

# Arizona Branch AALAS Newsletter

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Arizona Branch of the American Association for Laboratory Animal Science

## Financial Assistance in Technician Certification for US Veterans and Service Persons

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### Presidents Message

First, I would like to thank all the members that came and enjoyed the "Fun day" at the Arizona Sonora Desert Museum. We met in the early afternoon for lunch, then regrouped and split into two tours. While one went to the animal kitchen to learn about the diet preparation for the mammals, the other group went to the Reptile facility where we learned about the various snakes and reptiles that are native to our part of the desert. It was a fascinating day. Many of the members took advantage of the late afternoon and evening events and stuck around to take in the rest of the Desert Museum. A special thanks to Bob Perrill and Kathy Stollberg-Zagar for setting this up and to our wonderful tour guides Shawnee Riplog-Peterson and Craig Ivanyi.

I hope you all had a great summer and are ready to take on the fall. Dr. Martin is working on arranging the fall video-conference. As soon as a speaker, date and time are known we will be alerting the membership. If you have any suggestions, please e-mail or call Tim as soon as possible.

The works have been set in play to attract Dr. Rick Linnehan, a Veterinarian and NASA Astronaut to be our key note speaker for the Spring 2003 Symposium. We will keep you posted.

Have a wonderful fall, and we'll look forward to "seeing" you at the Fall video-conference. Paula Johnson - 520-621-3483 or (pauladj@email.arizona.edu)

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#### Arizona Branch AALAS Newsletter

Arizona Branch AALAS

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### AZAALAS Meeting Calendar

#### Board Meetings

September 26: 3-4 p.m. - CAF  
November 14: 3-4 p.m. - CAF

#### General Meetings

Fall Meeting with Speaker - TBA  
Holiday Installation Event - TBA

### Minutes of the Past Meetings

### Minutes of the 3/22/02 Board Meeting

Meeting began at 12:10 p.m. The meeting was held in the conference room of the Central Animal Facility at the University of Arizona in Tucson. President Paula

Johnson presented the minutes of the last meeting for review. Minutes were accepted.

Treasurer Jeri Ellis presented a financial report. The most recent items were the donation to the Childlife Activity Center, purchase of office supplies and publication of the branch newsletter. Other activity included purchase of supplies for the recent technician week celebration and payment made to the Arizona Corporation Commission.

Secretary Grace Aranda reported that a form had been created that would alleviate recent problems experienced in getting new signers on the AALAS accounts. The new form combines the letter informing the financial institution of the new board with a signature form.

Paula stated that the board has been trying to raise the interaction between the Arizona Branch and our vendors by making a vendor representative our vendor liaison. The suggestion was made to approach Paul Chavez who is frequently in the state. Paula has contacted Paul and he has shown interest though was unable to attend this meeting. Grace explained that with vendor interaction in the past we have been able to get vendor opinion on branch events like the symposium and district meeting which also made it easier to get financial assistance when necessary. President elect Tim Martin stated that this has been an issue at the National level as well.

Paula announced that the next branch symposium will be next year in the spring. Dr Linnehan from NASA has been asked to speak though we have had to wait for confirmation until after his recent shuttle mission. We plan to set the meeting around his preferences as far as time and place to some degree. Paula will

be in touch with Dr. Linnehan. She and Tim will be planning this meeting and ask for suggestions on topics of interest. It will be a one day meeting and we may ask him to be our dinner speaker.

As Grace reported at the last board meeting, she has been updating the AZAALAS website. She has linked all 2001 Buyers Guide ad sponsor companies and all other AALAS branches. She has also updated the membership, vendor checklist for buyers guide, nomination and awards forms for the year. She asked the board if they could review the technician award form for more revisions as we are still getting few forms and may increase nominations with an easier form. The certification pages have been revised to include more information for our members. All board members have agreed to go online to review our web for more changes by the next board meeting in May.

Grace mentioned that AZAALAS has applied for a grant from the AALAS Foundation to cover the costs of video conferencing. She reported that she had received a request for more information from the foundation. Paula and Grace will draft a response by the June deadline.

Grace distributed an updated membership roster complete with mailing list. Members were reminded of the need to renew membership with their last newsletter. The branch already has over 100 renewals.

Grace reported that she is in the process of obtaining survey information from other branches regarding membership dues and advertising rates. As there is a great deal of information to compile and not all the information has been received she will be presenting this information at the May board meeting. The purpose of the survey was the issue of whether or not to raise membership dues as a result of the lack of vendor financial support and continued

expense involved in video conferencing.

Paula presented a proposal made by the 2001 Technician of the Year requesting the board to allow her to use the designated amount of \$530 of registration and airfare for her to attend the 2002 national meeting where she would like to present a paper. Board members were receptive to this idea to further the educational goal of our organization, but felt policy should be written for future reference. Tim pointed out that this was proposed once before and raised the question of the awardees employer feeling obligated to send the person to the meeting. Grace mentioned that the board had come up with a letter which is sent to the winner and their supervisor that informed them of the specifics of the award. Grace and Paula will get together to review and expand the letter appropriately and present it to the board. April will be informed that her proposal was accepted in order for her to make the April 1 national submission deadline.

Grace mentioned that the 2002 buyers guide is coming together. She will be mailing out reminders to those vendors who have yet to respond.

Paula mentioned that the summer fun event is coming up and ideas were needed. Past ideas that included water or animal information were the best attended. Some ideas will be presented on the listserve including: a pool party in Phoenix or Tucson, picnic at Mt Lemmon, Salt River Tubing, behind the scenes tour of Reid Park Zoo, or an early morning or evening event at the Arizona Sonora Desert Museum. Grace will check on pool availability and put it out on the listserve for vote. If no interest is peaked the summer fun event may be cancelled.

Past President Jane Criswell reported that she will be submitting

the AZAALAS 2001 Technician of the Year for the national Tech award. At this time she is also resubmitting Kathy Stollberg, the 2000 AZAALAS winner as her materials were not received in time for review last year.

Grace reported that teleconferencing can be done relatively cheaply and successfully as we have found with this meeting for .15 a minute multiplied by the number of participating phones plus tax. Therefore, for 3 participating numbers for about an hour should cost about \$27.

The meeting was adjourned at 12:50 p.m.

### **Minutes of the 5/24/02 Board Meeting**

Meeting began at 12:20 p.m. The meeting was held in the conference room of the Central Animal Facility at the University of Arizona in Tucson. Secretary Grace Aranda had copies of the past board meeting minutes. As we do not have a quorum, she will send them out with this meetings' minutes for review and acceptance via email.

Treasurer Jeri Ellis presented the financial report. The CD matured this month and \$1000 was rolled over and the interest was transferred to our checking account.

President Paula Johnson updated us on our Spring symposium. Plans are still holding on Dr Linnehan's schedule at NASA. We hope to hear from him by September so that we can get things planned.

Paula announced that Board member Bob Perrill has agreed to arrange the summer fun event. Most responses to the member survey chose the Arizona Sonora Desert Museum as the site. Bob will get the scheduling done and forward the info to Grace to

distribute to the membership. Technician Branch Representative Kathy Stollberg will be asked to assist in the scheduling of the food for this event.

At the last board meeting Grace requested that the website be reviewed for any needed changes, additions, etc. This item will be placed on the agenda for the next meeting with a reminder to have the board submit any updates, revisions, etc.

The Arizona branch has received a letter from the AALAS Foundation regarding our grant proposal. They have asked for more information concerning attendance numbers at our video conferences. Grace will draft a letter to Pam Grabeel and the selection committee for the June 2<sup>nd</sup> deadline.

Paula mentioned the Fall video conference. President elect Tim Martin is in charge of getting a speaker for the event. Perhaps he can find someone in the Phoenix area for a late September meeting.

Grace reported that the membership dues survey was more complicated than originally planned. Therefore, the results of the survey will be added to the next agenda.

Grace reported that a mailing and follow up email has gone to all vendors who have contributed to the Buyer's Guide in the past. As of today we have received orders for space from 26 companies, four with no ads and 3 nonresponders. Grace will be in touch with those who haven't responded and work will begin on the Guide.

National is looking for persons to attend the Leadership Academy at the National meeting in San Antonio in October. The branch is to suggest at least one person. Grace has forwarded the information to the membership to see if anyone is interested.

Grace has heard of additional awards that Arizona members may be eligible for in the future. Certain

vendors give out awards each year and these may be added to those the branch offers. One award from Purina Mills offers \$500 and a plaque to a technician for their experience, activities and contributions to advancement. The due date for submissions is August 1<sup>st</sup>. Jane will submit the Tech of the Year info to them for possible selection.

The meeting was adjourned at 12:45 p.m.

### **From the AALAS Hotsheet**

Financial Assistance in Technician Certification for US Veterans and Service Persons

Financial assistance is now available for US veterans and service persons to obtain technician certification! If you are a US veteran or service person who has taken an AALAS Technician Certification Exam at any level on or before March 1, 2001, you're qualified to apply for reimbursement for your certification fees from the US Department of Veteran Affairs. To obtain your reimbursement, you must apply directly to the Department of Veteran Affairs. You will be asked to provide the following: 1) your name and social security number; 2) the name of the test you took and the date you took it; 3) the name and address of the organization issuing the license of certificate (AALAS); 4) the cost of the test; 5) the following statement: "I authorize release of my test information to the VA."; 6) a copy of your certification test results (sent to you by AALAS).

Information on this reimbursement program is available on the Licensing and Certification Reimbursement Program of the Department of Veteran Affairs at <http://www.gibill.va.gov/education/LCVets.htm>

## New National Membership Price Levels

During its Summer Session on Friday, June 21, the AALAS Board of Trustees approved an increase in AALAS membership dues for the first time in four years. Effective January 1, 2003, incremental increases for Individual Members will be \$5 for Bronze, \$20 for Silver, and \$30 for Gold, respectively. The new individual membership prices are:

Bronze Members: \$35  
Silver Members: \$85  
Gold Members: \$180

## Opportunities to Learn: Tech Talk

Tech Talk is a quarterly publication focusing on current information and technology of interest to technicians and other members of the research team, including those responsible for animal husbandry, facility support and management, veterinary care, scientific research, education, and products — everyone in the laboratory animal science field. The guiding philosophy of *Tech Talk* is to enable and assist those who wish to share their ideas and information with others in the field of laboratory animal science. Technicians are encouraged to submit articles on topics that pertain to their daily responsibilities. To aid in this dissemination of knowledge, Tech Talk is also available in both English and Spanish on the AALAS web site.

## Dog's Tale of Survival Opens Door in Cancer Research

By Erin Kirk

Navy's cancer was back. Marion Haber knew that her golden retriever pup was going to die if she didn't act fast. "Without surgery

and treatment, Navy would have had three months to live," says Haber, a fourth-year student at the Tufts University School of Veterinary Medicine in Boston. But traditional treatments, such as amputation, chemotherapy and radiation, would have meant Navy, then only 18 months old, wouldn't be able to swim at a nearby lake or go for long walks.

So Haber opted for an experimental treatment that eliminated Navy's cancer within 10 weeks without any of the side effects associated with traditional therapies. Today, 16 months later, all traces of her cancer are gone.

Now, the same kind of treatment, named the "Navy Protocol" in honor of Haber's dog, is being tested elsewhere in veterinary medicine. And researchers are excited enough by Navy's success that they will begin testing the treatment in human cancer patients later this year. They caution, however, that it might be several years before they know whether the treatment, one of many avenues of cancer research, will work in humans. Even in veterinary medicine, Navy is their only total success. The treatment is a cocktail of so-called anti-angiogenic drugs, which have been widely researched for more than a decade and work by starving tumors of their blood supply. Researchers say the three-drug combination, which Haber mixed into Navy's regular dog food, targets the cancer from many angles.

Haber, 24, knew about this form of experimental cancer treatment because she had worked as a research fellow at the Angiogenesis Foundation, a non-profit organization based in Cambridge, Mass. Created in 1994, the foundation promotes research on angiogenic treatments by teaming drugmakers with scientists. Haber persuaded researchers at the foundation to design a treatment for Navy. No one thought the pup had a prayer.

Haber had first found cancer in Navy's chest while practicing examinations on the dog in September 2000. That tumor was removed by a surgeon, who to be on the safe side removed extra tissue and five ribs, replacing them with three prosthetics. When the tumor appeared on Navy's leg just weeks after the surgery, Haber knew that was very bad news. That's when she sought the anti-angiogenic treatment. Navy's treatment began on Christmas Day 2000. By early March 2001, her veterinary oncologist could not find a trace of cancer. "That's a remarkable achievement, for the dog to have no side effects and the tumor be gone," says Judah Folkman, the father of angiogenesis.

Folkman, a researcher at Children's Hospital at Harvard Medical School in Boston, discovered in the 1970s that angiogenesis — the growth of new blood vessels — plays a significant role in the development of cancer. Since his discovery, an entirely new field of cancer research has developed. Doctors now are testing drugs that stop the growth of the blood vessels that tumors rely on for nutrients. They're known as anti-angiogenic drugs, and they deprive a tumor of its life source by killing the blood vessels that feed it.

Today, more than 50 anti-angiogenic drugs are being used as therapy for cancer patients. At least 10,000 cancer patients have been treated with anti-angiogenic drugs, and \$4 billion has been devoted to angiogenic research to date. This year, the amount of money spent by the federal government and the pharmaceutical industry on cancer research is expected to exceed \$10 billion. The first clinical trial for cancer patients using anti-angiogenic drugs was conducted in 1992. In the late '90s, the popularity of anti-angiogenic drugs grew, resulting in many more clinical trials.

In 1998, when news reports suggested that anti-angiogenic drugs, such as endostatin and angiostatin, held promise that a cure for cancer was within reach, clinical trials using those drugs skyrocketed. Everyone wanted the "miracle drugs." But researchers were chagrined that the news reports inflated the public's expectations. Folkman says those drugs should never have been painted as a cure. Instead, he says, "the idea is to convert cancer into a chronic manageable disease."

Anti-angiogenic drugs are showing a great deal of promise in that respect. So far, researchers have been able to "freeze cancer in its tracks" in some cases using the drugs, says William Li, president of the Angiogenesis Foundation. Doctors hope to stabilize the cancer while maintaining the patient's quality of life. The drugs have no documented side effects. They don't appear to make patients sick, and they don't cause patients to lose hair. That makes them an appealing option for humans — and their pets.

The field recently expanded to include veterinary medicine. Navy is viewed by some as a pioneer in veterinary oncology, and her success is raising awareness about cancer treatments for animals. And though Navy is only one dog, Folkman says the success of her treatment is important. Navy never had chemotherapy, and her cancer wasn't just stabilized — it vanished. When researchers heard that Navy was cancer-free after receiving a cocktail of drugs already approved by the Food and Drug Administration — Celebrex, tamoxifen (sold as Nolvadex) and doxycycline — the treatment became known as the Navy Protocol.

Navy's treatment was designed using what researchers call a "multi-targeted" approach, meaning that each drug targets a different angiogenesis growth factor. These growth factors are like switches that "turn on" angiogenesis, signaling the body to grow new blood vessels that feed the tumors. Using the Navy Protocol, doctors "sent in three smart bombs" to attack the growth factors, Li says. If the growth factors can't send signals to the rest of the body, angiogenesis can't take place. Then researchers can "pull the rug out from under the cancer," Li says.

What researchers have found by attacking these switches is a new method of early detection for animal cancers. Now, veterinarians can use a simple blood test to look for signs of the disease. "If you see an elevation in an animal's angiogenic growth factors, that's a red flag to look for a tumor," says Chris Bonar, associate veterinarian at the Cleveland Metroparks Zoo. Bonar collaborated with the Angiogenesis Foundation and Antony Moore, head of the Harrington oncology program at the Tufts University School of Veterinary Medicine, to design and monitor Navy's treatment. Navy's treatment was practical and easy. Navy snarfed the pills down every morning in her food.

Today, Navy is living a dog's life in North Grafton, Mass. Technically, her cancer is in remission, and she has periodic checkups. She spends her days chewing on a rope or playing with a fuzzy monkey that squeaks. She is always up for a walk; her tail wags at the jingle of her leash. On Haber's days off from school, she delights in taking Navy to swim at nearby ponds.

Angiogenic therapy began with humans. Now, "an unexpected benefit is being able to treat pets," Folkman says. And pets need better treatments, just as humans do. According to a Morris Animal Foundation survey, the No. 1 concern

of American pet owners today is cancer. Domestic animals are living longer because of improved health care and nutrition, so they naturally develop more cancers.

The cost of treating animal cancers is steep: Pet owners spend from \$2,000 to \$9,000 to save their pets' lives, according to Jack Stephens, a cancer survivor and former practicing veterinarian, who founded Veterinary Pet Insurance, based in Brea, Calif. His company offers special plans that reimburse up to \$8,000 for cancer treatment. Navy's treatment, though experimental, cost \$2,000. Haber says the cost would have been about the same had she opted to give Navy chemotherapy or radiation. Donations from Haber's classmates at Tufts helped pay for the treatment.

More veterinarians are specializing in the treatment of cancer in animals. The American College of Veterinary Internal Medicine certified five veterinary oncologists this year, bringing the total to 122 specialists worldwide. Although the Navy Protocol appears promising to cancer-ridden pets, Li says, the foundation is not pushing the cocktail as the only way to treat canine cancers. Other anti-angiogenic drugs, such as Abbott Laboratories' ABT-510 and ABT-526, also are being used in pet clinical trials.

The benefits of these drugs can be seen in zoos, too. Cancer afflicts certain species of exotic animals, such as tigers, Tasmanian devils and polar bears, as often as it does people and pets, Bonar says. Tigers in captivity are especially prone to mammary cancers, while Tasmanian devils can develop all kinds of cancers, and polar bears tend to have a higher incidence of pancreatic cancer. Recently, a polar bear at the Cleveland Metroparks Zoo developed an angiosarcoma, a tumor of the blood

vessel, on its paw. Because the tumor was aggressive, it needed to be removed surgically, and the bear was given a cocktail of anti-angiogenic drugs as a secondary measure.

The cocktail, similar to Navy's, consisted of Celebrex, Thalidomide and doxycycline. Bonar says he "mixed the medicine up with something sweet and tasty, like cherry pie filling, and the bear gobbled it up." Later, the bear was euthanized because of an infection unrelated to the tumor. As he did an autopsy, Bonar found the beginnings of pancreatic cancer. He believes the anti-angiogenic drugs suppressed the cancer. It would have been in its acute stages had the bear not been on the drugs, he says. "Cancer is an artifact of captivity because our animals generally live longer than they would in nature," he says. "It's a disease of old age." Bonar says he has seen lymphomas and uterine cancers in primates. But, he adds, laughing, "I haven't seen lung cancers because there are no cigarette smokers among my patients."

The Cleveland Metroparks Zoo and the Angiogenesis Foundation hope that exotic animals will be among those that benefit from anti-angiogenic therapies, even if the Navy Protocol does not turn out to be the answer. Since Navy's success, the Angiogenesis Foundation is working to help pets and their owners overcome cancer on a case-by-case basis. The foundation continues to receive telephone calls from pet owners and veterinarians who have heard about Navy. Over the past three weeks, the foundation has helped administer the Navy Protocol to a dozen dogs. There have been changes in the dogs' tumors, but Li says it is still too early to tell whether the results will be as dramatic as Navy's. Meanwhile,

Haber says Navy is quite a celebrity in the labs of Tufts vet school. "I'm not even Marion anymore," she says. "I'm Navy's owner."

(USA Today, 7/25/02)

### **Southwest Association for Education in Biomedical Research (SwAEBR)**

SwAEBR was formed with the specific mission of developing and implementing a strong proactive campaign to educate school children, as well as the general public, in the vital role biomedical research plays in our everyday lives. SwAEBR disseminates information to improve the public's understanding of how responsible research has led to significantly improved health care for man and his animal companions.

The progress of biomedical research is threatened by the growing scientific illiteracy of the public and, in particular, our young people. Opinion polls have shown that most adults do not understand the process of bringing basic research into applications that directly benefit their health and well being.

Education of the general public, our young people and their teachers is of vital importance to the future of science and biomedical research. At all levels of society, the facts concerning the process of medical discovery must be instilled. Without exposure to the truth concerning research, many of our next generation will be deceived into believing that biomedical research is unnecessary.

Speakers' Bureau:

Some available topics:

- C Biomedical Research
- C Health Careers
- C Careers with Animals
- C Medical Careers
- C Caring for your Pets
- C Animal Welfare
- C Veterinary Medicine
- C Classroom Animal Care
- C Biological Modeling
- C Endoscopy
- C Cardiovascular Surgery
- C Surgery & Surgery Techniques

For more information on SwAEBR check out our website at: [www.swaeb.org](http://www.swaeb.org)

To contact SwAEBR: call (520)621-3931 or you can e-mail: [garanda@u.arizona.edu](mailto:garanda@u.arizona.edu)

Congratulations: Marguerite (Maggie) Gonko from Mayo Clinic sat for, and passed her LAT exam!

## Sponsors Page

The AZAALAS would like to thank our vendors who have sponsored the branch through advertising in the Buyer's Guide. We ask that members patronize their business and show our support of them too!

Allentown Caging & Equipment  
Ron Orta  
(800)762-2243

Alternative Design Mfct  
Eddie Loyd  
(479)524-4343

Ancare  
Mitchell Kanarek  
(800)645-6379

Animal Technologies Ltd  
Albert Nutbrown  
(925)243-0863

A. K. Roseberry & Associates  
Ardis Roseberry  
(415)553-8131

Braintree Scientific  
Ruth Benvie  
(781)843-2202

Britz-Heidbrink Inc  
Gail Heidbrink  
(307)322-4040

Charles River Laboratories  
Marcia Murphy  
(877)274-8371

Edstrom Industries  
Skeeter Georgeson  
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Elm Hill Breeding Labs  
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Getinge Castle  
Russell Braxtan  
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Hardy Diagnostics  
Joe Plummer  
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Harlan  
K.C. Reese  
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Hilltop Lab Animals  
Edward Miedel  
(724)887-8480

Lab Diet  
David Blocker  
(251)679-0715

Liberty Research  
William Waring  
(607)565-8131

Lithgow Lab Services  
Robert Drye  
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Marshall Farms  
Nikke Nicolelis  
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Myrtle's Rabbitry Inc.  
Rebecca Dodson  
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Pharmacial Research Labs  
Paul Chavez  
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Rees Scientific Corp.  
Glenn Horlick  
(800)327-3141

Simonsen Laboratories Inc  
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(415)553-8131

Thermocare Inc  
Lee Cunningham  
(775)831-1201

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company name and  
number listed on this  
page? You must have  
missed this years'  
deadline for the  
Buyer's Guide.

To keep this from happening  
again next year, be sure to  
return your vendor  
checklist  
and check on time.

If you have not received  
your buyers guide be sure  
to drop us an email and we  
will get one right out to you!

For more information on  
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