would you like to scope dogs in Alaska?” It wasn’t the question that Dr. Michael D. Willard, Professor at Texas A&M University’s College of Veterinary Medicine was expecting, but after four years and two trips to the Iditarod Sled Dog Race, Willard was hooked. First, working with such animals was a rare privilege. “These dogs have been born and bred to race and they love it. The dogs race over 1,000 miles in extremely cold weather in anywhere from nine to thirteen days—they are incredible athletes beyond anything you can imagine,” said Willard. “Furthermore, the mushers were exceedingly kind in allowing us to work on their animals; these dogs are celebrities up in Alaska just like football and basketball players are down here in Texas. To the mushers, these dogs are more like family than pets; they love and protect them. Second, these dogs present a rare chance to study sustained, maximal physical exertion.”

Billed as the “Last Great Race,” the Iditarod presents a unique research opportunity to study exercise-induced gastritis. Human and animal athletes undergoing maximal exertion are reported to have a higher incidence of gastrointestinal (GI) disease than their sedentary counterparts.

“My friend and colleague, Dr. Mike Davis, DVM ’88, noted that every year one to two animals died in the race, often from GI-related illness such as vomiting, aspiration pneumonia or bleeding out,” said Willard. The year before calling Willard, Davis performed gastric endoscopies on thirty sled dogs confirming that there was a relatively high incidence of ulcers or erosions among these canine athletes.

“During my first year working



Top: Resting in the dog lot.

at the Iditarod, we scoped about 70 dogs and found that there was about a 45% incidence of GI erosion, bleeding and ulceration. This was much higher than what anyone would expect in what are otherwise clinically happy, healthy dogs.” The next year, Davis and Willard were funded to look at the effects of omeprazole as a preventative medication for gastritis in dogs at the Iditarod. Half of the dogs on participating teams received medication and the other half received placebos.

“The musher and the administering veterinarian did not even know which dogs had received the medication or placebos.” Findings from the study indicate that this drug had a marked protective effect. This last year they looked to see if there were easier ways to detect GI disease than endoscopy. “We have been anesthetizing dogs for four years at the Iditarod in order to scope them. We are looking for easier, quicker means to detect and monitor GI disease.” The researchers are doing sugar permeabilities at the college’s GI

lab with the hope that they will prove to be useful in a clinical setting. If sugar permeability is in fact a really good test for these kinds of lesions, they will have an easier, less expensive means to examine the dogs and perhaps be able to enlist the aid of more mushers.

While there may not be an organized event for humans that provides a challenge remotely resembling the Iditarod, this research may have benefits that extend beyond helping “man’s best friend.” The study with these dogs presents a great model for studying the effects of maximum stress on humans. Potential human applications include stress prevention, reduction or treatment in athletes and other people undergoing maximal physical exertion. After three years, Willard remains intrigued by what can be learned through his research projects at the Iditarod and he stands in awe of the event’s canine athletes. “These are the most incredible dogs in the world, they are really impressive. They leave greyhounds in the dust when it comes to endurance.”

An Ounce of Prevention

Kathleen Halvorson believes in the old adage “An ounce of prevention is worth a pound of cure.” That is why Halvorson, the infection control coordinator at Texas A&M University’s Veterinary Medical Teaching Hospital, comes to work each day.

Halvorson holds what may be the first position at any College of Veterinary Medicine wholly dedicated to preventing the spread of infectious diseases among patients and caregivers.

“This is something that human medicine has struggled with for some time. It is important to keep healthy patients well and to prevent sick patients from getting sicker from exposure to infectious diseases while they are being treated at the clinic,” said Halvorson.

With resistance to antibiotics growing daily, preventing patients from needing them makes good sense.

“The health benefits of infectious disease control are significant in that patients recover more quickly in a clean environment. However, there are economic reasons for implementing an infection control program as well.”

Salmonella, a potentially deadly disease, is common among horses. “If a clinic has an outbreak of salmonella, it may be forced to close down for a thorough cleaning and disinfecting. This could cost the practitioner a great deal of money in lost revenue.”

In small animal medicine, parvo and bordetella bronchi-septica (kennel cough) are both common infectious diseases the spread of which is preventable in the clinic with a solid infectious control program.

“The three most important things to remember in order to

prevent disease from spreading is to ensure that health workers wash their hands, that instruments and all contact surfaces are properly disinfected, and that there is clear communication between health-care professionals to ensure that patients with an infectious disease are properly isolated away from the uninfected population.”

Halvorson says that the amount of time that soap and disinfectants require to kill bacteria varies, so it is important to read the labels. “For washing hands, at least 15 seconds of vigorous rubbing with a good lather is needed to kill most of the germs. For surface disinfectants, the recommended time may range from a few minutes to as much as 10 minutes.”

To establish the infectious disease control program at the Veterinary Medical Teaching Hospital, Halvorson and the hospital’s infec-

tious disease committees from both the large and small animal clinics, identified specific standards and protocols and began a process of educating veterinary health professionals within the hospital. They also implemented procedures to monitor, review and revise standards and protocols as necessary.

Terry Stiles, Hospital Administrator of the Veterinary Medical Teaching Hospital sees infectious disease control as an emerging area in veterinary medicine.

“We may be at the same place with infection control that we were 15 years ago with the employment of Veterinary Hospital Pharmacists. The importance in establishing the program may not be obvious until the benefits are fully realized. In the near future, I believe that we will look at our infectious disease control program and wonder how we ever got along without it,” said Stiles.



Taking Care of Business

He's taking care of business, every day, and if you eat out regularly, he has probably taken care of you, too. Providing quality, healthful foods is top priority for Dr. Scott Brooks, DVM '90, Senior Manager Food Safety for YUM! Brands which includes Taco Bell, Pizza Hut, KFC, Long John Silver's and A&W. He takes your food and safety very seriously.

How does a Doctor of Veterinary Medicine become involved in the restaurant business? "Public health courses in my curriculum at veterinary medical school peaked my interest," Brooks stated. "Drs. Leon Russell, Manny Thomas, Asa Childers and Norm Heidlebaugh taught public health courses that I found very interesting." Their courses coupled with a fortunate job opportunity and graduate studies, provided Dr. Brooks with solid experience and preparation for his duties at YUM! Brands.

An opportunity came in the form of a new job as public health officer with the U.S. military. Dr. Brooks joined the Air Force in June 1991 and became public health officer at Goodfellow Air Force Base in San Angelo, Texas. The position gave him, a veterinarian, public health credibility. "As health official for Goodfellow AFB, I was in charge of the base hospital, restaurants, occupational health workshops, medical intelligence, communicable disease control, epidemiology and food safety."

The Air Force sent Dr. Brooks to the University of California, Davis, where he was accepted to the Master in Food Science Program. At the same time, on his



Dr. Scott Brooks

own, he worked on his Master of Preventive Veterinary Medicine program. "Dr. Leo Cropper, a military veterinarian and mentor, charged me to make both degrees happen," said Brooks. These programs focused on a farm-to-table food safety perspective for the military. A background in food-borne disease, epidemiology and food science gave Brooks an understanding of farm-to-processor issues. Both graduate degrees were completed in 21 months and Dr. Brooks was then stationed at Brooks Air Force Base, San Antonio, Texas, School of Aerospace Medicine.

As Director of Food Safety Programs for the Air Force, he taught food safety to new public health officers (veterinarians), public health technicians, preventive medicine physicians, public health nurses and other preventive medicine/occupational health personnel. Dr. Brooks also taught advanced courses, procedures and programs in the Air Force as well as fielded food safety questions and consulted with other experts when needed.

Brooks' education and work experiences prepared him for his responsibilities with YUM! Brands. Every week, YUM! Brands serves more than 150 million people in nearly 30,000 restaurants in 100 countries around the world.

Mold Dog, New Tricks

Teaching a "mold dog" new tricks just might be the answer for the Texas insurance industry's toxic mold crisis. Max, a border collie/lab mix and the first trained "mold detection dog" in Texas and his owner, Eric Voss, both of Houston, have begun sniffing out molds after Max's routine physical at Texas A&M University's College of Veterinary Medicine.

The one-year-old super sniffer has received 1,000 hours of training on mold detection, which explains the canine's abilities and his \$12,500 price tag. Max demonstrated how he is trained to detect mold and the daily drill that keeps him sharp at Texas A&M University's College of Veterinary Medicine.

"Dogs are used to detect bombs, narcotics, missing people, arson, termites and other scent driven targets," said Voss. "Detecting for toxic molds was a logical extension of their abilities."

Texas will be joining California, Florida and other states in utilizing canines to detect health-threatening molds. Dogs have the ability to determine if mold exists within a structure, thus decreasing the costs of location and remediation. The fact that dogs can find specific things by smell is proven, but how well they do it is less known.

"Dogs have an amazing ability to detect odors. In fact, they are so good at it that it is difficult for us to determine how accurate they are because we are limited in our ability to test what we cannot yet comprehend," said Dr. Bonnie Beaver, Professor of Small Animal Medicine & Surgery and a board certified animal behaviorist.

"The area of the brain that deals with smells is much larger in

Good Dog, Bad Dog



The Veterinary Medical Teaching Hospital (VMTH) at Texas A&M University, is one of the few places in the world that has board certified veterinarians specializing in animal behavior. Drs. Bonnie Beaver and Lore Haug, both in the Department of Small Animal Medicine & Surgery, are two of only 32 boarded members in the world focusing on animal behavior. Beaver and Haug treat patients presented at the VMTH and support veterinarians throughout the world through the Behavior Referral Service.

“The Behavior Referral Service has been around for many years and we want veterinarians to be aware of how useful it can be to owners with animals that are experiencing aberrant or undesir-

able behaviors such as compulsive disorders, stereotypes, anxiety or aggression,” Haug said.

The Behavior Referral Service provides a one-to-three hour consultation with owners, depending on the patient’s symptoms. Physical examinations, blood work, radiographs and/or CT Scans (computed tomography imaging) may also be performed in order to better distinguish medical conditions from behavioral issues.

Veterinarians interested in the referral service can call the Small Animal Clinic at (979) 845-2351 to make a referral and then have their client call to make an appointment.

“This service is not reserved for just cats and dogs,” Haug said. “Large animals, particularly horses, and exotics are also welcome.”



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are not easily corrected.

dogs than in humans. The result is that if humans are able to detect one drop of a specific substance by smell in 25 barrels, dogs would be able to detect one drop in 25 million barrels,” said Beaver.

Max and other mold detection dogs have a tremendous professional challenge ahead of them. According to the Texas Coalition

for Affordable Insurance Solutions, in 2001 70% of all mold claims filed nationally were filed in Texas, with the top five insurance companies seeing their mold claims rise over 500% in the past year.

Texas leads the nation in both the number of mold insurance claims and mold-related lawsuits at a cost of over \$1 billion to

Texas insurance companies. With many Texas insurers making mold coverage an option, the costs associated with finding and cleaning up mold in residential structures is being absorbed by consumers. The use of mold detection dogs may help to decrease the expense of mold detection, once again proving that dog is man’s best friend.

In the Army Now

They're in the Army now, not hunkered down at the Critical Care Café cramming for a physiology exam. Army Captains Tracy Hoff and Jennifer Robson, both 2001 College of Veterinary Medicine graduates, are assigned to the Vogelweh Army Base and Ramstein Air Force Base with the 51st 100 medical detachment in the Kaiserslautern Military Community (KMC), Germany. Although serving in our nation's military, they are both practicing veterinarians.

The KMC is the largest military community outside of the United States consisting of several Army and Air Force bases. There are 17 military and 11 civilian personnel, including four veterinary surgeons, that staff the veterinary treatment facilities. Vogelweh is a full-service referral hospital for all of the military working dogs in the European theatre. The Ramstein

veterinary treatment facility is smaller and handles primarily routine visits and health certificates.

The clinic's patients include approximately 40 KMC Military working dogs and the pets of military families stationed at the KMC.

"We are expected to run our own clinics and take care of our soldiers. All in all, the military can be a great life for those willing to work for it," said Hoff.

There are about 400 Army veterinarians, which make up only a small percentage of those serving in the Army. The Air Force and other branches of the military do not have traditional veterinary practitioners that provide patient care. Instead, non-Army veterinarians in the military focus on public health and safety issues such as food inspections.

Those who are fortunate enough to be Army veterinarians are clearly doing what they love

according to Robson. "I like being an Army veterinarian because it gives me the opportunity to see and work with animals all day long, not to mention the chance to save their lives."

It was no coincidence that classmates Hoff and Robson wound up working so geographically close.

"Actually, Tracy helped me a lot, both during veterinary school and in Officer Basic Course (OBC). When we were in school, she put me in touch with the right people to get an assignment in Germany. Then at OBC, she helped me through my army culture shock. She taught me how to march and wear a uniform and helped me improve my run time on the physical training test."

Drs. Hoff and Robson, the folks back home salute you for your service and dedication to your country!



Going, Going, Ghana

Journeying into the heart of West Africa, a team of second-year veterinary students from the College of Veterinary Medicine, Texas A&M University, is helping to launch the Ghana Animal Welfare Society (GHAWS) this summer in Accra, the capital city of Ghana.

For six weeks, four students will assist local veterinarians in setting up guidelines and standards that will ensure proper animal care. They will work with the people of Ghana to help develop a more compassionate attitude toward animals and understanding the important human health issues related to zoonotic diseases.

GHAWS began in January 2003 after Angela Williams, principal investigator for the project, spent three months in Ghana last summer working with head veterinarian, Maj. Dr. Joseph Selorm Tettey, gaining valuable international experience and veterinary knowledge.

While sharing her experience with others, Williams recruited Molly Jowell, Alexis Willingham and Krista Hardy. Together, this group will educate members of the Ghana community by distributing materials that will serve to promote pertinent animal welfare topics.

“GHAWS is needed to end the cycle of animal abuse, neglect and inadequate care in Ghana,” Williams said. “As future veterinarians, it is our obligation to address animal care issues and to begin educating the public.”

Ghana, located in West Africa, is primarily rural with more than half of the 18.5 million inhabitants involved in agriculture. The city of Accra is highly developed, yet lacks appropriate animal care and control. Although the dominant language is English, many

tribal dialects are spoken as a significant barrier that GH must overcome.

“Developing effective ways to interact with the people of Ghana will be the initial challenge our team to overcome when we arrive,” Willingham said. “We will be unaware of what we are doing, but hopefully once we get out in the city and contact veterinarians we will be able to overcome the communication barrier.”

In addition to educating the people of Ghana, the team also will lead the construction of an animal holding pen at the veterinary hospital in Ghana and donate veterinary supplies to the clinics in Accra. It is often difficult for veterinarians in Ghana to acquire basic supplies because of high cost and low availability. GHAWS plans to collect veterinary supplies donated by local veterinarians and distribute them to the clinics in Accra.

“Awareness of the issues facing Ghana is one of our major goals,” Jowell said. “In our studies we tend to focus on problems pertinent to our country and as students we must realize that there are veterinarians out there that need our help.”

“Many professional veterinarians support the goals of GHAWS but are unable to dedicate the time necessary to help set up the organization,” Williams commented. “It’s amazing that a group of students can go over there and make such a huge impact in such a short time.”

Assisting with the launch of the Ghana program, the Geraldine R. Dodge Foundation awarded the team a Frontiers in Veterinary Medicine fellowship in the amount of \$6,500 because of the project’s potential to advance the humane



treatment of animals. Through their faculty mentor, Dr. Jeffrey Musser, Department of Veterinary Pathobiology, the project is receiving financial support from the USDA Cooperative State Research, Education and Extensions Service Challenge Grant, Global Veterinary Medicine and Foreign Animal Diseases: Trade, Control, Careers.

The students are hopeful that the program will continue in the future and that anyone interested in going abroad will have the opportunity to go to Ghana.

“We are trying to build a framework for future work in Ghana,” Hardy said. “Our efforts this summer with GHAWS will not end when we leave, but will continue to help the people and animals of Ghana.”

Helping Hands

Human medical surgeons are lending a hand with advanced cardiology procedures in companion animals at Texas A&M University's College of Veterinary Medicine. In the past year, several teams of human and veterinary medical surgeons have collaborated on procedures in an effort to repair the hearts of canine patients suffering from congenital heart defects. While many heart procedures in humans are considered "routine," which result in relatively high success rates, the technology is in its infancy in veterinary medicine.

"The surgical techniques in veterinary cardiology are not as well defined as they are in human medicine. That is why these collaborations are so important, so we can learn from our human medical colleagues and hopefully they can learn from us as well," said Dr. Theresa Fossum, Professor of Small Animal Medicine & Surgery.

Almost two years ago, Fossum and a surgical team that included a human cardiovascular surgeon, performed the college's first successful cardiac bypass on a two-and-a-half year old Golden Retriever, using a surgical procedure that had been developed to correct congenital heart abnormalities in children, but had never been successfully performed on a companion animal.

The canine patient had been diagnosed with a subaortic stenosis, a common congenital heart defect, and was not expected to live past his third birthday. The 92-minute procedure involved surgical entry through the septum to the right heart ventricle and into the left ventricle to remove an obstruction. Today, at four years of age, the patient is fully recovered from the open heart surgery



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and living an active, normal and healthy life.

"What we are seeing is that medicine has come full-circle. In the early days of human medicine and surgery, most of the progress was made because of what had been learned from the research that was conducted using animals. Today, animal research is improving our ability to treat companion animals while advances in human medicine are being applied to veterinary medicine."

To help get this message out, Fossum serves as the Foundation for Biomedical Research's spokesperson for a public education effort known as the "Survivors Campaign" which was designed to promote the vital role that biomedical research plays in advancing animal health.

"When I first began practicing," explained Fossum, "there were usually only two options for the anguished families of seriously ill pets. Because there were few drugs, less surgical options and

next to no medical devices available for companion animals with chronic or fatal conditions, the choices were euthanasia or a life of pain and suffering. Thanks to animal research and the collaborations with our human medical colleagues, veterinary medicine and surgery is making great strides."

Pace-makers, CAT scans, MRIs, sophisticated surgical procedures and advanced medications are just a few of the ingenious innovations that were developed for humans as a direct result of biomedical research conducted with animals in the laboratory. Now, these same technologies are extending the lives and increasing the quality of life of our companion animals.

"This is an extraordinary time in veterinary medicine," added Fossum. "Our ability to treat patients and the options that are available to us through advanced medical and surgical technologies are enhancing and lengthening the time that we get to spend with our companion animals."

Comrades for a Cure

In this post-Cold War era, relations between Russia and the United States have warmed considerably. Helping to fuel the fires of friendship and technology transfer, scientists at Texas A&M University's College of Veterinary Medicine are working with the Department of Defense (DOD) and the Department of Commerce's (DOC) International Trade Administration to transform the former Soviet Union's biological weapons laboratories (where pathogens were once engineered and manufactured for biological warfare) into bio-defense research facilities.

Drs. Garry Adams and Thomas Ficht, both researchers at Texas A&M University's College of Veterinary Medicine, have established a close working relationship with Russian scientists for the peacetime production of brucellosis vaccines for use in wild bison, domestic animals and perhaps, even man.

Adams and Ficht reviewed proposed projects by the former Soviet Union that will transform the work performed at the labs into civilian applications. These applications include developing advanced diagnostics, vaccines, and treatments against various National Institute of Health Category A, B and C pathogens. The focus of the research proposals includes brucellosis, foot and mouth disease, Q fever, anthrax and other pathogens that can harm humans, animals or both.

In 2001, Russian scientists met Texas A&M University researchers in Yellowstone National Park to finalize projects and program funding. An added benefit to the meeting's location was that Russian scientists were able to see first-hand how their work could impact the rest of the world.

A major effort is underway to develop new vaccines for the bison in Yellowstone National Park to protect them against brucellosis. The current bovine vaccines do not protect bison since their physiology and immune response is different than domestic cows. Successful vaccination programs in Yellowstone National Park will not only preserve these herds, but will also prevent other wild (and domestic) animals from contracting brucellosis.

The technology developed through these DOD and DOC funded projects should have worldwide application with shared intellectual property rights.



Commencement 2003

Dr. Jack Stephens, President of Veterinary Pet Insurance (VPI) was the speaker for the College of Veterinary Medicine's 2003 Commencement Ceremony. Stephens established VPI to eliminate economic euthanasia.

A former practicing veterinarian, Stephens is a pet enthusiast and cancer survivor. Through the pain, sickness and long nights of his recovery, his wife's Miniature Pinscher, Spanky, stayed by his side. Stephens credits the dog's motivation, unconditional love and companionship as the keys to overcoming the illness.

While Spanky's memory lives on, another Miniature Pinscher—Skeeter—has become Stephens' constant companion. Skeeter joined Stephens on stage in cap and gown.

Stephens admonished the students to look to the future but live in the present because, "You never know what life will bring or what you'll accomplish. Let *no one* set limits on you."



Aggie Guide-Dogs

Reville is not the only dog that is allowed in Texas A&M University classrooms these days. Members of the student-run Aggie Guide-Dogs and Service-Dogs (AGS) organization bring dogs to class every day in order to train them for a lifetime of service to the disabled.

In a society that thrives on movement and speed, it can be difficult for disabled people to integrate themselves into a completely independent lifestyle. However, with an advancing society and the help of service dogs, a hearing impaired woman can be alerted of a phone call, a physically impaired man can move in a wheelchair and a visually impaired child can walk to school. Service dogs have been credited for increasing the independence and confidence of the disabled in a variety of daily activities. AGS provides animals with the necessary building blocks that lead to a lifetime of dedicated service.

“AGS is an excellent organization that educates the public on the benefits of using dogs as guide, service and therapy animals and it increases the public’s awareness of individuals with disabilities and how dogs can help them,” said Dr. Alice Blue-McLendon, a lecturer in the Department of Physiology and Pharmacology at the College of Veterinary Medicine and co-advisor for the organization.

AGS initially started as a small branch of the national organization, Canine Companions for Independence, which is a California-based, non-profit group that provides highly trained service dogs to individuals with disabilities. In 1997, these members started AGS and

today it is a recognized student organization with over 20 active members and four successfully placed dogs.

Sruti Sreerama, senior Biomedical Science major and president of the organization, joined AGS her freshmen year after seeing the dogs wearing the signature blue vests at

ts of using dogs

MSC Open House. She didn’t know much about the program but as a member of AGS, experience is not required.

“AGS provides their members with the needed skills to train service dogs,” Sreerama said. “You don’t even have to own a dog, all you need to have is an interest in helping others.”



For their owners, service dogs often mean the difference between independence or a life of total reliance on others.

Members interested in the training aspect of AGS are called “puppy walkers” and are required to attend seminars that instruct them on the proper techniques used to effectively train a puppy

for service. Once AGS members complete training and receive their puppy, they begin a year-and-a-half long commitment to their animal that includes Phase I basic instruction on obedience, appropriate behavior in public places and attention to commands specific to service dogs.

“Once the puppies complete Phase I training, we send them to national service organizations like Paws with a Cause and Canine Companions for Independence where they continue to train for specified areas of work,” Sreerama said.

AGS dogs can be trained for work as hearing dogs, guide dogs and even specially trained social dogs that provide emotional support to autistic and shy children. Beyond the individual service they provide, these dogs can assist in search and rescue, U.S. customs and police support. Recently, AGS sent four dogs to national organizations for specialized training and two have already begun service as hearing and therapy dogs.

“There is a definite shortage of service dogs,” Sreerama said. “There are many people in need but not nearly enough dogs to satisfy that need.”

Each dog is evaluated to determine if it will make an effective service dog. If they do not pass, they are removed from the program. Typical reasons for dismissal from the program include health, temperament and slow learning ability.

“Successful service dogs usually have strength, personality and a high level of intelligence which provides the owner with a sense of confidence in their pets ability to assist them,” Sreerama said.

Exotic Newcastle Disease

Texas poultry producers are keeping a close watch on the spread of Exotic Newcastle Disease (END) as it continues to devastate parts of California, Nevada and now Texas. “As one of the top poultry producing states, Texas adheres to strict biosecurity measures,” says Dr. John El-Attrache, Assistant Professor in the College of Veterinary Medicine with a joint appointment in the Poultry Science Department.

END is an extremely contagious and fatal foreign animal disease affecting most bird species. Although this disease is not new to the United States (a similar outbreak occurred in southern California in 1971), it is suspected to have re-entered the United States through illegal smuggling of infected fighting cocks and Amazon parrots from Mexico.

This disease is often spread within a flock through bodily discharges including feces and secretions from the nose, mouth and eyes. These bodily discharges can attach to shoes, clothing and equipment and consequently increase the chances of the disease spreading to other flocks through human transport.

Signs of END include: sudden death, sneezing, gasping for air, nasal discharge, coughing, muscular tremors, drooping wings, swelling of the tissues around the eyes and in the neck, and greenish, watery diarrhea. “Eradicating the disease is the primary goal when a flock is diagnosed with END even though an infected bird can be saved. Infected individuals become carriers of the disease and present a potential threat to other birds,” El-Attrache said.

In the poultry industry, chickens are raised to be either egg layers or broilers. Layer chickens are raised to produce eggs while broilers are grown for consumption. END is particularly devastating to the layer industry because these chickens have a longer life span, which creates a larger window of opportunity

for infection. Layer chickens usually live in houses that are both warm and humid with up to 20,000 other birds, which may permit the disease to live for several weeks.

“The Texas poultry industry could face a similar challenge to that in Southern California if the proper preventative measures are not taken to keep END from spreading throughout the state,” El-Attrache said.

The Texas poultry industry is No. 6 in the nation in both layers and broilers while California is No. 8 in broilers and No. 3 in the layer industry. In California, approximately 2.2 million birds have been destroyed to stop the spread of the disease which has affected 14 commercial operations and 2,000 noncommercial flocks. The hefty price of fighting the disease is estimated at \$35 million.

“Most chickens have been vaccinated against END with either an additive to their water, a spray vaccine or both. Even though the spray vaccine is the most effective method, it sometimes results in uneven distribution of the vaccine, leaving some birds more susceptible to END despite regular boosters,” El-Attrache said.

If a case of END is suspected, contact the Texas Department of Health or the Texas Veterinary Medical Diagnostic Laboratory to confirm the diagnosis before making any decisions to eradicate a poultry farm or bird species.

“END is a respiratory disease with symptoms that are often similar to other non-lethal respiratory diseases and must be identified in a diagnostic laboratory setting,” El-Attrache said.



Dr. John El-Attrache



COLLEGE NEWS

An Endowing Fellow

A love of horses, a life-long dedication to veterinary medicine and good business savvy led Dr. E.P. Stallings to establish the Dr. E.P. Stallings Endowed Fund to benefit Texas A&M University’s College of Veterinary Medicine.

Stallings grew up in Houston where horses became a part of his life while helping at his mother’s Crosby livery stable. His experience at the stable helped to develop an interest in veterinary medicine. He graduated with his DVM in 1943 and returned to the growing city of Houston. Property located on Westheimer owned by Stallings on which an IHOP restaurant had been developed was used to fund a charitable remainder unitrust to provide an income to his three daughters for a term of twelve years.

Stallings requested that the remainder of this trust on termination be used for the benefit of the College of Veterinary Medicine.

“Dr. Stallings has given this gift to be used as the Dean shall determine, for the most important needs of the College of Veterinary Medicine,” stated Dr. O.J. “Bubba” Woytek, DVM ’65, Senior Director of Development for the College of Veterinary Medicine. The Dr. E.P. Stallings Endowed Fund is in excess of \$600,000.

“There are many benefits with this type of gift,” notes Dr. Woytek. “The individual establishing the trust receives a charitable income tax deduction the first year and may carry forward any unused deduction for up to five additional years.” In Stallings’ Charitable Remainder Unitrust, his daughters each received the same income from the trust on an annual basis.

There are benefits for the Col-



Drs. E.P. Stallings and O.J. “Bubba” Woytek began their friendship with a handshake and a few longhorns.

lege of Veterinary Medicine, too, notes Woytek. “An unrestricted gift allows funds to be utilized where most needed.”

Stallings previously established an endowment that supports an annual veterinary student scholarship.

Our hats are off to you, Dr. E.P. Stallings ’43, for your tremendous support of Texas A&M University’s College of Veterinary Medicine.



E.P., thank you for supporting Texas A&M University’s College of Veterinary Medicine.



joined a veterinary practice in Orlando, Florida after graduation.

Veterinarian Honored with Lifetime Achievement Award

Dr. Harris (Hank) Stoddard '47, a veterinarian at Shamrock Veterinary Clinic in Cross City, Florida, was honored with the Lifetime Achievement Award by the Florida Veterinary Medical Association (FVMA) during their 73rd annual conference in Orlando. The Lifetime Achievement Award is presented to senior members who have made outstanding contributions to the FVMA and veterinary medicine.

Dr. Harris specializes in Tropical Veterinary Medicine and exotic animal diseases. He also worked in Vietnam as a representative of the U.S. Agency for International Development.

He is an authority on the farming of fresh water fish and served as president of the Florida Aquaculture Association, which is a state-wide organization of more than 1,800 veterinarians.

Nathan R. Brewer Scientific Achievement

Dr. Michael Swindle '69 received the Nathan R. Brewer Scientific Achievement Award from the American Association for Laboratory Animal Science. Dr. Swindle was cited for his work in developing swine as a biomedical research model.

Dr. Swindle is the Director of the Division of Laboratory Animal Resources and Professor & Chairman of the Department of Comparative Medicine at the Medical University of South Carolina.

He has many accomplishments and has served in many professional organizations either as a member of the board of directors, committee chairman and/or officer. Dr. Swindle is the first U.S. citizen to be given board certification status by the European College of Laboratory Animal Medicine.



Dr. Michael Swindle

Safe Highly Cited

The Institute for Scientific Information compiled a list of the 1,200 most highly cited authors during the 1981-1999 period. This group is assembled from the most highly cited scientists in categories covering a wide range of fields from Agricultural Sciences and Chemistry to Engineering to Geosciences. Dr. Stephen Safe was recognized as a highly cited author in two categories, Pharmacology and Ecology/Environment, for research carried out in the College of Veterinary Medicine over the past 20 years. Recently, Safe was recognized by Texas A&M University's Licensing and Technology Department for outstanding Research Support through acquiring over \$7 million in funding since 1999 for his research in developing compounds for treating cancer.



Dr. Stephen Safe



COLLEGE NEWS

College of Veterinary Medicine HOMECOMING 2003

August 29-31

SCHEDULE

Friday, August 29

Bush Library Conference Center

- 6:00-7:00 PM Reception with cash bar
- 7:00-9:00 PM Outstanding Alumni Dinner*
\$20/plate

Nominations for next year's Outstanding Alumni Awards are due March 1, 2004

Saturday, August 30

CVM ★ Mark Francis Room

- 11:00 AM Brunch*-\$8/person
- 12:00 PM Tours of CVM
- 4:00 PM Pre-Game Buffet*-\$10/person
- 6:00 PM Aggies vs. Arkansas State
Tickets estimated at \$35 ea.

Bus service will be available from Agronomy Road parking lot to Kyle Field and back

Sunday, August 31

CVM ★ Mark Francis Room

- 8:00 AM Continental Breakfast* and Continuing Education
Registration-\$50/person
- 9:00-10:00 AM Dr. Sharon Kerwin,
Orthopedic Surgery
- 10:00-11:00 AM Dr. Derry Magee, Bovine
Medicine & Surgery
- 11:00 AM-12:00 PM Dr. Joe Joyce, Equine
Dentistry & Ophthalmology

***Reservations will be essential for all meals**

REGISTRATION BROCHURES HAVE BEEN MAILED TO DVM CLASSES OF '38, '43, '48, '53, '58, '63, '68, '73, '78, '83, '88, '93, '98

Questions? Call Dr. O.J. Woytek at the TAMU College of Veterinary Medicine at (979) 845-9043, or e-mail Suzy Keller at skeller@cvm.tamu.edu

Clinical Service Awards

The Veterinary Medical Teaching Hospital Clinical Service Award was presented to Drs. Claudia Barton and Wesley Bissett at the Honors Convocation on April 11, 2003, for demonstrating exceptional clinical service, compassion for the patient and client, as well as communication and cooperation with peers, clients, referring veterinarians, staff and students.

Barton is a professor and staff oncologist in the Department of Small Animal Medicine & Surgery and received her DVM in 1973 from the University of Missouri. Barton is a member of the American Veterinary Medical Association (AVMA), the American Animal Hospital Association, the Texas Veterinary Medical Association (TVMA) and the Veterinary Cancer Society. Bissett is a lecturer and post-doctoral research associate in the Department of Large Animal Medicine & Surgery and received his DVM in 1997 from the TAMU College of Veterinary Medicine. He is a member of the American Association of Bovine Practitioners, the Society for Theriogenology and also the AVMA and TVMA.



Dr. Claudia Barton



Dr. Wesley Bissett

Texarkana Native Selected as Distinguished Member of the American College of Veterinary Pathologies

Dr. Linda Collins Cork, Professor and Chair of the Department of Comparative Medicine at Stanford University School of Medicine, has been named a Distinguished Member of the American College of Veterinary Pathologies (ACVP). Dr. Cork earned her DVM from the TAMU College of Veterinary Medicine and received a PhD in Experimental Pathology from Washington State University.

Dr. Cork serves on the editorial board of several professional journals. She is the author and co-author of more than 140 publications. An active member of the Institute of Medicine and the National Academy of Sciences, she has also presided as President of the ACVP.

A Tip of the Hat

The Texas Veterinary Medical Association (TVMA) recognized two of the college's own at the TVMA's 2003 Winter meeting held in College Station. Dr. Duane Kraemer and Joni Watkins, RVT, received honors in the presence of family and colleagues at the TVMA's presentation banquet.

Dr. Duane Kraemer, Professor of Physiology and Pharmacology received the Veterinary Medical Specialty Award in recognition of his cloning and embryo transfer research. Throughout his career, Kraemer has given countless presentations and media interviews to help further the public's knowledge of veterinary medicine and research.

Joni Watkins, a radiological technologist in Large Animal Medicine & Surgery, received the Veterinary Technician of the Year Award in recognition for her service to the veterinary profession. She has given numerous radiological seminars to veterinarians and technicians throughout Texas.

The college joins the TVMA in a "tip of the hat" to Kraemer and Watkins for their contributions to veterinary medicine!



Dr. Duane Kraemer



Joni Watkins

Congratulations

Our friend and colleague, Dr. Raymond Sis, Professor and former Department Head of Veterinary Anatomy and Public Health, at Texas A&M University's College of Veterinary Medicine, was recently appointed Dean of the School of Veterinary Medicine at St. George's University in Grenada. Dr. Sis assumed the position of Dean on April 1, 2003, after serving Texas A&M University for 35 years.



Dr. Raymond Sis

IN MEMORIAM

Class Year

1940

William Alvis Belcher
Belcher, of Del Rio, died March 30, 2001

1941

Herbert Doc Dubuisson
Dubuisson, of Longview, died December 7, 2002

1942

Edward P. Hornickel
Hornickel, of San Antonio, died March 13, 2003

1943

Waymon G. DuBose
DuBose, of San Angelo, died February 10, 2003

Richard D. Macy

Macy, of Redondo Beach, CA, died May 10, 2002

Robert B. Wilcox, Sr.

Wilcox, of Groves, died Sept. 5, 2002

1947

Ben B. McCollum
McCollum, of Stephenville, died Nov. 18, 2002

1950

William W. Clifton
Clifton, of Lubbock, died February 17, 2003

J.B. Joy

Joy, of San Angelo, died December 9, 2002

Jack D. Robbins

Robbins, of San Antonio, died December 30, 2002

1951

Roger W. Baker
Baker, of South Riding, VA, died October 23, 2002

1952

Herman Frank Dieterich
Dieterich, of Del Norte, CO, died April 28, 2003

1954

Edmund Walter Smyka

Smyka, of Newark, NJ, died February 12, 2003

1955

William Henry Kirksey
Kirksey, of Fort Worth, died December 2, 2002

1956

Otis Bryan Beard
Beard, of Navasota, died March 19, 2003

Glenn Clark Green

Green, of Mesquite, died January 7, 2003

1960

Charles D. Minnis
Minnis, of Fort Worth, died March 14, 2003

1961

Robert L. Glaze
Glaze, of Longview, died November 29, 2002

1963

Lester Mike Cummings
Cummings, of Monroe, died December 3, 2002

1964

John F. Kern, Jr.
Kern, of Pearland, died June 23, 2002

1965

Gail W. Wood
Wood, of Spicewood, died January 29, 2003

1969

Jerry Thomerson
Thomerson, of Ingram, died March 3, 2003

1976

Charles K. Beahan
Beahan, of Austin, died October 19, 2002

1979

Trevalyn S. Holt
Holt, of Hempstead, died July 30, 2002

CVM

Brad Davis
Davis, Large Animal Resident, died June 12, 2003

DEVELOPMENT NEWS

Capital Campaign Kick Off

One billion dollars! That is Texas A&M University's goal for the "One Spirit One Vision" campaign publicly launched on March 28, 2003. Thanks to you, our alumni and friends of the college, we are right on schedule toward our own goal of \$60 million for the College of Veterinary Medicine by December 31, 2006.

Two exciting new programs started by the college are the "Mark Francis Legacy Society" and the "Walk of Honor" brick program. Please review the enclosed brochure and consider including the College of Veterinary Medicine in your estate planning; also, please give us a call if you have questions or need help



in creating a planned gift to leave a legacy for our students and the future of the college. The College wants to thank Charles and Pat Wiseman for being the first Mark Francis Legacy Society members with their bequest gift of \$250,000.

Please do not hesitate to contact our office for the "Walk of Honor" brochures and information about this special new way to permanently honor and memorialize people and pets. This program will provide support for the college, and the gift for a brick can be designated for the donor's area of interest.

Everyone is invited to our college Homecoming. If you want

to participate, contact our office and join in the festivities. Everyone is welcome to "come back" and help us launch a new era in Aggie football as we begin the 2003 season at Kyle Field.



Dr. O.J. "Bubba" Woytek

Thanks for your continued support and interest in our students and programs. As the economy improves, we will surely exceed our "One Spirit One Vision" goal! Gig 'em!

- Dr. O. J. "Bubba" Woytek,
Senior Development Officer
DVM '65

White Coat Ceremony

The third annual White Coat Ceremony was held in January, 2003. First year veterinary students entering their second semester of veterinary school received their white lab coat from Dean H. Richard Adams and Dr. E. Dean Gage, Associate Dean for Professional Programs. The white coat symbolizes their accomplishments and further progression toward obtaining their DVM.

The White Coat Ceremony is a significant milestone in the student's veterinary medical education. It demonstrates the commitment that the students have made to their profession and to the betterment of animal care and their communities.

Dr. Jeanne Fairweather was honored for her support of the college's White Coat Ceremony. Fairweather is recognized as a respected humanitarian and educator within the human medical field. She received her Doctorate



Dr. Lynn Ruoff helps her daughter, Catherine, with her white coat. Cathy's dad, Dr. Walter "Dub" Ruoff, would have been proud!

the University of Texas Medical School in Galveston and has received many awards and honors including a Fellowship at M.D. Anderson Cancer and Tumor Institute in Houston.

She was awarded a Medal Commendation, the first such medal awarded to a civilian physician at the medical center. She is so a world traveler and an avid archeologist, studying in many countries over ancient Mayan ruins.

Fairweather recognizes the importance of the White Coat Ceremony and believes that it is important to always be professional in appearance and action. "Putting on the white coat today should remind you of the honor and privilege you have to become part of the veterinary profession and part of the Texas A&M University College of Veterinary Medicine legacy," said Fairweather.

ICU Renovations

The Small Animal Hospital at the College of Veterinary Medicine received a face-lift this year as the west end of the first floor building was renovated to make way for state-of-the-art equipment and facilities.

Interior work was done on the anesthesia induction, post anesthesia recovery and the new endoscopy laboratory. Exterior work was done to landscape and update the ICU exercise yards.

Inspections were made during

Spring Break and the area was opened the following week allowing the Veterinary Medical Teaching Hospital to reclaim possession of its renovated space and begin moving in supplies, equipment and patients.



Finalist

Underscoring the importance of outstanding teaching at a major research university, Texas A&M University President Robert Gates announced the establishment of two new faculty awards for excellence in teaching, each of which comes with a \$25,000 stipend.



Dr. Debbie Kochevar

The new awards, which include the title of “Presidential Professor for Teaching Excellence,” have stipends that are believed to rank among the highest in the nation on the basis of a single institution making such presentations annually. They will be presented each year during May commencement ceremonies.

Although two presidential professors had been chosen for 2003, President Gates and his advisors were so impressed with two additional nominees whose accomplishments also merited recognition that he decided to name two additional finalists. The College of Veterinary Medicine’s own Dr. Debbie Kochevar, Professor in Physiology and Pharmacology, was named a 2003 finalist for the Presidential Professor for Teaching Excellence Award.

Dr. Kochevar and a second finalist received a one-time \$10,000 stipend in recognition of this honor.



Special Delivery

Dr. Tracy Colvin was about eight months pregnant with her first child on December 14, 2002, as she listened to a presentation at the College of Veterinary Medicine's Annual Equine Reproduction Symposium for Veterinarians at Texas A&M University. She said that perhaps she was "concentrating too hard on the hormonal cascades for the induction of parturition" when it became clear that her own delivery was at hand. Although she is from Uvalde, Texas, Colvin delivered her first child, Shelby James Colvin (a little "she" Aggie), at St. Joseph Regional Health Center in Bryan, Texas, because Shelby thought it was time. Mom and Dad—both Aggies—are doing fine and they are so proud that Shelby chose Aggieland as her birthplace!



College Highlight Calendar

FALL SEMESTER 2003

August 25	First day of CVM Fall Semester classes
September 12–14	Small Animal Orthopedics Conference
October 17–19	Diagnostic Cytology Workshop
November 7–9	Annual Equine Conference
November 17–December 13	Period for North American Veterinary Licensing Examination
November 21–22	Emergency Medicine for Small Animals Conference
November 27–28	Thanksgiving Holiday, Texas A&M University
December 6	Annual Exotic Pets Conference
December 8–12	Fall semester final exams for CVM Classes 1VM, 2VM & 3VM
December 12–14	Annual Equine Reproduction Symposium for Veterinarians



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