



Newsletter

The American Association of
Human-Animal Bond Veterinarians

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AAH- ABV web page: www.aah-abv.org

MESSAGE FROM THE PRESIDENT



*Message From the President
Robin Downing, DVM, CVA,
CVC, CPE, CCRP
Diplomate, American Academy
of Pain Management
Hospital Director:
The Downing Center for Animal Pain
Management, LLC
Windsor Veterinary Clinic, PC*

Greetings, all - -
What an exciting time this is to be involved
in veterinary medicine and in the work of
honoring the Human-Animal Bond!

What an honor it was to accept the role of
President of this esteemed organization at
the annual meeting of the AVMA in July
of this year. I am humbled to know of
the hard work that has come before in the
evolution of the association.

During my term, which will take us to the
AVMA annual meeting in 2012, I hope to
assist the AAH-ABV in achieving several
milestones important to our future and
to our sustainability. We are not unique
among organizations facing challenges
in this time of economic recession and

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Caribbean Case Study Investigators

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*Second semester RUSVM students Julie Riha and Kyndell Weder
describe the appearance of a Rhipicephalus tick and a blood smear in
a case of Texas cattle fever. Photo: Paul Orchard.*

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in the busy realm of groups competing for the limited time, attention, and monetary resources of the veterinary profession. In addition, we compete with the paradigm of “virtual” organizations, which represent the model of interaction for many of the younger members of our profession.

One of the most important recent changes for the AAH-ABV was the decision to engage the professional management firm XM_i, lead by Ms. Terry Applegate, to assist us in creating a sustainable model for infrastructure as we face the future. As you all know, Dr. John Wright from the University of Minnesota College of Veterinary Medicine has given selflessly of himself, his time, his energy, and his passion in order to facilitate the ongoing existence of the organization. This has been a VOLUNTEER position! It has been to John that we have collectively turned for all of the details - - he has been the thread of continuity for the AAH-ABV as he has “herded cats” (that would be those of us in leadership positions...) in order to “git ‘er done”. John, you will never know how deeply grateful we are for your vision and persistence over the years.

That said, in order for the AAH-ABV to survive and thrive, it MUST have an infrastructure - - there MUST be continuity in the day-to-day operation of the organization - - a way to track membership, organize dues collection, manage corporate sponsorship dollars, attend to the fiscal details, etc. As a founder of the International Veterinary Academy of Pain Management, and its second President, I was delighted to witness what Terry Applegate and XM_i were able to provide the IVAPM when we were in this same position of needing consistent infrastructure. I was even happier when Ms. Applegate agreed to take on the AAH-ABV as a client, knowing that we have work to do in order to become the viable, self-sustaining organization I know we can be. Terry, you have my respect and gratitude that you are willing to work with us to help us move forward effectively.

The next order of business is to work through the details of acquiring our 501(c)3 status with the Internal Revenue Service. I have the pleasure of working with an accountant in my practice who brings two important advantages to the table in this endeavor. One - - she has excellent experience achieving this goal with multiple non-profits. And, two - - she has offered to provide this service pro bono, allowing the AAH-ABV to preserve our scant resources. Thanks to Terry Applegate and John Wright, we have been able to track down the necessary information and founding

documentation to begin working in earnest on this next step for the organization. Formal designation as a non-profit makes our appeal to larger entities (e.g. corporate partners) more appealing as they receive a tax benefit when they contribute financially to our success. It also means we have the opportunity to pursue charitable contributions from our constituents with the quid pro quo of a tax deduction. And it formalizes our fiscal activities and fiduciary responsibility as we must report our financial activities, which de facto subjects us to a bit of scrutiny. Not a bad thing!

Another priority for me as I work to enhance the role of the AAH-ABV in the larger world of veterinary medicine is to build collaboration with the many tiny organizations out there that share our vision and commitment to all the varied elements of the Human-Animal Bond. We live in a very fragmented world right now, and there is no strength in being a splinter. Rather, by gathering our resources, working collaboratively and collectively, we have the opportunity to build relevance. As each of you is out and about in your individual sphere of influence, it is important to reach out to individuals who do not know about us, make them aware, and ask the important question, “How can we work together?”

Which leads me to one very sad reality... despite the FACT that veterinarians and veterinary healthcare team members are engaged DAILY in support of the Human-Animal Bond, and despite the FACT that animals are even more important to us as a culture now than ever, ours is an organization so small as to be irrelevant in the big scheme of things... we actually have fewer members now than at any time in the past, despite the fact that there are now more veterinarians and veterinary healthcare workers than ever before! Part of this we have brought on ourselves by our very name - - the name implies that ONLY veterinarians may be members. This is, of course not true!

My charge to the current membership is to take this challenge seriously! Dues to belong to the AAH-ABV are about the most affordable in the profession. If each current member brings just two additional people into the AAH-ABV, we will have instantly TRIPLED our membership! What a great way to validate the work that our paraprofessional team members do every day in the trenches. Consider membership in AAH-ABV as a staff benefit. Likewise, get serious about educating those who are not yet members that they needn't be veterinarians in order to engage in the important work of the American Association of Human-Animal Bond Veterinarians.

Finally, I'd like to introduce to this membership a very fun and informative website dedicated to the Human-Animal Bond - - www.petconnection.com. Most of you know of Dr. Marty Becker and his work on behalf of pets

and the people who love them. Dr. Becker earned the Bustad Award a number of years ago. About four years ago, Dr. Becker began assembling a group of like-minded individuals from many walks of the animal-loving world to assist him in gathering and disseminating ACCURATE information to the animal loving public. I have the great honor of participating as the pain management/palliative care expert on Dr. Becker's team. It is powerful stuff to be able to reach a wide pet-owning, animal-loving consumer audience with good, solid information that has the power to enhance the precious relationship readers share with their animal companions! I encourage you to visit the site and sift through the information that has been archived there for ongoing perusal.

Enjoy the Holiday season with your human and animal companions alike. We all look forward to a better year to come in 2011!

Carribbean Case Study Investigations: Jenny Moffett, MRCVS

One of the challenges that human-animal bond educators face is trying to integrate the subject into an already packed veterinary course. Curriculum committees may agree to a token lecture but, beyond that, it can be hard to secure support. "There's no room!", we hear, or: "The students' time is better spent learning real science." The truth is, however, that the human-animal bond already guides our veterinary curriculums more than the traditionalists like to think. If we look at how veterinary medicine has evolved in recent decades, e.g. the increased interest in companion animal science, the move towards collaboration with physicians on 'one health' programs, we can see that we have been steered towards the subjects that have the most bearing on human-animal interactions.

To integrate the human-animal bond and related 'non-technical' skills into a clinical course takes innovation. At Ross University School of Veterinary Medicine (RUSVM), St. Kitts, a novel teaching strategy aims to marry the knowledge of parasitology with the communication skills of clinical practice. Devised by the parasitology team at RUSVM, the course – called 'Caribbean Case Study Investigators' – uses a student-centered approach. Second semester students select to participate and are arranged into groups of four, with each group studying a veterinary case study and aiming to identify the likely "suspect" parasite or parasites involved. Each case includes client details and the students must work out what clinical relevance this diagnosis has for the person concerned, and how to communicate it in lay-person's terms.

A typical case runs like this: "A sheep farmer has just gotten his first internet lesson from his grandson and he loves it. He phones you three weeks later to make an appointment for his dog because he has done lots of reading online. The farmer

is concerned and needs more professional advice about probable tapeworm infection in his dog and potentially himself." In this case, the client is a Utah-based farmer with 20 years of experience in the sheep farming business. He has a five-year-old neutered male border collie called Buster.

The challenge for the students is to work this case up and find out all they can about the relevant tapeworm. They are asked what clinical approach they would like to take, the significance of this parasite to the owner and – crucially – what advice they need to give him. The scenarios are diverse and imaginative. Students 'meet' everyone from a hobby farmer and his lethargic peacocks, to a pot-bellied pig owner with an itchy indoor hog, and a horse breeder with a 100 yearlings that are failing to thrive.



*Second semester RUSVM students Julie Riha and Kyndell Weder explain the life cycle of the common liver fluke *Fasciola hepatica* with the help of 'Betsy' the cow.
Photo: Paul Orchard*

Caribbean Case Study Investigators operates on an "each one, teach one" basis, meaning the students present the information they have learned to other students in a large group session. They use a range of creative approaches, including posters, models and role-played skits. This gives them an opportunity to practice public speaking skills, and the students' peers assess the presentations using a grading rubric and an automated audience response system.

Currently Caribbean Case Study Investigators is at an early stage at RUSVM but many of its principles – notably the "each one, teach one" concept – were based on a previous course, Iron Parasitology, another student-centered teaching program. Early results from research into these novel teaching strategies at RUSVM are testing students' short and long term recall. The data is currently being analyzed.



“A mutually beneficial and dynamic relationship between people and animals” is how the AVMA describes the human-animal bond. That’s easy to observe with companion animals – to see the joyful interaction between a well-loved dog and his owner. But, when we consider the human-animal bond with regards to wildlife, that mutually beneficial relationship may not be quite so clear cut.

At Ross University School of Veterinary Medicine (RUSVM), students are exposed to this different – and often more challenging – set of human-animal interactions. St. Kitts, where the university is situated, is one of the last Caribbean nations where sea turtle fishing is still legal. From October through to February, fishermen hunt two of the main species found in these waters: hawksbill and green sea turtles.

Given that sea turtles have been on the menu in parts of the Caribbean for years, and that some local people believe turtle eggs to have aphrodisiac powers, this presents conservationists with unique cultural challenges. RUSVM faculty, staff and students have been spearheading conservation work on the island through the St. Kitts Sea Turtle Monitoring Network (SKSTMN), a nonprofit organization founded in 2003 by Dr Kimberly Stewart, a 2006 RUSVM alumnus and current assistant professor at the college.

Over the last seven years, Dr Stewart and her team have rolled out a multi-faceted conservation and education program on the island. SKSTMN activities cover everything from nesting site monitoring and tag and release schemes, to outreach events in local schools, community and fishery centers. In 2010 alone, SKSTMN volunteers documented 41 nesting females and 163 nests, and put in an estimated 9,000 hours patrolling the beaches of St. Kitts.

Central to the SKSTMN philosophy is promoting a culture of understanding of the animals and of their relationship with people on the island. Traditionally, sea turtles have been seen as ‘resources’ by the local community – a source of protein. Education through SKSTMN hinges on sustainability and how a turtle can have more economic benefits alive than dead. Kittitian fishermen are often surprised to hear, for example, that leatherbacks predate jellyfish which kill fish larvae. Similarly, hawksbill feed primarily on sea sponges, which – if not kept in check – can overgrow on the reef with detrimental effects

for the marine ecosystem and the tourism that depends on it. The success of the SKSTMN program can be measured by its people: one of St. Kitts' most prominent fishermen, the president of a local fishing co-operative, now works shoulder-to-shoulder with conservationists. He still catches turtles but for tagging, not for fishing.

SKSTMN provides veterinary students with a wealth of human-animal bond learning opportunities. From the moment they start work as a volunteer, they learn that the culture and laws of St. Kitts differ from those at home (the majority of RUSVM's 812 students come from the US). The success of SKSTMN's work hinges on marketing the ecological and tourism benefits of protecting these creatures. Students take this message to the children of the island via school tours and special 'sea turtle camps'. They can also be found leading local beach cleaning efforts and eco-tours which teach local people and tourists alike about turtles and the problems they face. People hear about photopollution, for example, and how lights from seaside bars or houses can cause nesting turtles to become disorientated, or simply return to the sea without nesting. Jewelry-making classes are also held and students help equip local people with the skills to provide an alternative income to fishing.

RUSVM students are also to be found monitoring leatherback nesting, juggling their studies with early morning and night surveys, and tagging duties. Recently, students helped SKSTMN place satellite transmitters on two juvenile hawksbill sea turtles. The turtles were named by the St. Kitts National Youth Parliament Association and through a schools' competition. 'Skypit' and 'Liamuiga' can now be tracked by via GPS and followed online.

For more information on the St. Kitts Sea Turtle Monitoring Network, go to: www.stkittsturtles.org.



Andy gives Kenrick, an attendee at a sea turtle camp, a lesson in recycled bead making. Photo: Sara Ramirez



SKSTMN founder Dr Kimberly Stewart demonstrates tagging of a juvenile hawksbill sea turtle that was captured off the coast of St. Kitts. Photo: Sara Ramirez



SSKSTMN workers fit a transmitter to a juvenile hawksbill sea turtles 'Skypit'. Photo: Matt McMillan



Attendees at a sea turtle camp hosted by SKSTMN. School children learn about the animals and their importance to the island.

The AAH-ABV: Palliative and Hospice

*Written by Doctor Alice Vialbos, DVM, DPNAP
Editor-in-Chief of the AAH-ABV Newsletter*

The AAH-ABV is advancing the philosophy and practice of palliative and hospice care in general practices and specialty practices in the United States. This page covers items of interest.

Early Palliative Care: NEJM, August 19, 2010, Early Palliative Care for Patients with Metastatic Non-Small-Cell Lung Cancer, Jennifer Temel, et al: This 3 year study, at Massachusetts General Hospital, examined the effect of introducing palliative care early after diagnosis on outcomes among ambulatory patients diagnosed with lung cancer. 151 Patients were randomly assigned to receive either early palliative care integrated with standard oncologic care or standard oncologic care alone. Quality of life and mood were assessed using the Functional Assessment of Cancer Therapy-Lung (FACT-L) scale and the Hospital Anxiety and Depression Scale, for pain, nausea, mobility, worry and other problems. The primary outcome was better quality of life, less depression, better mood and happier lives for the palliative care patients (PCP's). The median survival was 11.6 months for the PCP's vs. 8.9 months for the standard care group despite PCP's receiving less aggressive therapy at the end of life. Temel's study provides the rationale for early palliative care to improve survival time and to reduce overall personal and societal costs. The conclusion was not surprising to palliative care specialists; however, it came as a shock to physicians who advocate standard and aggressive care at all cost. PCP's had reduced first line chemotherapy, longer hospice care and were more likely to sign advanced directive forms with DNR's to clarify and ensure respect for their wishes. Aggressive and costly care for cancer patients in America is the trend. However, this study proves that early palliative care may help cancer patients avoid futile medicine which increases risk for adverse events and early death. "It shows that palliative care is the opposite of all that rhetoric about 'death panels,'" said Diane E. Meier, M.D., director of the Center to Advance Palliative Care at Mount Sinai School of Medicine commented, "It's not about killing Granny; it's about keeping Granny alive as long as possible—with the best quality of life." ClinicalTrials.gov number, NCT01038271. Summary by Alice Villalobos, DVM, DPNAP, with permission.

New York passed Legislation requiring physicians to speak frankly to terminal patients and discuss the benefits of palliative care and hospice. Surveys show that physicians don't address the issue of dying mostly because they are not comfortable with that conversation, do not have the training or skills to speak compassionately on the subject and they do not want to crush hope in their patient and family. This lack of communication drives many cancer patients and their families to elect procedures which often cause adverse events and destroys quality and quantity of life. Many patients die on life support, unable to bid farewell to their families and friends. New York wants to change this situation by passing legislation similar to that in Oregon. Comparatively, do veterinarians have an obligation to speak frankly and compassionately to clients with terminal pets and discuss the benefits of palliative and hospice care? AV

L.A. City Council Public Safety Committee is considering a measure that would allow Pet Limit Increase. Since L.A. is a model city for humane animal welfare laws, many other city councils will be asked to consider a Pet Limit Increase. AV



Oliver on the last day of his "Pawspice."

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for More info on Pawspice**

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Mission Statement

- To further awareness of the human-animal bond
- To further scientific progress in the area of the human-animal bond
- To further educational opportunities in the area of the human-animal bond
- To encourage veterinary participation in human-animal bond activities with related organizations and disciplines
- To explore the potential for establishing a veterinary specialty in the area of the human-animal bond

*** All AAH-ABV members will be listed in the directory unless the member specifies otherwise. Please write checks to AAH-ABV and send them to Dr. Tom Krall, St. Petersburg College, PO Box 13489, St. Petersburg, Florida 33733**