



Arizona Branch AALAS Newsletter

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May 2010

Arizona Branch of the American Association for Laboratory Animal Science

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

Be Sure to Renew Your Membership Today So You Can Enjoy All the Fun to Come in 2010!

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Outgoing President's Message

Arizona Branch AALAS News Your Board of Directors

Tedd Brandon, President
tbrandon@azheart.com

Tom Greene, Secretary
Tom.Greene@nau.edu

Grace Aranda, Treasurer /News editor
garanda@email.arizona.edu

Cindy Madura, TBR
madurac@u.arizona.edu

Chrystal Redding, N Board Member
Chrystal.Redding@senestech.com

Emily Radomski, C Board Member
emily.radomski@chw.edu

Paula Johnson, S Board Member
pauladj@email.arizona.edu

Frank McFadden - Vendor Liaison
Frank.McFadden@Getingeusa.com

P.O. Box 210101
Tucson, AZ 85721-0101
(520)621-3931 fax: (520)621-8833
www.azaalas.org

I have enjoyed my year as your President. It has been a privilege to lead the Arizona AALAS branch again.

The spring symposium went well even though the economy was going through tough times. I appreciate all the hard work that everyone did for the symposium and especially for the attendance of the vendors whose continual support we sincerely appreciate.

Our summer video-conference with Rick Roth, President and CEO, Arizona Heart Foundation was also well received and I look forward to more video-conferences in the future to bring the Northern, Central and Southern branch members together.

The Holiday Installation event hosted by incoming President Tedd Brandon in Phoenix was enjoyed by 35 attendees. We feasted on a traditional Mexican buffet complete with burros, tacos, enchiladas, rice, beans, chips and salsa with desserts provided by AALAS members.

Jaime White-James did a superb job as raffle designee with Danielle Ellis assisting. As usual the Northern area had the most ticket sales thanks to Chrystal Redding.

My sincere congratulations to Chrystal Redding, Member of the Year and Tom Greene, Technician of the Year. both from the Northern area. I look forward to serving with the new incoming officers, Tim Martin, President-Elect, Tom Greene, Secretary, Grace Aranda, Treasurer and Paula Johnson, Southern Board Member.

Important Dates

Summer Video Conference - July
Fall Fun Event - October

The District 8 meeting is being held in Tempe in May 2010 so please volunteer to help promote the meeting and plan to attend.

Thank you all again for your support and a great year. - Jane Criswell, Past President

New President's Message

It is with pleasure that I begin my tenure as the President of the Arizona AALAS Branch. Although 2009 was a great year, I do believe that 2010 must and will be even better. Many of our members dealt with furloughs, layoffs, or general decreases in their research efforts or educational programs due to the economy. Some had to deal with this first hand or felt the impact through experiences with friends or family members. May we all stick together and help where we can. It can only get better.

I would like to personally thank President Jane Criswell and the rest of last year's officers for a job well done. They along with all of the members of our Branch were able to successfully increase both membership but also contributions from local and national companies. This in turn will allow this years

Member Profiles

Susan Wilson-Sanders, Director, University of Arizona, University Animal Care

Dr Sanders moved to Arizona three time before staying in the early 1970s. She joined the University of Arizona in 1973 as a Clinical Vet at the Division of Animal Resources, became the Associate Director in 1980, and the Director in 1987. She transferred to the Associate Director position in University Animal Care in 1988, was promoted to Interim Director in 1993, and became Director of UAC the following year. From the time she was 3 years old she wanted to be an “animal doctor.” When Susan was 6 she took care of a calf that had developed a screw worm infestation. A few days later the calf developed paralysis from a Clostridium tetani infection caused by the screw worm open sores that had healed over. The calf had to be put down and she made up her mind that day that she was going be a vet AND study how to cure diseases such as tetanus. In the 8th grade she told her class she wanted to be a vet and the teacher said “girls aren’t vets.” She was in tears, but her father came to school the next day to say his daughter could be anything she wanted to be. This incident, along with her fathers respect and humane treatment of all animals he owned on their ranch, was a major influence in her life’s direction. She received her DVM from Texas A&M University, College of Veterinary Medicine and Biomedical Sciences in 1971.

Dr Sanders has been a National and AzAALAS branch member for many years. She has been particularly interested in pathology, public information regarding humane animal research, and teaching young people about science and the importance of research. On her ranch north of Wilcox she has 6 dogs (4 Jack Russell Terriers and 2 Border Collies), more than 30 horses, 220+ cows, lots of deer and antelope, and a mamma mountain lion with two cubs that live in a canyon on the ranch. When not herding cattle and running University Animal Care, Susan enjoys singing, playing the guitar, fishing, traveling, and her church work. She says the best way to influence other on the right path is “To have them learn to treat others as they would want to be treated and to do the same with animals.”

officers and our Branch members to participate in programs and scholarships which we have never been able to offer in the past.

Speaking of new officers, I would like to thank each of them for their willingness to serve. I encourage any and all to throw your hats into the ring later this year so that we can continue to elect individuals dedicated to the cause.

May we have a great year, but remember with that in mind, this Branch is your Branch, its officers are elected by you the members and if its members continue to put forth the support and efforts which we have seen in the past, we can only get better. Don’t be afraid or timid to make suggestions for improvement. Your suggestions have already enabled us to put forth programs in which all within our Branch can and will benefit.

If you have any comments or suggestions, I would love to hear from you. - Tedd Brandon, (480) 216-8333 or tbrandon@azheart.com

Past Meeting Minutes

Minutes of the 6-18-09 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 12:02pm.

The minutes of the meeting on 3/24/09 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 106 members in good standing.

Though Treasurer Wendy Keswater is not present, the financial report was distributed. There was \$16,759 in all accounts, not including some outstanding checks for: SwAEBR membership, printing costs for the symposium, the hotel bill for the symposium and the symposium speaker award.

Grace distributed and Buyers Guide summary. We have already received a total of \$1,890.

From 20 companies. The guide should be at the printers next month and distributed in August/September.

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 in early August so everyone needs to get materials to Grace by the end of July. Anyone with ideas for the next newsletter and member profiles should contact Grace.

Jane reported that the symposium was a success and thanked everyone for all their hard work on this meeting. Comments from the symposium survey were good. Folks were happy with the exhibitors, lab, hotel, food and speakers. Total receipts were 6,415.00. Total expenses came to 6,336.94. Net receipts there were 78.06. We were able to give 6 member scholarships or a total of \$1,750. In this economy it is good that the branch was able to provide this valuable experience for

technicians who would likely have been unable to attend otherwise.

Jane asked that board members with suggestions for questions for the membership survey submit them to her. Jane will bring this up at the video conference general meeting next month to see if we have any other submissions of questions. Each board member was asked to submit at least one question to Jane for the survey.

President-elect Tedd Brandon found a speaker for our Summer video conference on July 17. Rick Ross, CEO of the Arizona Heart Foundation. Tedd needs to get the title and a short bio to Grace for the website and meeting flier. Past President Jeff Williams, Northern Board Representative Chrystal Redding and Grace will work on the arrangements for the video conference at all sites and also refreshments. After the meeting submit your attendee list and receipts to Grace for reimbursement.

Tedd is working on a behind the scenes tour of the wildlife park and aquarium. He is in discussion with his contact and will be getting us prices and possible dates for October. Once he gets the information to Jane at the end of July she will include it in her Presidents message for the August Newsletter.

SwAEBR representative Tim Martin announced that plans are underway for the 2010 District 8 meeting in Tempe, AZ. Each branch has been asked to submit their donation to ensure this meeting is a success. AZAALAS has donated \$250 for these meetings in the past and will submit the same this year. Dates for the meeting look to be the first week in May and will follow the MSMR SwAEBR Three I's Conference. They are also looking to include a Charles River Short Course. More information will be coming in later months along with requests for volunteers so start thinking about how you can take part.

The meeting adjourned at 12:38 pm.

Minutes of the 9/24/09/09 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 board meeting on 6/18/09 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 106 members in good standing. From here on out any new memberships will be considered for 2010 as usual.

Though Treasurer Wendy Keswater is again not present, the financial report was distributed. There was \$7,809.36 in all accounts, not including some outstanding checks for: raffle tickets, donation letters, fliers and mailing for raffle and buyers guide.

Jane reported that Wendy has missed the majority of our board meetings and this poses a problem for the board. She will speak with Wendy within the next week to see if there is a problem so that we can resolve this issue.

Grace distributed the Buyers Guide summary. We received a total of \$1,890 from 20 companies. With printing and postage coming to \$797.65 we have a total revenue of \$1,092.35 this year.

Grace announced the November 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. Jane mentioned that Cindy won the TBR award for a piece she submitted to the nominations committee and we would like to print it in the next newsletter. Cindy will get that to Grace next week.

Jane reported that we have received the results of the

membership survey. A printed report was distributed to the board members prior to the meeting. Issues raised were a need for more training and education opportunities. Idea of regional events around the state to encourage more networking. Suggestion was made to have a members only section of the website to post items like meeting minutes or perhaps posting them to the listserv for a more timely delivery. We would like to stimulate membership. There were only about 25 surveys submitted so Grace has been asked to extend the date and send notice to the listserv.

Jane asked the board to review the minutes of the last 2010 Planners Committee minutes which were distributed. Meeting has been set for May 2010 in Tempe to coincide with the MSMR SwAEBR CBRA Three I's Conference. They are also working to get a Charles River Short Course booked if possible. The 3 events together may inspire larger numbers to attend to get more bang from their travel dollars. The Theme of the Meeting is Rising to the Challenge. Save the date fliers are posted on the D8 website and Call for Abstracts and Registration information will be out soon. Volunteers will definitely be needed so be sure to keep that time first week in May open so that you can be a part of this great meeting.

Jane reported that President elect Tedd Brandon is working on a behind-the-scenes tour of the Wildlife Zoo and Aquarium. He stated that he and James Badman are in discussion with his zoo contact and will be getting us prices and possible dates for October. Once he gets the information to Jane we will get word out to the membership.

Jane reported that nomination forms for officers were distributed to the membership and have been received. We will be contacting those nominated to see if they will run and get ballots out soon. Nomination forms for awards are due at the end of the month and will be going out to the judging panel.

Grace distributed the list of raffle items to date. She has asked our usual donators for items and

sent out the tickets to the membership. If you need more copies of the donation letter it can be found on the website. If anyone needs more tickets just contact Grace and she can send you some more. Anyone getting donation items needs to let Grace know so she can add them to the website. Tickets and money are due on December 2nd or bring them to the Installation event on the 5th.

Jane reported that the AALAS Foundation have asked each branch to promote the Whyville website. Word will be distributed to the listserv and linked on the website.

The meeting adjourned at 12:35 pm.

Celebrating Tech Week Around AZ

Many thanks to those companies who provided materials to make our Tech Week Celebrations a success: Allentown, CTAD, Getinge, Harlan, Purina Lab Diet

The entire ASU DACT staff met to celebrate Tech Week on Tuesday, February 2. We started with a nice lunch of sandwiches, veggies, chips, soft drinks and cake. With contributions from AzAALAS, AALAS, and ASU, we were able to provide each staff member with a "goodie bag" that included a flashlight/key chain/pen, a Tech Week button, pens, a highlighter, sticky notes, candy, a calendar strip, and a badge holder. Each staff also received a larger gift; these items were provided by various vendors or department management, and included such things as coffee mugs, gift cards, t-shirts, sleep-in-late on your birthday certificates, and time off and registration for 4 people to attend the AALAS District 8 meeting in Tempe in May.

Following the lunch and gift distribution, we played Lab Animal Jeopardy using questions with multiple choice answers. The group was divided into 5 smaller groups of 6 or 7 people per group. Each group

was given a different color "foam finger" to hold up to signal that they knew the answer to a question. The DACT director read the questions out loud while they were simultaneously displayed on a projection screen; four spotters around the room then chose the group that held up their foam finger first to answer the question. It became quite raucous and amusing. Each member of the winning team received a blue ribbon book mark and "bragging rights".

Two special awards were presented – Sandra Schenone received the "MVP" ribbon and Charles "Jeff" Williams received the "Award of Excellence" ribbon.

We then had a little time to socialize with our co-workers before heading back to work. A good time was had by all. - Colleen Benton, ASU DACT

* * *

University of Arizona Tech Week was celebrated with ice cream, cake and soda. Attendees received decorated bags with pens, calendars, envelope openers and mugs. They also received AALAS Tech Week certificates.

University Animal Care representative Dr. Dave Besselsen said a few words explaining how important animal technicians are to the world of research. Arizona AALAS board member Jane Criswell also commented on the importance of technicians and discussed the upcoming District 8 conference along with the planned summer video conference and fall fun event. She encouraged the technicians to join Arizona AALAS.

Everyone seemed to enjoy the event. - Jane Criswell, UA Cancer Center

* * *

During Tech week 2010 at NAU we were treated to a presentation by Mike Dvorak from Tecniplast USA. Mike presented a power point titled "Laboratory Animal Allergens, Real or Imagined Threat". After the presentation techs were presented to a home made meal of Vegan Chilaquiles and a chocolate cake.

We passed out Goody bags filled with tech week items. Additionally our techs received a gift bag with munchies and treats. - Chrystal Redding, NAU

Tech Week materials were distributed to Arizona Heart Institute, Banner Sunhealth Research Institute, Midwestern University, and St Joseph's Hospital as well.

How to Raise Your Visibility at Work

By Susan M. Heathfield, About.com

Used to flying below the radar at work? Think not being noticed will keep your job safe? Not anymore. The best strategy now is to figure out how you can raise your visibility at work - in positive ways.

Companies don't lay off or let go their best performers. But, company managers have to know who you are. These tips will help you raise your visibility at work:

- * Ask for additional and challenging assignments and tasks.
- * Find and share ways to make tedious or repetitive work more interesting.
- * Continuously improve your job and let your manager share in the success of your improvements.
- * Offer to help coworkers who are bogged down or unable to finish a task.
- * Celebrate success with your coworkers and invite your boss to attend. (The celebration doesn't have to be an expensive lunch out – order subs or do a department potluck lunch.)
- * Keep your manager informed of your progress and ask for help if you need it. That's much better than failing in an assignment or missing a deadline.
- * Maintain an infectiously positive spirit and outlook.

The Two Most Important Management Secrets: The Power of the Supervisor's Expectations & The Power of Self-expectations

By Susan M. Heathfield

Tired of hearing that people are your most important resource? That's fair. These buzz words have been overused and abused in the board room, in speeches to employees and in business books. People have heard these words so often, in situations where actions degrade their meaning, they have grown cynical.

To battle the cynicism, I propose a better statement of belief. People are your only resource. If you get this, you will create a work environment that fosters their ability to increase productivity, build up high self-esteem, and develop new skills and capabilities. To reinforce this growth, you will reward them and recognize them for their contributions. Love them and help them grow or lose them to an employer who will.

In an earlier article, *Set Them Free: Two Musts for Motivation*¹, I discussed two criteria that create a motivating work environment: employee involvement and managing the workplace with as few policies and rules as possible for workplace order. Two more musts for motivation are:

- * a work place in which the high self-esteem of each employee is fostered and

- * the opportunity for people to fully develop their abilities and knowledge in their areas of interest.

People who have high self-esteem are more likely to continuously improve the work environment. They are willing to take intelligent risks because they have confidence in their ideas and competence. They work willingly on teams because they are confident about their ability to contribute. Nathaniel Branden, author of *The Psychology of Self-Esteem* and

Self-Esteem@Work, says, "Self-esteem has two essential components:

- * Self-efficacy: Confidence in the ability to cope with life's challenges. Self-efficacy leads to a sense of control over one's life.

- * Self-respect: Experience oneself as deserving of happiness, achievement and love. Self-respect makes possible a sense of community with others.

Self-esteem is a self-reinforcing characteristic. When we have confidence in our ability to think and act effectively, we can persevere when faced with difficult challenges. Result: We succeed more often than we fail. We form more nourishing relationships. We expect more of life and of ourselves."

A motivating work environment enhances staff self-esteem. People feel like they are more, not less--more competent, more capable, more appreciated, more contributing. A concept called the Pygmalion Effect² emphasizes that the positive and high expectations of the supervisor help mold the expectations individuals hold for their own high performance. This fact is on my top ten list for "what every supervisor must know." The Galatea Effect³, also on the list, states that, even more important than the supervisor's expectations, the expectations an individual has for her own performance govern that performance. Convinced? If you're looking for ways to increase staff self-esteem, these ideas will help.

- * Act as if you have high self-esteem. Your behaviors, beliefs, attitudes, and example are a powerful role model for staff members. How you look, talk, present yourself, and act send the most powerful message possible to all staff members.

- * Practice personal integrity and fairness. Model it and expect it from others. People who feel they can tell the truth, without fear of reprisal, grow as they experiment and experience success and failure.

- * Provide frequent feedback that reinforces what people do well and corrects the approaches that need improvement.

- * Learn what staff members feel good and positive about doing. Maximize their opportunity to contribute in these activities.

- * Provide assignments that stimulate growth. Ask people to stretch beyond what you have observed them doing in the past. Challenge staff members. Negotiate goals which are realistic, yet a stretch.

- * Provide positive reinforcement, rewards, and recognition to reinforce the standards and practices you believe your staff members are capable of achieving.

- * Create an environment in which people practice self-responsibility. Show that you trust them to report production numbers, deal with employees who are not contributing to the team effort, and succeed and/or fail at implementing new ideas.

- * Demonstrate that it is okay to disagree with the supervisor. Allow the implementation of new ideas, even if they are different than yours. Praise when the approach works and ask the employee to implement more good ideas.

- * Provide clear expectations about performance standards to all employees and express your sincere belief that they can meet or exceed these standards.

The opportunity for personal development is one of the more important variables in personnel selection and retention today. Training and education, in what the employee is interested in learning, is one of the key factors in retention and motivation. Employers who pay for classes, conferences, and professional associations encourage staff growth and ensure staff motivation. One of my clients, a mid-sized manufacturing company in Romulus, Michigan was committed to becoming a learning organization and to the ongoing professional growth of staff.

They paid for classes employees took, regardless of topic, because they believed they had better employees when employees chose to learn and develop their knowledge. At this same company, a press supervisor and a press operator shared with me that they were having trouble applying the team development skills they were learning from me at work. Their local Rotary Club and their Little League Baseball team were benefiting, however. As the company gradually changed its culture, the practice they had in team building within the outside organizations bore fruit within the company. So, cross-fertilization will benefit your organization in the long run.

I don't think many will argue with me about the importance of staff development. The important twist, however, is to allow staff members to determine the areas in which they want education and training. These ideas will help you increase staff motivation by providing opportunities for development.

* In conjunction with each staff person and their supervisor, create a Performance Development Plan¹ which is reviewed quarterly.

* Offer regular, active assistance to enable employees to carry out their plans. An example is to monitor topics about which many employees seek information and offer classes and learning opportunities in these areas. Ensure that supervisors are sitting down with employees quarterly and that people are making progress on their plan. Use slow months in your business as opportunities for staff development.

* Pay for classes, conferences, books, and other learning opportunities for all staff. Ask staff to regularly visit customers to learn more about their needs from your organization.

* Read books or see videos together as a staff. Schedule time to discuss what people are learning from the reading. Use the reading to develop new ideas and approaches. At TechSmith Corporation² (the

developers of Snagit and Camtasia software for multimedia screen capture), the marketing staff regularly selects and reads books which will help them develop their marketing skills.

* Schedule meetings which span several departments or two layers of management in your organization. Use these meetings as opportunities to teach employees about your business.

* Ask various people to represent your department at company meetings. Employees will expand their outlook, feel important and expand their knowledge about the business.

* Schedule people into assignments that stretch their skills and cause them to learn.

* Provide cross-training opportunities so that staff members learn all of the jobs in their work areas. You'll increase your flexibility and theirs as well.

* Use promotions and lateral assignments to further develop staff skills.

* Eliminate jobs that are repetitive and that have a deadly sameness day in and day out. Think about what is happening to the minds, the talents, the interest and the flexibility of the people who do them. Your staff deserves better than this.

[\(About.com\)](#)

Use Mentoring to Develop Employees

By Susan M. Heathfield, [About.com](#)

Mentoring is a formal or informal relationship established between an experienced, knowledgeable employee and an inexperienced or new employee. The purpose of the mentoring relationship is to help the new employee quickly absorb the organization's cultural and social norms. Mentoring also assists an

employee, new to a specific job or area of responsibility, to quickly learn what they need to know to succeed in their job and role.

Mentoring can involve a formal exchange of knowledge and information and can be evaluative in nature to assess the assimilation of the new employee in his or her new role. Mentoring is provided in addition to your new employee on-boarding process¹ and should have different content and goals.

The best mentoring relationships involve the exchange of a particular body of knowledge that helps the new employee quickly come up to speed as a contributor within your organization. Mentoring helps the employee navigate the learning curve inherent in any new role and relationship.

Many organizations assign a mentor as part of their formal employee on-boarding process. Other mentoring relationships develop spontaneously and over time. All mentoring relationships are encouraged as research indicates that employees who experience mentoring are retained, learn more quickly, and assimilate into the company culture more effectively.

A mentoring relationship frequently occurs between an employee and their immediate supervisor; in fact, this was the normal mentoring relationship in the past. These mentoring relationships are still encouraged, but it is recommended that employees and organizations pursue additional mentoring relationships. A mentoring relationship with a supervisor never loses the evaluation aspects necessary for the employee to succeed within your organization.

Mentoring is a skill and an art that can be developed over time.

Mouse Bedding and Enrichment

By Darren McRoy

Using the right type of mouse bedding and enrichment for

your lab is crucial to cleanliness, animal welfare, and accurate results.

There are many important factors in the conducting of a mouse study, including the choice of bedding used in the cages and the addition of enrichment items. Bedding and enrichment compose the majority of the animal's environment and can play an influential role in its development; thus, an educated selection is critical in optimizing both the welfare of the mouse and the output of the study.

Cage bedding must be able to absorb liquid discharge and prevent ammonia buildup. It should be comfortable for the animal, simulating a natural environment in which the mouse can burrow and nest contentedly. To avoid accidentally introducing unwanted variables, it should be dust-free and standardized across cages. Enrichment items should also facilitate natural chewing, tearing, and/or nesting behaviors.

What you put into your mouse cages are what they have to live in—so choose wisely.

Woodchip Bedding - Labs have been using woodchip bedding in mouse cages for decades. The most "natural" of bedding types, woodchips are similar to material mice burrow under and nest with in the wild. This classic style of bedding is naturally absorbent and offers strong ammonia control. In addition, woodchips are among the least expensive of bedding types, well-suited for facilities on a tight budget.

ProChip wood bedding from PWI Industries is available in aspen and maple varieties. Clean, dry, sterile, odor controlling, and economically priced, ProChip is reliable for researchers and their mice, says John Samson of PWI. "Normally, it is cheaper bedding in price," Samson says. "But people don't buy it for the price — they buy it for the product."

"The woodchip was the pioneer in mouse bedding...It benefits the welfare of the animal, to

be in more of a natural habitat." Samson added.

PWI also offers treated aspen Chew Sticks enrichment items. The hardwood aspen does not produce dangerous splinters, and gnawing on a Chew Stick mimics actions that mice would have in the wild.

Cob Bedding - Bedding made from dried corn cobs is highly absorbent, biodegradable, and easy to incinerate. Cob bedding can absorb at least five times its weight in moisture, so well that it has been used to help clean up oil slicks. The cellulose structure of corn cobs traps ammonia crystals when the water component of urine evaporates. The smaller the cob is sliced, the more cumulative surface area the bedding has, and the better it will absorb moisture.

Bed-o'cobs corn cob bedding, manufactured by The Andersons, Inc., is available in quarter-inch, eighth-inch, and half-and-half varieties, to suit different budgets, researcher preferences, and sizes of mice. This heat-dried bedding is subjected to regular independent analysis. The Andersons, Inc. also offers variants on bed-o'cobs, including irradiated versions, and Enrich-o'cobs, which packages paper rolls for enrichment and nesting along with the cobs, eliminating the necessity of adding enrichment manually.

"We are looking for products that are going to provide a combination of features into one that will be more labor-saving," says Jerry Reynolds, national sales manager for The Andersons, Inc. "That means combining bedding, enrichment, and nesting. You need all three of those things, and we try to combine those things in a way that will save labor in the lab."

Shepherd Specialty Papers, though specializing in paper and cellulose bedding materials, offers Shepherd's Cob, which is heat-dried to a low of 5% moisture content for maximum absorbency and better elimination of bacteria. It comes in

quarter-inch and eighth-inch versions, as well as a version with rolled-paper enrichment for mice to tear apart and nest with, called Shepherd's Cob +Plus. Shepherd also sells all its products by weight to guarantee consistency of quantity.

Paper/Cellulose Bedding -

The most consistent bedding in terms of content can be found in paper and cellulose brands, which are engineered to eliminate variables while still offering absorbency and ammonia control. Because of the manufacturing costs, these beddings are usually the most expensive, but critical to high-precision studies in fields like toxicology. Because of their typically bright white color, these beddings are also easiest for observing animal discharge if required.

CareFRESH wood-pulp bedding from Absorption Corp is made from virgin wood pulp and is engineered to suppress ammonia formation; CareFRESH Ultra uses long-fiber, high-grade white pulp for easy observation of discharge. Both beddings are fluffy and serve as partial enrichment themselves, encouraging natural behaviors like foraging, nesting, and burrowing.

"It eliminates the need for shred-able pads or housing, [which] provides fewer variables in your animal study," says Tom Pletcher, director of marketing for Absorption Corp. "It is only bedding [to us]; however to the animal it is their entire world, from bathroom to living room to procedure recovery room to birthing center, and many more rooms along the way."

ALPHA-dri bedding and associated products are the signature creations of Shepherd Specialty Papers. Made from alpha cellulose and manufactured in extremely absorbent particles of uniform size, ALPHA-dri is available in several varieties, including irradiated and blended with Shepherd's Cob. It is essentially dust-free and static-free—easing dispensing and preventing clogs.

Company owner Joel Shepherd prides himself on ALPHA-dri's consistency of composition and elimination of variables. "If change matters, you should use bedding that never changes," Shepherd says. "Our industry has lost that over the past several years. They just don't worry about the cleanliness of bedding material. Everything else comes secondary."

The Andersons, Inc. produce a paper bedding in the form of Pure-o'cel, paper bedding chips that offer a high amount of surface area (increasing absorption); their soft and dust-free traits make it suited for hairless mice. The company also offers a blend of Pure-o'cel with its bed'o-cobs, and bedding designed for breeding mice, Enrich-n'nest, which includes paper rolls that serve as bedding, enrichment, and nesting all in one.

Enrichment - Enrichment of some sort is standard in improving the health and welfare of your mice, not to mention improving the results of your experiment. Most companies that offer bedding will also offer some form of enrichment (often combined with the bedding), but additional products can be utilized to better your animals' experience.

With the double purpose of adding enrichment while reducing labor, W. F. Fisher and Son offer Nestpaks: a large teabag-style container pre-filled with an exact amount of bedding. The bags are placed in cages, and the mice tear them open to get at the material inside—they essentially make their own bed. The product thus improves lab ergonomics and provides enrichment for the mice. A similar effect is found with the company's new Rodent Foraging Box, stuffed with 6 grams of nesting-friendly bedding.

"[Our products] are best suited for large facilities that do not have automatic dispensing, and small facilities that are looking to cut labor costs by improving efficiencies," says Joseph B. Bellomo of W. F. Fisher and Son.

Mice can also contribute to their own health — while engaging with enrichment — in using MiteArrest, permethrin-treated cotton that effectively destroys mites as the rodents tear, spread, and nest with the cotton. Instead of costly spray or spot treatments, the mice do all the work themselves, and a six week treatment eliminates all mite infestations.

"What sets MiteArrest apart from the rest is that instead of having to treat each animal individually and add a time consuming extra step specifically for mite control, one can simply add MiteArrest to bedding materials and allow for the natural nesting instinct of the rodent to do the work of killing mites," says MiteArrest spokesperson Ariana Ganak.

Conclusion - Take measure of the full range of products available before selecting the bedding for your next experiment. Consider both your budget and your specific test related needs. Using the right bedding both adds value to research at the cage level and improves the welfare of your mice. Choose wisely; your research and mice are counting on it.

Darren McRoy is a freelance contributor to ALN Magazine. He can be reached at editors@alnmag.com

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[\(ALN Magazine, Nov/Dec 2009\)](#)

**2010 National Meeting
Submission Site Open**

On behalf of program chair
Dr. John Long and AALAS president

Deb Donohoe, the 2010 National Meeting Program Committee would like to encourage you to submit proposals for abstracts, seminars, special topic lectures, panel discussions, technical trade presentations, and workshops for the 2010 meeting in Atlanta.

Submissions will again be handled online. Those of you who submitted topics or abstracts in the past year received today a system email with your password and username. New users must create an account.

Biomedical research in space is this year's special theme forum. As such, those of you with backgrounds and expertise in this topic are especially encouraged to submit.

Read the [call for abstracts](#) for complete requirements for submitting abstracts and proposing educational session topics. The deadline for abstract (posters and platforms) submissions is June 1.

Topic submissions should be designed specifically for one of the following formats: 2-hour, 45-minute seminar, 1.5-hour panel discussion, 1-hour special topic lecture, 4-hour workshop, or 20-minute technical trade presentation. If you choose to submit a topic, please note that you must include the title, brief description, and names and contact information for any suggested panelists, speakers, or leader. Once the submission undergoes review and acceptance, any substitution or addition of speakers must be approved by the Program Committee.

Abstract submissions will be considered for either a platform or poster presentation format. Platform presentations are typically 10-15 minutes in length and are grouped together by general category. If you choose to submit an abstract, please follow the guidelines and provide complete information. This will greatly assist the Program Committee in their review process and enable the correct assignment of

your abstract to the appropriate program session.

AZAALAS TBR Wins National AALAS TBR Travel Award

Our TBR, Cindy Madura, won the 2009 TBR Award at National which allowed her to attend the National AALAS meeting in Denver in November. Here is the winning entry to CTAD:

I have been an employee at the University of Arizona in the Animal Care department for nine years. I am currently a Research Specialist and part of my job duties involve training technicians and investigators who work in animal rooms. I have an LAT certification and I am studying for the LATG.

This year begins my second term as a Technician Branch Representative for the Arizona Branch AALAS. I participate in the listserv. I attend most all of the branch meetings. I help make decisions pertaining to various events and activities such as video conferences, tech week, and symposiums. I assist with and promote tech week activities. There is a TBR column in the branch newsletter that I will often write about AALAS news and activities such as tech week and symposiums events. My involvement includes informing technicians about AALAS and encouraging them to become a branch member and also to study for the AALAS certifications. I believe this has improved the branch membership. I organized a Rodent Techniques workshop during the AALAS symposium this year. This has also helped to foster interest and involvement in AALAS. I enjoy promoting educational opportunities that are available to technicians. I believe it is the continuous learning by attending seminars, symposiums and using the resources provided by National AALAS that help keep the morale in an animal care department high which helps to motivate technicians.

The Arizona Branch AALAS does not have the funds available to send a candidate to the National AALAS Meeting. University Animal Care does not have funds as well due to extreme budget cuts. I have not had the opportunity to attend a National Meeting.

I have wanted to attend a National Meeting for many years. I enjoy my position as a TBR. I have learned a great deal about the job duties and responsibilities of a TBR and I am continuing to learn. I believe attending the National AALAS Meeting would help me gain more knowledge through networking with others in the field. I would be able to share this with others in my department.

I look forward to hearing from you soon. - *Cindy L. Madura, Research Specialist, University of Arizona, University Animal Care Dept.*

Here is her account of what her trip to National was like:

As a first time attendee to the National AALAS meeting my first response is to say it was amazing. There is so much to see and hear. Although the focus of the meeting was diabetes, there is a topic or subject for everyone's interest and specialty.

I attended the Leadership Academy where I had the opportunity to meet and hear from the National Leadership. This is a one day event and it is designed to foster leadership skills. It was very motivating and inspiring. The sessions were interesting and fun and they really do encourage you to become involved.

I attended a few seminars and a panel discussion on non-human primates, animal enrichment and controversial rodent techniques. One thing that stood out during some of the discussions was the variety of ways animal caretakers and researchers approached problems when working with animals. It gave you more ideas to consider and possibly facilitate new ones to

continue to improve all aspects of animal care and research.

The vendor room was fun and informative. I also took some time each day to look at the posters of which there were many.

My first National AALAS meeting was an enjoyable and memorable experience. If anyone has the opportunity to attend one I highly recommend it. You will get more out of it than you expect. I will definitely look forward to the next one.

7th Annual Lab Products Animal Technician Award Program

This program is designed to reward a deserving animal care technician from each of the 8 AALAS Districts and Canada with the opportunity to attend their first National AALAS Meeting. One award recipient is selected yearly from each of the 8 AALAS Districts and Canada. The award is limited to animal care personnel, with at least one year of laboratory animal care experience, that have never attended a National AALAS Meeting. The recipients of the Lab Products Animal Technician Award will each receive an award recognition plaque; airfare, hotel and registration for the National AALAS Meeting; one year membership to National AALAS and \$350 to cover incidentals while attending the AALAS Meeting.

For more information write Lab Products, Inc., P.O. Box 639, Seaford, DE 19973, or see the award description and nomination information on CompMed or Techlink.

Award Benefits: (participation, recognition, public speaking, and decision making). This award will:

1) Allow a deserving animal care worker from each of the 8 AALAS Districts and Canada to attend a

National AALAS Meeting for the first time.

2) Publicly recognize the recipient at a social function of the AALAS membership.

3) Encourage the recipient to speak at a Branch Meeting on their experiences at AALAS, thereby allowing them to gain experience in public speaking and to promote the AALAS experience to other technicians.

4) The recipient will serve as a member of the Lab Products Animal Technician Award Selection Committee for the next year. This will allow them the experience and involvement in a decision making process that will affect their peers.

Award Selection Committee:

1) Nominees for this year's awards should be submitted to Lab Products, Inc. An Award Selection Committee will then consider all nominations and select one nominee from each of the 8 AALAS Districts and Canada to receive the award.

2) The 2009 Award recipients will form the Award Selection Committee for selection of the 2010 Award

Recipients.

Award Selection Criteria:

1) Nominee must have a minimum of 1 years work experience in a laboratory animal facility.

2) Nominee must be a working supervisor, animal care worker or animal health technician. (Managers, Assistant Directors, etc. are not eligible).

3) The nominee must be someone that actually performs hands on animal care work or works in the cage wash area.

4) The nominee must be someone that would not be eligible for travel funds (from the University, Institution or Company) to attend a National AALAS meeting.

5) This award is intended to provide deserving animal care technicians with the opportunity to attend their

first National AALAS Meeting. Therefore, only nominees that have never attended a National AALAS Meeting will be eligible.

Nomination Process: (Nominations must be RECEIVED BY June 16, 2010)

1) Nominations are to be submitted by letter, detailing the Technicians' work history, accomplishments,

community involvement, and describing how this travel award will benefit the technician and their facility. AALAS/CALAS Branch membership, and involvement in branch AALAS/CALAS activities, will be considered in the award selection.

2) Supporting letters are encouraged and will be considered, but are not required.

3) Send nominations to: Attn: Awards Selection Committee, Lab Products, Inc., P.O. Box 639, Seaford, DE 19973 Ph. 800-526-0469 Fax 302-628-4309

4) Award recipients will be notified by August 2, 2010.

Award Recipient Requirements:

1) After attending the National AALAS Meeting, the award recipients must present a paper at their next

annual Branch or District AALAS meeting on how the AALAS Meeting experience affected them.

2) Award recipient agrees to attend the Lab Products, Inc., Tuesday night social during the National AALAS

Meeting for a formal award presentation.


3) Award recipient agrees to be a judge for the selection of the next years award recipients.

NOMINATIONS MUST BE RECEIVED BY JUNE 16, 2010

TBR Corner by Cindy Madura


AZAALAS is pleased to announce we are awarding 2 bronze National AALAS memberships to technicians who are financially unable to pay for their National Membership. There will be 2 scholarships offered for each region. You must be a branch member and preparing to take your AALAS certification exam. Interested applicants should email: azaalas@ahsc.arizona.edu stating why they wish to be granted the award. Any questions contact Cindy Madura at 520-626-6702

Sponsor's Page

Your handy reference page to all our supporting vendors. - **If you weren't included or have a**  **by your name be sure to contact azaalas@ahsc.arizona.edu to renew as you will be deleted from the next issue and website**

We ask that members patronize their business and show them our support too!


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Send me a receipt for my records No ___ Yes ___ Mail me a paper copy of newsletter No ___ Yes ___

Add me to the AZAALAS Listserv Yes ___ ; and/or Add me to the AZAALAS Jobs list Yes ___

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