



Arizona Branch AALAS Newsletter

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Arizona Branch of the American Association for Laboratory Animal Science

Have you sent in your membership renewal? If not, see form on last page.

See You All at the Fall Fun Event in October!

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President's Message

I hope everyone has enjoyed their warm summer and hope you were able to enjoy a little of the vacation season. I don't know about you, but I am looking forward to a cooler fall.

Our summer video conference was held at ASU, NAU and UA on July 17. Our speaker Rick Roth, CEO of the Arizona Heart Foundation, was our speaker and was both informative and entertaining. We held a short general meeting following his presentation at which the spring symposium was reviewed and upcoming events profiled.

Please plan to attend the Fall Fun Event to be held at the World Wildlife Zoo and Aquarium in Phoenix in October. We are looking forward to an educational and fun behind-the-scenes tour. Date and cost will be announced shortly so keep an eye out for it in your email or check the Arizona AALAS website for more information.

It is that time again, time to nominate and elect new officers. I'm sure you all know someone who would make a great addition to our board. Please nominate those you feel would be willing to serve. You should be getting an email with the necessary format to nominate in September and ballots will go out in November. You should also be thinking of likely nominees for the Member & Technician of the Year awards.

The Louise Brooks Memorial raffle is also coming up. Tickets will be going out in September. Remember the proceeds from this raffle go to the Flagstaff Medical

Upcoming Meeting Dates

Sept 17: noon-1pm - AZAALAS Board Meeting

October 2009 - Fall Fun Event: Behind-the-scenes tour at the Wildlife World Zoo & Aquarium

Dec 5 - Holiday Installation in Gilbert

Center Pediatric Department, Arizona Special Olympics in Phoenix and the Childlife Activity Center at the Steele Memorial Pediatric Center in Tucson. Please do all you can to promote this worthy cause. The raffle itself will be held at our Installation Event at President elect Tedd Brandon's home in Gilbert December 5th. We hope to see you there, but you do not have to be present to win!

The 2010 District 8 AALAS meeting will be held in Tempe in early May. A call for abstracts will be coming out in September. Volunteers are needed so if you are interested in getting involved contact Dr. Tim Martin, Timothy.Martin@chw.edu. This is an excellent opportunity to network with your fellow technicians from all over District 8.

A membership survey will be going out shortly to poll the membership. Please respond to this survey as this will help the board decide what future events the members would like to attend.

If you have any questions or comments feel free to contact me - Jane Criswell, 520-626-6747 or criswell@u.arizona.edu.

Member Profiles

Leigh Jacobs - Research Specialist and Laboratory Manager in the Department of Pharmacology, U of A

Leigh was born in Biloxi, Mississippi, and came to Arizona twice, once in 1976 and a second time in 1984 and stayed. She attended several different schools before finishing her degree here at the UA and joined the UA staff in 1998. She always wanted to be a veterinarian, kept taking animal oriented classes, and she thanks her mother for allowing her to bring every conceivable animal into the house "including the rattlesnake I mistakenly brought home as a child" and for showing the respect and caring her mother had for each animal. Leigh has been an AzAALAS member for three years. She has worked with calves, gerbils, mice and rats at her positions here and she is also a certified veterinary technician with experience in horses, reptiles, birds, etc. She said, "I can't tell you how much fun it is to tech in a busy [veterinary] practice. It is very hard work, 12 hour days are not unusual, but you don't realize it until the end of the day. On the other hand, I enjoy working in a research lab where learning something new everyday is common."

Leigh describes herself and her life as an open book. What you see is what you get. She has a "significant other," two grown sons and one granddaughter. She takes care of two cats and a horse (and is looking for another horse). She use to enjoy endurance riding, but the trails are not as smooth as they use to be. She has scaled back on long distance rides, but still loves to be on horseback. She reads all types of fiction and enjoys going on vacations. When asked how she would influence others to follow her footsteps she said, "Best way is to show people how much you enjoy your work or interaction with the animals. I would encourage anyone to make a plan, break it into steps along a path. Take each step, knowing there may be detours, realizing there is an adventure in getting to the goal as well as attaining it."

Past Meeting Minutes

Minutes of the 3-24-09 Board Meeting

The meeting was held via conference call. President Jane Criswell welcomed and thanked the board members for attending. She called the meeting to order at 12:04pm.

The minutes of the meeting on 2/24/09 were distributed and reviewed. Jane asked for corrections or changes to the minutes. The minutes were accepted as written.

Secretary Grace Aranda distributed the membership roster and reported that we currently have 87 members in good standing with 3 more added this week.

Though Treasurer Wendy Keswater was not present, the financial report was distributed. There was \$11,238.27 in all accounts, not including some outstanding checks for: SwAEBR membership, new certification materials, raffle disbursements, installation event, awards, teleconferences, newsletter printing, and incorporation fees. A question was raised about the charity funds

which haven't cleared as yet. Disbursement cant be made until all donations received and there are still some outstanding amounts. Once they are received the checks will be mailed.

Grace distributed the Buyers Guide summary. We theyhave already received a total of \$1,300. Board members should check the list and be sure to distribute information to their institutional vendors. All forms are up on the website. The deadline has been extended until May 15.

Grace announced the May newsletter is being compiled. We need to prompt more member profiles as our backlog is empty. Grace will distribute the profile form to the listserv and institutional representatives need to encourage their members to turn in their completed forms. We will be printing our next newsletter after the symposium to include information from that event. Anyone with ideas for the next newsletter and member profiles should contact Grace.

Jane announced that the program is being set but we still have some holes and need more abstract submissions. The suggestion was made to have anyone submitting a

poster to instead work it up into a presentation. Jane will get in touch with them and try to convince them to make the change. We still don't have specifics on the wet lab and its schedule, transportation, etc. She will meet with TBR Cindy Madura to see if we can get this firmed up so registration information can be publicized. Grace reported that registration is still low and finances have been cited for the reason in most cases. Suggestion was made to apply the poster contest funds towards scholarships for technicians to apply to attend. Those interested would submit a statement why they wanted to attend and submit them by April 1st. The board would review the submissions and then grant the scholarships. Grace will publicize the scholarships to the listserv, etc. Jane and President elect Tedd Brandon will act as moderators. Vendor liaison Frank McFadden and Tedd will work to get the exhibitors set up before the symposium begins. Northern Regional Representative Chrystal Redding and Grace will work the registration table and the sponsors. The board will all be asked to keep an eye out for any security issues and report them to

Grace who will be the hotel primary contact.

Jane asked that board members with suggestions for questions for the membership survey submit them to her. The idea was raised to use time at the general meeting at the symposium to get those present to offer questions. Jane will look for some treats to prompt more questions from the audience.

Tedd is working on the Summer video conference. He has spoken with Rick Ross at the Arizona Heart Institute who is willing to be our speaker. He will get with him to decide on a date and get back to the board so that plans for the video conference can be set.

Suggestions for the Fall Fun Event have been made. Some ideas include: BBQ at a local Phoenix lake, event at Golfland, time at a local ice rink, or something at the wildlife park and aquarium. Most interest was raised for the wildlife park and aquarium as we are looking to hold this in the fall and it was animal related.

We have been asked to promote the District 8 meeting to be held April 30-May 1st in San Francisco. Registrations are slowly coming in and they need more attendance. Grace will distribute notices to the listservs and members are encouraged to promote it to their institutions. Tim Martin will be attending the district 8 council meeting for AZ and will report back at the next board meeting.

The meeting adjourned at 12:37 pm.

Seven Steps to Riding Out a Downturn

Employees who are anxious about their futures — especially during a challenging economy such as now — can adversely affect a company's profitability by delivering poor customer service, being less intellectually engaged in their jobs, and making plans to leave, according to research by Sirota Survey Intelligence

(www.sirota.com), specialists in attitude research.

"While, in general, employees' attitudes will decline in uncertain economic times, there are major exceptions, depending on how management treats workers," said Douglas Klein, President of Sirota Survey Intelligence.

Companies should take the following steps to formulate a Resiliency Strategy for Difficult Economic Times:

1. Do build a "partnership culture." Companies with a "partnership culture" consistently outperform their competitors during both boom times and downturns. A partnership culture is characterized by 12 hallmarks, including basic trust, a long-term perspective, joint decision-making, open communications, financial sharing, and equitable day-to-day treatment.

2. Do create, communicate, and then exhaust "rings of defense" before downsizing. "An employer that treats its employees as true partners makes every effort to avoid layoffs," Klein said. "Believe it or not, you will even find people willing to participate in arrangements for their own 'funerals.' The key is employees having trust in management — that they feel management is being absolutely open and honest, and is doing everything it can to cushion the blow. When it does become necessary to reduce costs, many steps can be taken as an alternative to involuntary layoffs. These are known as 'rings of defense.'"

3. Do focus on the local behavior of immediate supervisors and managers. "Simple management behaviors such as giving timely recognition to employees, supporting their continued development, and providing coaching and guidance, mean a lot to employees — especially when they are anxious," Klein said. "During these times, it is even more important to be consistent between words and actions, and to create an environment where everyone is respected."

4. Do pay more attention to high-potential employees, who are most likely to leave during difficult

times. "Even in a tough economy, high-potential employees have other opportunities," Klein said. "Consider developing a retention strategy for high-potentials that includes a strong focus on career development. Give them special projects to meet their achievement needs, and make sure they are taking advantage of training and development opportunities."

5. Do create ways for all employees to contribute to the company's efficiency and effectiveness goals. "One excellent mechanism is gain sharing efforts," Klein said. "As the name says, it is a method for sharing gains with employees — the gains that employees themselves achieve for the organization. These programs are very motivating and truly exemplify a partnership culture."

6. Don't exclude employees from assisting with possible solutions. "Management often keeps plans and information very close-to-the-vest during difficult times," Klein said. "Communicating openly and asking for help in developing actions to be taken helps minimize feelings of powerlessness."

7. Don't stop performing periodic employee assessments. "Companies need to assess how anxious their employees and leaders are feeling about internal and external issues, and how well their culture and management practices are buffering," said Klein. "Monitor workers' stress levels, their perceptions of their workloads, and be on the lookout for burnout," added Klein. - [ALN Magazine](#)

AAALAC Accepting Applications for International Technician Fellowship

The Association for Assessment and Accreditation of Laboratory Animal Care (AAALAC) is accepting applications for their International Technician Fellowship. The fellowship recognizes two outstanding technicians, one AALAS Registered (RALAT, RLAT, RLATG, or CMAR) Technician and one IAT Registered Technologist, who have made, or have the potential to make,

significant contributions to the field of laboratory animal care and use.

The AALAS Registered Fellow will receive a week-long guest visit to a prestigious biomedical research facility in the U.K. or the Republic of Ireland, plus complimentary attendance at the IAT Congress, the U.K.'s largest laboratory animal science and technology meeting (all registration, travel and lodging expenses are included, along with a daily allowance for meals and out-of-pocket expenses). The fellowship is valued at more than \$4,000. **The deadline for receiving application packages is October 1, 2009.**

Information available at: www.aaalac.org/about/fellowship.cfm or [Download the flyer.](#)

Help People Thrive at Work: Encourage Employee Involvement

By Susan M. Heathfield

How to recruit, retain, reward, and motivate staff regularly tops your interest list. Doing these well is the most important strategic role of the manager or the Human Resources professional. In what other capacity can you contribute more to the success of your organization than in encouraging employee involvement and employee engagement? Employee involvement and employee engagement matter to your organization's success.

In *The New Pioneers: The Men and Women Who are Transforming the Workplace and the Marketplace*, Thomas Petzinger, Jr., discusses the pieces of a powerful revolution currently reshaping the face of American business. I'd like to see HR professionals leading the charge on these.

Petzinger, the long time writer of the *Wall Street Journal* column, *The Front Lines*, draws his conclusions from corporate case studies of companies in more than forty cities in thirty states and worldwide. I will highlight some of his most important conclusions. The

highlighted workplaces demonstrate environments in which motivated people choose to work.

Employee Involvement Lives - "Being good in business calls on being good at being human," Petzinger concludes after studying the turnaround of Rowe Furniture Company. Rowe, which had been a very traditional manufacturing company, identified the need to utilize the brains and talent of its employees. Charlene Pedrolie, its manufacturing chief, truly believed that the people doing the work should design how the work is done.

With the assistance and consultation from a much reduced management team and engineers, workers redesigned their work. They moved from an environment in which each person handled part of a work process to fully cross-trained manufacturing cells producing a whole product.

From standing at an assembly position all day long, they created work which allowed some freedom and movement. They eliminated the formerly "deadly dull" jobs. At the same time, the flow of information they received, which allowed them to know exactly how they were performing, increased dramatically.

The new sense of personal control, according to Petzinger, "bred a culture of innovation in every corner of the plant... It reveals the creative power of human interaction. It suggests that efficiency is intrinsic; that people are naturally productive; that when inspired with vision, equipped with the right tools, and guided by information about their performance, people will build on each other's actions to a more efficient result than any single brain could design."

Tap Staff Potential Through Employee Involvement - In his company research, Petzinger found important and consistent themes relating to vision, employee involvement, control, measurement of work processes, simplicity, communication, fun and energizing environments, excellent work tools and training, and commitment. If you can create these in your

organization, you'll retain your committed, motivated employees.

At HalfPrice books, Pat Anderson, the late founder, recognized the importance of having not just a big vision, but one that benefits society. People are energized by feeling as if they are part of something bigger than themselves. She also believed that day-to-day management was about tracking information not controlling people. She also encouraged a sense of play at work, realizing it was good for the business.

Teams for Employee Involvement in Continuous Improvement - At Monarch Marking Systems, Jerry Schlaegel and Steve Schneider had a deep respect for the minds of their workers. When confronted with a workplace in which people had been paid not to think, they instituted a "small set of simple rules" to break that mindset.

They required people to participate on teams that were formed specifically to improve a particular performance numeric. Teams were allowed no more than thirty days to form the team, study a problem or opportunity, and implement a solution. Perhaps a bit heavy-handed to start, the success of over 100 teams has created a new culture within the organization.

These companies are successful because their employees thrive. - [About.com](#)

NIAID Set to Launch Clinical Trials to Test 2009 H1N1 Influenza Vaccine Candidates

Scientists in a network of medical research institutions across the United States are set to begin a series of clinical trials to gather critical data about influenza vaccines, including two candidate H1N1 flu vaccines. The research will be under the direction of the National Institute of Allergy and Infectious Diseases (NIAID), part of the National Institutes of Health. "With the emergence of the 2009 H1N1 influenza virus, we have undertaken a collaborative and efficient process

of vaccine development that is proceeding in stepwise fashion," says NIAID Director Anthony S. Fauci, M.D.

After the isolation and characterization of the virus, the U. S. Centers for Disease Control and Prevention generated and distributed a 2009 H1N1 seed virus to vaccine manufacturers for the development of vaccine pilot lots for testing in clinical trials. "Now, NIAID will use our longstanding vaccine clinical trials infrastructure — the Vaccine and Treatment Evaluation Units — to help quickly evaluate these pilot lots to determine whether the vaccines are safe and to assess their ability to induce protective immune responses," says Dr. Fauci. "These data will be factored into the decision about how and if to implement a 2009 H1N1 flu immunization program this fall."

Initial studies will look at whether one or two 15 microgram doses of H1N1 vaccine are needed to induce a potentially protective immune response in healthy adult volunteers (aged 18 to 64 years old) and elderly people (aged 65 and older). Researchers also will assess whether one or two 30 microgram doses are needed. The doses will be given 21 days apart, testing two manufacturers' vaccines (Sanofi Pasteur and CSL Biotherapies). If early information from those trials indicates that these vaccines are safe, similar trials in healthy children (aged 6 months to 17 years old) will begin.

A concurrent set of trials will look at the safety and immune response in healthy adult and elderly volunteers who are given the seasonal flu vaccine along with a 15 microgram dose of 2009 H1N1 vaccine. The H1N1 vaccine would be given to different sets of volunteers either before, after, or at the same time as the seasonal flu vaccine. If early information from those studies indicates that these vaccines are safe, similar trials in healthy children (aged 6 months to 17 years old) will start.

A panel of outside experts will conduct a close review of the safety data from these trials to spot

any safety concerns in real time. Information from these studies in healthy people will help public health officials develop recommendations for immunization schedules, including the optimal dosage and number of doses for multiple age and groups, including adults, the elderly, and children. Data may also be used to support decisions about the best recommendations for people in high risk groups, including pregnant women and people whose immune systems are weakened or otherwise compromised.

The trials are being conducted in a compressed timeframe in a race against the possible autumn resurgence of 2009 H1N1 flu infections that may occur at the same time as seasonal influenza virus strains begin to circulate widely in the Northern Hemisphere.

Close collaboration among NIAID, the U.S. Food and Drug Administration (FDA) and the Biomedical Advanced Research and Development Authority (a component of the Department of Health and Human Services) was key to launching the trials quickly while ensuring high standards. Following initial discussions between the agencies on trial design, NIAID prepared the protocols and submitted them to the FDA for review. FDA rapidly completed the necessary reviews and approved the trial protocols.

Since 1962, NIAID's Vaccine and Treatment Evaluation Units (VTEUs) have been intensively involved in the successful development and clinical testing of vaccines and treatments against many pathogens that threaten the health of people in the United States and around the world. Among the vaccines tested have been those that prevent seasonal influenza, H5N1 avian influenza and pneumococcal pneumonia.

The VTEU network consists of eight university research hospitals and medical organizations across the United States that provide a ready resource for conducting clinical trials that evaluate vaccines and treatments for a wide array of infectious diseases.

An important strength of the VTEUs is their ability to rapidly enroll large numbers of volunteers into trials and to immunize the volunteers in a safe, effective and efficient manner. This rapid-response capability is especially important for testing vaccines designed to counteract emerging public health concerns. Results are expected to be available weeks after the trials begin. - NIH

Oops—When Lab Animals Escape from Primary Housing

By Sandra Schenone, BA, RLATG,
ASU and Mike McGarry, PhD, McG
Consulting

Episodes of lab animals escaping from primary housing are unfortunate and hopefully rare. The Guide is not silent on the subject, noting that "...primary enclosures...provide a secure environment that do not allow escape..." and "...should be kept in good repair to prevent escape...." Although all efforts may be exercised to avoid escapes, it seems only a matter of time before an incident occurs. The situation can present many challenges in the research environment and to the animal care staff. Some matters for concern relate to strategies for recapture without resultant harm to the animal; others are necessarily more focused on the health and safety of the affected staff. Furthermore, the temporary loss of containment, barrier conditions, or just the exercise of unrestricted movement within the animal holding room can result in stress, injury, or contamination that have potential for far-reaching impacts on research, animal health, colony health, room integrity, staff, and even public safety.

Strategies to create a workplace culture in which such incidents are reported without fear are critical to open communication. Proactive plans for such events need consideration in advance. Staff needs preparation through education and training on methods, safe

strategies, and implements before an incident occurs.

An essential component of orientation and training for new animal care technicians should be procedures to assess and respond to encounters with escaped lab animals, wherever they may occur. Specific standard operating procedures (SOPs) may be developed and include information about the species, hazards involved, and skills necessary to accomplish recapture. Procedures will depend on species-specific natural behaviors, current health status, protocol history (appliances/implants, recent surgery, etc.) and safety issues. Each of these conditions will have a bearing on the methods and urgency of efforts to reconfine the subject animal and the consequent cleanup required for the site.

The majority of animal escapes may not be particularly noteworthy, as they occur within a contained environment, such as a mouse within a transfer station. In fact, some animal care staff may not even consider a mouse that has temporarily "ejected" itself from an open microisolator as truly being an escaped animal. However, under some conditions, methods and hazard containment sequelae associated with the replacement of an escaped mouse into its microisolator may well present a challenge. Each episode in which an animal becomes loose may need to be addressed and perhaps documented. Before an animal is replaced to its primary cage, it must be accurately identified. It may be necessary to have the animal placed into a temporary holding cage until the researcher can confirm its identity and assure the care staff that it is acceptable to replace the animal into its original primary enclosure. This, of course, requires that the incident is reported and the researcher is informed of the event.

Planning for an Escape - Before animal acquisition or a new program of care is initiated, all aspects of animal care, research use, and housing must be considered. This includes how an animal could escape its primary

enclosure. Assessment of primary and secondary enclosures prior to and after an escape is necessary to prevent further incidents. All space, including the primary enclosure, change space, the animal holding room and other accessible space within the animal care and use facility needs review and consideration. Skill in observing the environment needs to be developed.

Not all escapes are observed at the time they occur. With many events, one simply encounters an animal unconfined in its macroenvironment. How this may occur has any number of possibilities. All aspects of the research protocol should be considered for potential occasions and sites in which an escape may occur. Who has access to the animals? Has it been used recently? Was the animal transported to/from areas for testing, imaging, surgery, conditioning and training, between animal holding rooms (AHR), between AHR and procedure rooms, or between buildings? Escapes that occur outside the AHR present special circumstances that may require particular considerations.

All those working directly with lab animals need hands-on training in proper handling/restraint of the species. If procedures for restraint require collars, handling poles, or other devices, staff needs to be trained in their use.

After an Escape - After an event has occurred, several possibilities may be considered regarding the cause—human error, faulty housing, and animal ingenuity.

Human Error - Staff may need to be coached with regard to how they used improper technique and, more importantly, what the proper technique is. Any corrective action should be proportional to the incident, and supportive to an open culture.

Faulty Housing - Close inspection of the caging may reveal the defect that requires repair or modification.

Animal Ingenuity - Hasps and other closure devices can present as manipulative and as tools

in which to escape. The strength of other animals is not fully appreciated until they have found ways of forcing their way out of inadequately fastened closures. An unsecured clasp on a transport container provides an ample opportunity for an active animal. Too often, equipment inadequacies are discovered after the fact when it is discovered that the caging was not sufficient to the task.

To help initiate discussion, we present two theoretical cases for the reader's consideration:

Scenario #1 - While doing a routine change-out of conventionally housed rats, the animal technician is distracted while the cage lid is off an occupied cage. Upon returning their attention to the cage, the tech finds it empty.

Scenario #2 - On entry into an AHR, the animal care technician observes a pigeon perched atop of one of the three racks in the room. The room, with a total capacity of 48 birds (3 racks with 16 cages each), has a current census of 39 pigeons. A student had been testing animals previously that day, taking birds to an adjoining room. All testing has been finished for over an hour. One cage of the 48 units is empty and its door is slightly ajar. What should be done?

The reader should contemplate solutions for each of these scenarios if they were to occur in their own facility, and consider methods that would prevent future occurrences.

What to do in an encounter with an escaped lab animal:

- Alert other personnel in the room.
- Check the cage card to see how many animals were in the cage.
- If an empty cage is the only evidence that the animal is missing, check for other indicators that an animal is loose, hopefully locating it. Look on shelving and in dark places such as under racks or a cart.

- Determine whether help should be requested in locating the animal.
- Once the animal is located, recapture it if it is safe for you and the animal.
- Check for injury to the animal.
- After recapture, notify the PI, the clinical veterinary services staff, and the supervisor.
- Clean up all debris, feces, urine, and any other bodily fluids.

Questions to consider when planning for an animal escape:

- Who is responsible and trained for the capture of a particular loose animal?
- Is there a danger to the animal or staff?
- How is escape handled for each species?
- Does the facility have the proper handling equipment available?
- Does everyone know where it is kept and how to use it?
- How are procedures affected if more than one animal is loose?

Planning ahead for an escaped animal makes dealing with it safer and less dramatic. When taking in all considerations, it is important to include all personnel involved with the animal. This is a team effort that requires cooperation. Remember, when an animal is loose, first and foremost is the need to safely resecure the animal(s) in the appropriate primary housing.

Planning for the 60th Annual AALAS National Meeting in Denver, CO

By Scott E. Perkins, VMD

For many of us, the summer means that work gets a little slower, the weather gets nicer, and we find time to get away for vacation. However, it seems that 2009 is bucking that trend for many of the AALAS members that I talk to. The government stimulus packages have resulted in a tremendous workload, with new grant submissions and anticipated new funding. The summer weather has been atypical across the country; summer didn't

start in Boston until the end of July, while the Northwest got blasted with record highs. However, I hope that everyone was still able to get away for and enjoy their summer vacations!

The AALAS national office and all of the AALAS committees have continued to work hard, with many committees having meetings and teleconferences over the past few months. Our committee members continue to complete the assigned tasks for 2009 to meet the goals and objections of the association.

The Program Committee and the AALAS staff are in high gear finalizing the program and events for the National Meeting in Denver. We all anticipate that the meeting in Denver will be one of the best ever! It appears that the Denver meeting will be one of the largest in terms of attendance. Housing registration has opened, and room requests are being processed daily. So don't put off booking your room! You can obtain all the details about the National Meeting at <http://nationalmeeting.aalas.org/>. The annual elections are now over, and I congratulate our newly elected leaders. I know that they will all serve AALAS well. Once again, all of the candidates were top notch. I encourage those who didn't win this year to try again in the future. Your strong sense of volunteerism and leadership will serve AALAS well in the future.

I hope you all have an enjoyable rest of the summer. And don't forget to start making plans for the National Meeting in Denver, November 8–12, 2009! I look forward to seeing you in Denver.

(AALAS in Action, August 2009)

Veterinary Technicians United to Spread the Word

By the 2009 CTAD Veterinary Technician Subcommittee

During a board of directors meeting in California, Ellen Teneriello, the 2006 President of Palms to Pines Branch, ignited the idea of bringing together veterinary

technicians in the field of laboratory animal science at the local level. Ellen, a veteran vet tech, also envisioned recruiting existing vet techs and students by exhibiting at veterinary conferences such as Western States Conference, where the lab animal field was not adequately represented. Bruce Kennedy, then AALAS President-Elect and a Palms to Pines board member, approached the AALAS Board of Trustees (BOT) to spread the word nationally. An action resolution was submitted to create the Veterinary Technician Committee (VTC). The general idea was to create interest in the LAS field by actively educating vet techs on the different careers available and the roles they can play in research. The BOT approved an ad hoc VTC to develop a more defined role and work through some initial objectives. One such task was to conduct a survey of the AALAS membership relating to veterinary technology, which received an overwhelming response of more than 400 vet techs willing to participate in a Speakers Bureau. The committee developed a brochure, which is available from the AALAS bookstore, to increase the awareness of vet techs in the field.

The VTC became a subcommittee of the Committee on Technician Awareness and Development following the National Meeting in 2008. The tasks set for the subcommittee included promoting opportunities in the LAS field to vet tech training programs as well as organizations representing vet techs such as AVMA and NAVTA. Research is rarely a preferred career path for students at vet tech schools. The VTS wanted to challenge the misconceptions students have about research and promote the roles of vet techs within the field. A speaker's kit is now available on the AALAS website which includes a PowerPoint slide set to help structure a presentation as well as suggestions on handling difficult questions from an audience.

At the National Meeting in 2000, a session was held to discuss the role of vet techs in LAS. With this session as a model, a panel

discussion will be held in Denver to discuss developing internships for vet tech students in LAS. We're also sponsoring local vet tech students at the National Meeting to help expose them to future career paths within our field.

Many thanks to the ad hoc committee members: Karen MacLeod, Ellen Teneriello, Nicole Sammons, Ken Pyle, Bill Wade, Amanda Banks, David Disselhorst, Lee Shuman, Sherri Goss, Kim Overhulse, Cheryl Pater, Sue Hart, Dawn Conover, Gene Rukavina, Maria Lang and Michelle Tussing. We look forward to the growing need for and appreciation of vet techs in the field and to the opportunities that are available for those entering LAS. It is truly a place to make a difference.

(AALAS in Action, August 2009)

Pro-Test @ UCLA: The Day History Was Made

By Gene M. Rukavina, Division of Laboratory Animal Medicine, UCLA

On a warm and sunny Wednesday, April 22, 2009, history was made on the UCLA campus. After years of attacks on UCLA researchers, one courageous man, David Jentsch (who uses nonhuman primates in his research on schizophrenia and drug addiction), after having his own car set ablaze and destroyed under the cover of darkness, decided the time had come to take a public stand in the light of day and founded Pro-Test @ UCLA.

The animal rights activists, who gathered an hour earlier than the UCLA Pro-Testers, managed to muster a mere 40 people. By just 11:10 a.m., 20 minutes before the UCLA Pro-Test demonstration was due to begin, the Pro-Research, Pro-Science, and Pro-Test supporters were already outnumbering the animal rights activists across the street. The size of the crowd on the Pro-Test side of the street increased steadily. From a few hundred people initially, the numbers quickly swelled to nearly 800 people. The animal

rights activists were outnumbered by approximately 20 to 1. Energetic and lively Pro-Test chants rang out: "What do we need?" "Animal research!" "When do we need it?" "Now!" and "Cures for cancer, what's the answer?" "Animal research, animal research!"

The overflowing street corner demonstration then became a lively Pro-Test march that wound its way to a rally at the Court of Sciences at the heart of the UCLA campus. A clear blue sky was the backdrop, and a bright sun spotlighted the rousing and inspirational speeches. The rally concluded at 1 p.m., although it took a while longer for the nearly 800 Pro-Test supporters to disperse. Perhaps those that walk through the Court of Sciences at UCLA in the future will still sense the palpable energy and enthusiasm generated on this momentous day.

Being a part of this first-ever Pro-Test rally at UCLA was a proud and exhilarating moment for everyone involved. It was truly heartwarming to see such a large and diverse gathering of people standing together in solidarity, chanting and cheering in support of biomedical research. While this was certainly a great beginning, we must not lose the momentum that has been created on this remarkable day. Over time we have learned the hard way that "circling the wagons" is not an effective strategy. We have learned that dealing with the terror and intimidation tactics of animal rights extremists from a position of fear and secrecy is an exercise in futility. It is now up to each and every one of us to channel the spirit of Pro-Test and to champion the cause of biomedical research going forward. Together, we must stand up for the rights of all researchers, whose tireless efforts provide great promise for medical advancement and breakthroughs that will benefit both humans and animals.

For more information, please visit: www.ucla-pro-test.org.

(Tech Talk, August 2009)

Outreach Efforts Target Students, Teachers

One of the top priorities of the newly focused Foundation is to continue to develop innovative ways to help educate students about the importance of quality laboratory animal care, research, and medicine.

Building on the success of the [Kids-4-Research site](http://www.aalasfoundation.org/kids-4-research), the Foundation is exploring new ways to harness the power of the Internet to encourage today's students to become tomorrow's laboratory animal science professionals. One venture in the works would create a series of educational activities in a virtual animal research laboratory where students will conduct research experiments, learn how to responsibly care for animals, and develop treatments to benefit humans and animals.

The Foundation will also continue to showcase existing educational materials at science teacher conventions throughout the year, including the Nat'l Science Teachers Assoc. and the Nat'l Assoc. of Biology Teachers.

For more information about the AALAS Foundation, please visit www.aalasfoundation.org

(Tech Talk, August 2009)

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