

# news & notes

JULY/AUGUST 2006

## A LETTER FROM THE PRESIDENT

The veterinary profession has an honest, hard-working reputation, which fosters high expectations. A client called me last week, angry, wanting to report one of our colleagues for not living up to her expectations. A visit to a veterinarian had so upset her that not only had she gone to the trouble of seeking a second opinion, but she also wanted to find out how to report the offending vet.

I provided her information on how to file a report with the state licensing board without wading too deep into the fray. I'm glad the licensing board is there to sort these situations out. I am certainly not in any position to judge who was right or wrong. But the situation did bring a few thoughts to mind about why some veterinarians are sued more than others and the importance of suspending judgment and being aware of body language as we find the best way to work with others.

Malcolm Gladwell discusses the reasons some doctors are sued more than others in his recently published book on rapid cognition, *Blink*. He reviews a malpractice insurance study, which compared exam-room procedures and medical records of the least-sued and most-sued doctors. He found that the doctors who were sued less were not the ones who made fewer medical treatment mistakes, but were the ones who had an exam-room persona that left the patient with the impression that they were respected. The least-sued doctors told the patients what to expect up front, clarified what the exam would entail, how long it would take, and when the verbal part of the consultation would occur. During the consultation they paid full attention to the patient.

I recently experienced that kind of care from an anesthesiologist who was explaining the anesthesia procedure for my 18-year-old son's knee surgery. He was calm and thorough, and did not make us feel rushed in the least.

According to Gladwell's book, doctors who get sued tend to be those perceived as flippant, arrogant, or condescending, rather than those who had the most to do with making a questionable treatment decision. In other

words, satisfaction has more to do with communication, verbal and nonverbal, than the result of the treatment; an important thing to remember when presented with a complaining, second-opinion-seeking client.

As a veterinarian asked to provide a second opinion, I will be projecting a host of messages, most of which are unconscious. If I go into the examination room believing I will find an error made by the previous vet, that message will come across, whether I want it to or not. I'll shake my head or cross my arms or frown and the client will know, regardless of what I say. With that, I'll make the situation worse.

But if I remember the shoe might be on the other foot next time, that the most likely cause of the problem was miscommunication, and that everybody is doing the best they can, then maybe I can get to the bottom of the problem without making it worse.

Most of us have experienced listening to a client who is upset about the service received from one of our colleagues. It is not unusual for the story from the client to be dramatically different from the one their previous vet shares with us. It is easy to fall into the trap of believing one story or the other, but the fact is both stories are probably true to the person telling it, true regarding the way things happened from their perspective. As Oscar Wilde said, "The truth is rarely pure and never simple."

The essential lesson is that we need to work with both clients and colleagues to find the blessings that unity brings. For, according to French pilot and poet Antoine de Saint-Exupery, "One man may hit the mark, another blunder; but heed not these distractions. Only from the alliance of the one, working with and through the other, are great things born."

Don't forget to have some fun this summer! Hope to see you at the T-Bones game.

All the best,



## VETERINARY TRAINING PROGRAM PUTS KANSAS AT FOREFRONT ADDRESSING RURAL SHORTAGE

BY: MICHELLE HOPKINS

The Kansas Legislature and Governor Kathleen Sebelius blazed a new trail in support of the future of veterinary medicine this term with the passage and signing into law of House Bill 3005, "The Veterinary Training Program for Rural Kansas" at Kansas State University's College of Veterinary Medicine.

The new law is intended to boost the number of students entering rural veterinary medicine. Up to five qualified students each year will receive essentially up to \$20,000 a year for four years through forgiveness of student loans. Loans up to \$20,000 will be forgiven for each year the student agrees to practice veterinary medicine in rural Kansas counties with 35,000 people or less.

Dr. Ralph Richardson, dean of KSU's College of Veterinary Medicine says Kansas is the first state to allocate public funds to support a loan-forgiveness program of this type. Richardson, as well as other KSU faculty and students, testified in support of the measure at legislative hearings along the way. He also has been contacted by Dr. Robert "Bud" Hertzog of the Missouri Veterinary Medical Assn., who is interested in seeking similar public fund allocations in Missouri to attract rural veterinary students.

Richardson's colleague, David Andrus, Ph.D. professor and Payless ShoeSource Faculty Fellow at KSU's School of Business, has conducted focus group research into the "rural lifestyle" that is scheduled to be published this month in the Journal of Veterinary Medical Education and the Journal of the American Veterinary Medical Association. His research, Richardson says, underscores a very attractive picture of the rural lifestyle. "It is important to us that veterinary students see the community values they can serve by working in the rural areas. The lifestyle allows them to be closely involved with church, schools and the community," Richardson noted.

The shortage of rural veterinarians has been exacerbated by the perceived lower salaries (in rural areas) and the all-too-real high student loan debt. The average KSU veterinary student leaves school and begins a career with about \$122,000 in educational debt, both undergraduate and veterinary training.



Dr. Ralph Richardson

If the rural veterinarian shortage continues unabated, it will seriously undermine the economic strength of the state, noted Richardson. "We would lose people from the rural areas because of the lack of economic base and lack of good schools," he said.

The new Veterinary Training Program for Rural Kansas also will provide advanced training in public health and in the handling of emergencies/infectious diseases, including foot and mouth disease, severe acute respiratory syndrome (SARS), bovine spongiform encephalopathy (Mad Cow disease), West Nile Virus, monkey pox, and more. "These students will be our 'boots on the ground' in protecting the community from potential public health concerns," he noted. (The shortage of veterinarians trained to deal with food safety and animal disease control also is being addressed by a proposed federal initiative, the draft Veterinary Workforce Expansion Act.)

Richardson is upbeat about the new Veterinary Training Program for Rural Kansas, even with just five students admitted yearly.

"Everyone would love to have an immediate impact, but it takes time to provide specialty training. It will take six or seven years of getting veterinary students/new veterinarians into the pipeline and then maintaining that to see what kind of impact we will have."

### KSU COLLEGE OF VETERINARY MEDICINE, CLASS OF 2006

Total graduates	106
Veterinary students entering large animal practice (exclusively or predominantly)	9
Veterinary students entering small animal practice (exclusively or predominantly)	45
Veterinary students entering 50/50 mix of large/small animal practice	15
Veterinary students entering equine practice	4
Veterinary students entering internship/residency	24
Other	9
The avg. vet. student enters vet. school at age 23 and leaves at about age 28, with an avg. undergraduate/graduate debt of \$122,000	
The avg. student can hope to earn an avg. salary of \$55,000/yr. in the first year following graduation from veterinary school. Beginning salaries can range up to \$75,000/yr.	
Nationwide, there are 28 veterinary schools operating and at full capacity, graduating 2,500 new veterinarians each year.	

## LADY LUCK SMILED AND SERENDIPITY ABOUNDED IN CREATION AND PASSAGE OF HB 3005

BY: MICHELLE HOPKINS

Behind the creation, introduction, and passage of HB 3005 to create a new program to increase the number of veterinarians in rural Kansas, there was a little miracle. In fact, there were several little miracles.

In 2005, the House Agriculture Committee asked Dr. Ralph Richardson, dean of Kansas State University's College of Veterinary Medicine, to speak to them, seeking a solution to a pressing problem: the shortage of veterinarians in rural areas.

A short time later, Dr. Richardson received a call from a Kansas Farm Bureau member, also the mother of a medical student at KU. "Why doesn't veterinary medicine have something like the Bridges Program?" she inquired. The Bridges Program stimulates student interest in biomedical research by providing scholarships covering tuition, early research opportunities and strong mentoring by working professionals.

Dr. Richardson held a meeting with interested parties to discuss his ideas and what he had heard. Later, he met with people adept at the legislative process. Finally, he drafted a 1-1/2-page outline, which described the problem and contained the seeds of the eventual HB 3005. He sent his outline to George Teagarden, state veterinarian, State of Kansas Animal Health Department.

The next day, Dr. Richardson got a call from Rep. Sharon Schwartz of rural Washington County. She didn't know about his outline and meetings, but lamented how difficult it was to attract young veterinarians to rural communities. What could be done? she asked. Dr. Richardson told her about his outline and all the events that had transpired in just a few days. The Kansas House Republican from the 106th district soaked it all in and ran with it – becoming the sponsor of the legis-

lation that would seek to attract rural veterinarians by forgiving educational loans in exchange for practicing in rural communities.

This was not the end of this measure's good fortune. The first committee hearing for the draft legislation was held by Rep. Dan Johnson, chairman of the House Agriculture Committee. Johnson's own rural veterinarian in Hays, Kan. was grappling with the shortage of rural veterinarians through difficulty in hiring an associate for his practice.

Richardson acknowledges that this legislation grew out of many serendipitous turns of events. He's proud of the program that's resulted, but notes, too, that members of Kansas City Veterinary Medical Association can still make their voices heard in a beneficial way. He suggests:

- Write letters of heartfelt thanks from an industry perspective to lawmakers and the governor.
  - Follow similar efforts in Missouri and write to lawmakers supporting the allocation of state funds for this type of program.
  - Track and support related federal initiatives. For example, the National Veterinary Medical Service Act, which gained key support from U.S. Senator Sam Brownback of Kansas, provides a half million dollars of debt forgiveness for rural and underserved communities.
- Currently in its early phases, the Veterinary Workforce Expansion Act, forecasts a shortage of 15,000 veterinarians over the next 20 years, and targets where it believes this shortage will be felt most acutely: food safety, animal disease control, biosecurity, homeland safety, and public health. Senator Wayne Allard of Colorado, a veterinarian, and Rep. Chip Pickering of Laurel, Mississippi, are the bill's lead sponsors.

## AMY HUNKELER AND CANINE OPHTHALMOLOGY FEATURED IN STAR MAGAZINE

BY: MICHELLE HOPKINS

KCVMA Director-at-Large Amy Hunkeler's expertise in animal eye surgery received front-cover attention in the June 25th *Star Magazine* section of *The Kansas City Star*. The five-page article traced Hunkeler's efforts to restore the eyesight of Jack, a Shepherd mix. The dog of Sean Grennan, an actor/writer with the American Heartland Theater in Crown Center, developed cataracts due to diabetes.

The article described how Hunkeler and Shelli Vanover, RVT, prepared Jack for anesthesia and surgery.

Both cataracts were removed through a 3.2mm corneal incision using phacoemulsification (ultrasonic wave action) technology. Jack recovered well and was reunited with Grennan.

Not only did Hunkeler give the dog, Jack, better vision, she may have indirectly had an impact on the Heartland Theater's 2006-2007 season. The heartwarming story got Grennan an invitation to write a play for next season: "A Dog's Life," based on Jack.

## LARRY KOVAC APPOINTED TO KCVMA VICE PRESIDENT



KCVMA's Board of Directors recently filled an executive vacancy by naming Larry Kovac, DVM, of Liberty to the position of vice president for the remainder of the 2006-2007 term. After his stint as vice president, Kovac will move up to

president-elect and be on track to become president of the association in 2008.

Kovac, the owner of Northland Mobile Veterinary Clinic, has been making house calls his entire career and he has thoroughly enjoyed the personal quality of the interaction with his customers. About 60 percent of his practice is dogs and almost 40 percent cats, with a smattering of rats and guineau pigs, as well.

Kovac graduated from Rockhurst University in 1980 and earned his veterinary degree from the University of Missouri College of Veterinary Medicine in Columbia in 1985. Two years later, he opened his mobile veterinary clinic.

Sharing the family home with Kovac are his wife of 23 years, Julia, his daughter, Brittain, and more than a dozen pets, including a therapy rooster named Rooster Boy.

## DEAR KANSAS CITY VMA

I was chosen to receive the Anatomy Award at the University of Missouri College of Veterinary Medicine. I would like to express my heartfelt gratitude for your sponsorship of the award.

It is an honor to receive this recognition and your generosity motivates me to continue to strive for excellence in my study of Veterinary Medicine.

Thank you very much.

Very sincerely yours,  
Jack Ying  
*Class of 2009*

## DEAR GREATER KANSAS CITY VMA

Thank you so much for supporting me and my fellow classmates at the University of Missouri College of Veterinary Medicine. Thanks for the generous scholarships you have awarded, in particular the scholarship I received as the recipient of the Anatomy Award.

Thank you again for your generous contributions to the CVM here at Mizzou. This is a special place and will continue to be with support from organizations such as yours!

Sincerely,  
Laura Nafe,  
*Class of 2009*

KCVMA

news&notes

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for its members and guests.

All suggestions and comments are welcomed.  
Please write, call or fax Wanda Grindstaff.  
PO Box 12468  
Shawnee Mission, KS 66282-2468  
P 913-381-7823  
F 913-341-4225

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## **'Short Course' in Small Animal Internal Medicine Provides up to 8 Hours of CE Credit on August 5th**



**What:** UMC-CVM faculty members – Dr. Marie Kerl, Dr. Carol Reinero, Dr. Leah Cohn, and Dr. Amy DeClue – will discuss the latest research and ongoing clinical trials at the University of Missouri-Columbia, as well as provide their insights on the following topics:

**Topics:** Fever diagnosis and management  
Respiratory distress  
Protein-losing nephropathy  
Feline endocrinopathies  
Gastrointestinal therapies

**Date:** Saturday, August 5th 2006

**Cost:** \$225/Veterinarian and \$95/Technicians

**Location:** Columbia, Mo.

**Contact:** Kelly Benson (573) 882-2429 or [muconf2@missouri.edu](mailto:muconf2@missouri.edu)

## **October Continuing Education Event**

**Speaker:** E. Paul Gibbs, BVSc, PhD, FRCVS

**Date:** October 19, 2006 (3rd Thursday of the month)

**Topic:** Emerging Diseases

**Location:** Maple Woods Community College

E. Paul J. Gibbs, BVSc, PhD, FRCVS, is a professor in the Dept. of Pathobiology in the College of Veterinary Medicine at the University of Florida in Gainesville. His recent research focuses on the epidemiology and control of emerging viral diseases of livestock and the relationship of those diseases to human and wildlife populations. His previous research examined the transmission of viral diseases, such as bluetongue and equine encephalitis.

From January 1995 to July 1999, Gibbs served as the University of Florida's chief international officer and director of the University of Florida's International Center.

Gibbs received his Bachelor of Veterinary Science degree and his PhD from the University of Bristol in 1967 and 1970, respectively. In 1976, he received a fellowship with the Royal College of Veterinary Surgeons.

## **November Continuing Education Event**

**Speaker:** Stephen J. Birchard, DVM, MS, DipACVS

**Date:** November 5, 2006 (Morning Session)

**Topic:** Taking the Fear Out of Gastrointestinal Surgery in Dogs and Cats

**Location:** Overland Park Convention Center

Stephen J. Birchard, DVM, MS, DipACVS, is an associate professor in the Dept. of Veterinary Clinical Sciences at The Ohio State University College of Veterinary Medicine. Birchard was an associate staff surgeon at the Animal Medical Center in New York City for two years before coming to Ohio State in 1983. He was the head of small animal surgery from 1988 to 1994.

He received the Norden Distinguished Teacher Award (1985) and the Omega Tau Sigma Fraternity National Gamma Award (1994) for distinguished service to the veterinary profession.

With research interests including oncologic surgery, general thoracic surgery, portosystemic shunts, and chylothorax, Birchard has written numerous articles for refereed journals and books chapters. He is the chief editor of the Saunders Manual of Small Animal Practice.

He received his Bachelor of Science degree from Rutgers University, his Doctor of Veterinary Medicine from the University of Missouri and his Masters of Science degree from Purdue University.

## **November Continuing Education Event**

**Speaker:** Fritz Wood, CPA, CFP

**Date:** November 5, 2006 (Afternoon Session)

**Topic:** The Business of Veterinary Medicine

**Location:** Overland Park Convention Center

Fritz Wood is a CPA and a Certified Financial Planner who has conducted important research into the business of veterinary medicine. He completes projects, writes articles, teaches at many veterinary schools, and speaks to thousands annually at national, international, state and local meetings.

Wood is the personal finance editor as well as a member of the editorial advisory board for Veterinary Economics. He's published many articles. He served on the Pricing Subcommittee of the National Commission on Veterinary Economic Issues. His experience includes nearly 10 years with a Big Four management consulting firm in Kansas City. Fritz holds Bachelor of Science degrees in accounting and business administration from the University of Kansas.

## CLASSIFIED ADS...

Send your classified ads to: Wanda Grindstaff, PO Box 12468, Shawnee Mission, KS 66282-2468 or fax them to her attention at 913-341-4225. Ads must not be over 100 words in length. Deadline for the next newsletter is 8/13/06.

**Part-time Associate** needed for feline-only hospital. Seeking experienced veterinarian with strong communication skills who is interested in joining our client/patient oriented team. Our core purpose is to be an advocate for our patients, while striving to exceed our clients' highest expectations. We offer competitive salary, an extremely skilled and knowledgeable team, and a warm, compassionate environment. Located just south of Olde Town Lenexa (KS) in a beautiful historic home. Contact Cheryl Waterman @913-541-0478 or fax cover letter with resume to 913-541-1741. Email: cwaters@birch.net.

Our veterinary "Team" is looking for a **Veterinarian** who fits the mission and unique environment of our progressive, fast growing, full-service, merit award winning hospital. The right addition to our team will thrive on client contact, client education, and thorough, preventative and diagnostic medicine. We have a high staff/dr. ratio with enthusiastic, dedicated, well-trained members to support you. Excellent compensation and benefits package. Submit resume and cover letter to: Olathe Animal Hospital, 13800 W. 135th St., Olathe, KS 66062.

**Registered Veterinary Technician** is needed for a small animal clinic. New grad welcome. Will also consider an experienced Vet Tech Assistant. Willow Hill Animal Clinic is located in Kansas City North, a great area to live and work. Must be friendly, team player with strong communication skills. Mail resume to: Willow Hill Animal Clinic 9339 N. Oak, Kansas City, MO 64155.

**Exceptional Vet** for exceptional clinic! High volume (60 -80 clients daily), high pay, small animal practice in rural setting drawing clientele from a 100+ mile radius. Rapidly expanding, all new equipment. Practice vet. medicine the way it should be in a not-for-profit environment where the client comes first. Angels Vet Express is just 45 miles north of Kansas City, MO, a division of the largest no-kill animal rescue in USA, M Shoogy's Animal Rescue.

For interview contact: Gary Silverglat 816-324-5825

**Associate Veterinarian** needed for busy South Kansas City Small Animal Hospital. We are looking for a personable and energetic individual with strong medical and surgical skills to join our team. This is a great opportunity with potential partnership available to the right person. Experience is preferred, but we will consider new graduates. We practice high quality, medium volume, progressively minded medicine and surgery in a relaxed professional environment. Please fax or mail resume to: Dr. John Lyle, 11516 Hickman Mills Dr., Kansas City, MO 64134. Fax: 816-763-8225 or Email:crazydog@kc.rr.com.

**Registered Veterinary Technician** for progressive, 2-doctor small animal practice in Independence, MO. Individual must be motivated and organized. Moving into new, state of the art veterinary hospital Spring 2007 in Blue Springs. Looking for someone to anchor staff. Competitive wage plus benefit package. Contact Dr. Curt Cavanaugh at (816) 350-9738 or fax resume to (816) 373-0249.

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Billi Arthur.....816-862-6214 MO	Susan Hopper.....816-813-4734 KS/MO	Melissa Ovel.....913-432-2354 KS
Jerome Berkowitz.....913-239-9353 KS/MO	Maureen Gray.....913-538-6379 KS/MO	Terry Patterson.....816-524-3296 KS/MO
Donn I. Blevins.....660-656-3832 MO	Rod Jantz.....816-868-2332 MO	Chris Peterson.....816-580-4047 KS/MO
Alicia Boyce.....913-651-6023 KS/MO	Linda Kalmar.....913-557-9224 KS	Elizabeth Robertson.....816-304-5164 KS/MO
Michelle Chappell.....913-709-3077 KS/MO	Kimberly Kessler.....913-548-1686 KS/MO	Annah Terry.....816-838-0343 KS/MO
James B. Cornelius.....630-734-1760 MO	Keith Longhofer.....816-896-8040 KS/MO	Harris Tate.....785-841-8946 KS
G. Mark Daniels.....816-537-8483 MO	Tim Lyon.....913-782-1503 KS/MO	

## CERTIFIED SPECIALISTS

### Acupuncture:

Linda Faris, DVM, CVM 816-640-5729, 913-341-4372

Sandi Leonard, DVM, CVA 913-706-0411

Eliza Sundahl, DVM, CVA, ABVP 816-361-4888

## VETERINARY DIPLOMATES...

### Anatomic/Surgical Pathology:

David Pinson, DVM, PhD, ACVP, ACLAM  
913-568-7363

### Anesthesiology:

Guy Watney, MA, VetMB, PhD, MRCVS,  
ACVA 913-491-4965

### Dermatology:

Jean Greek, DVM, ACVD 913-642-9563  
David Senter, DVM, ACVD 913-722-5566

### Emergency and Critical Care:

Mark Brady, DVM, ACVECC 913-642-9563  
Robin Wall, DVM, ACVECC 913-722-5566

### Internal Medicine:

Lisa Cellio, DVM, ACVIM 913-642-9563  
Jeff Dennis, DVM, ACVIM 913-642-9563  
Michael Wasmer, DVM, ACVIM 913-722-5566

### Neurology:

Brian Cellio, DVM, Dipl. ACVIM 913-642-9563

### Oncology:

Heather Heeb, DVM, ACVIM 913-642-9563

### Ophthalmology:

Amy Hunkeler, DVM, ACVO 816-554-4990  
Jennifer Hyman, DVM, ACVO 913-381-3937  
Susan Keil, DVM, MS, ACVO 913-722-5566  
Reuben Merideth, DVM, ACVO  
913-381-3937 or 800-776-3937

### Radiology/Ultrasound:

Joanne Burns, DVM, ACVR (local) 913-642-9563  
(Topeka) 785-478-9708  
Loren Shaiken, DVM, ACVR 816-426-9896  
Todd Henrikson, DVM, ACVR 913-722-5566

### Surgery:

D.A. Allen, DVM, PhD, ACVS 913-722-5566

Joseph P. Desch II, DVM, MS, ACVS 913-642-9563

Karl Frees, DVM, MS, ACVIM

(Equine) 816-322-7722

Nathan Klocke, DVM, MS, ACVS 913-722-5566

Candace Layton, DVM, MS, ACVS 913-642-9563

Steve Riley, DVM, DVSc, ACVS 913-642-9563

Eric Wilson, DVM, MS, ACVS 913-722-5566

### Veterinary Practitioners:

Vern Otte, DVM, ABVP 913-381-3272

John S. Bradley, DVM, ABVP 785-843-9533

Thomas McKee, DVM, ABVP 816-341-9191

Richard Smith, DVM, ABVP 913-299-0010

Eliza Sundahl, DVM, CVA, ABVP 816-361-4888

Steve White, DVM, ABVP 913-432-7611

### Zoological Medicine:

Wm. Kirk Suedmeyer, DVM, ACZM

816-513-4669

## 2006 KCVMA OFFICERS...

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wgrindstaff@kcvma.com  
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