



LGVMA'S *Good News!*

The Official Publication of the
Lesbian & Gay Veterinary Medical Association

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Volume 13, No. 1 Winter 2005

Minutes of 2004 Annual Meeting

The 2004 Annual Meeting of LGVMA was called to order on July 25, 2004, at the Doubletree Hotel in Philadelphia, PA, in conjunction with the 141st AVMA Annual Convention. Outgoing President, Dr. Sara White, welcomed all those in attendance. Dr. Mel Vassey, acting in the capacity of Secretary, read the minutes of the 2003 meeting in Denver, Colorado, which were accepted unanimously.

Outgoing and longtime Treasurer, Dr. Joe "Chip" Wells reported total funds of \$27,754.25. Of that amount, \$6,591.19 was in the Operating Fund, \$20,873.06 in the Reserve Fund, and \$290 in the Scholarship Fund Reserve. Dr. Wells also delivered the Membership Report, with 164 regular members, 4 retired members, 9 student members, 6 AHT members, and 2 Friend members.

Old business items discussed including advertising plans, pursuing tax-exempt status for the Scholarship Fund, establishing a new Membership Director, and a review of the 2002 Membership Survey. Among the advertisement strategies discussed were small block ads in JAVMA and Vet Tech magazines, and online ads in Intervet magazine

A review of the 2002 Membership Survey found that there has been essentially no change in the gender makeup of LGVMA, despite the ongoing gender shift in the profession at large. There is also continuing high support for LGVMA to serve as an advocate for LGBT issues.

In new business, a motion was submitted to award LGVMA's first ever Dubious Achievement Award. The proposed award read, "The Lesbian & Gay Veterinary Medical Association hereby presents its first ever Dubious Achievement Award to Senator Wayne Allard, DVM (R-Colorado). Senator Allard is the primary sponsor of the Federal Marriage Amendment, which was proposed to ban same-sex marriages. As fellow veterinarians concerned with human rights, we are very disappointed in Senator Allard and his ongoing attempts to enshrine discrimination in the US Constitution." The motion carried.

In the 2004 Board elections, 37 ballots were returned, with unanimous approval of the slate of candidates. As there was no candidate for the position of Secretary, Dr. Joe "Chip" Wells moved to recommend that Dr. Vic Spain be appointed in that capacity, and the motion passed. One At-Large position also remained open, but longtime LGVMA member, Dr. Gene Bodily, volunteered

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Minutes of 2004 Meeting (cont.)

to serve in this capacity. A motion to recommend his appointment to this position also passed.

The new Board of Directors is as follows:

President – Tim Withers, DVM

Secretary – Vic Spain, DVM

Treasurer – Michael Miller, DVM

At-Large – Keri Jones, DVM

At-Large – Michael McElvaine, DVM

At-Large - Gene Bodily, DVM

Other topics of discussion included instituting a membership drive, establishing a Paypal account to facilitate membership renewals, sponsorship of the PAWS Human-Animal Bond Conference, lobbying AVMA-GHLIT to offer domestic partner benefits, sponsorship of a session at AVMA Annual Convention in 2007 in Washington, DC. The Proposed Budget for 2005 was approved, and recipients of the 2005 LGVMA Scholarships were announced.

The 2005 LGVMA Scholarships were awarded to Anthea Smith, a member of the Class of 2007 at the University of Saskatoon, and Rebecca Wolf, a member of the Class of 2006 at the University of Pennsylvania. LGVMA was pleased that Ms. Wolf was able to be in attendance at the meeting.



MILESTONES

Note to anyone who is under 25 or 30 reading this: growing old is not necessarily a bad thing. Once you get a few years under your belt, sometimes you can look back and find your life divides itself into distinct time periods, frequently connected by a common thread or two, and it can give you a sense all at once of history and peace and calmand perhaps even a little excitement about what the future holds. This is the story of how I came to be where I am and where I might be going after this.

ACT I – August 1970: About a year after the Stone-wall Riots rocked a steamy New York City and marked a milestone in GLBT history books, this story opens in a small Kentucky town 717 miles (and a thousand light years) from Greenwich Village. In a rambling farmhouse in Versailles, Kentucky, a pudgy little 5-year-old boy can't sleep – tomorrow is his first day ever going to school. The next morning when his mom, a single mother, dresses him for school, he's in a brand new, red, short-sleeve shirt (made of a hideous nylon which can probably still be found valiantly surviving in a landfill somewhere in the South) and a pair of white shorts (also

made of a similarly non-biodegradable material)..... and off to first grade.

A few months later, the red shirt has faded a little but the newness of school has not – especially considering the mysterious new feelings that little boy is developing for another little boy in his homeroom. While he didn't know what those feelings meant or what he might possibly ever do about them – and he certainly had never heard the words “gay” or “homosexual” in his short life in a tiny rural town – these feelings were undeniable evidence of one fact: he knew he was different. About a year later he decided he wanted to be a veterinarian – but the gay part was there first.

ACT II – June 1990: Another sleepless night, this one the night before graduation from veterinary college. Another small southern town – this time Auburn, Alabama, instead of Versailles, Kentucky. And instead of spending the evening with his mother, the young man is staying with his good friend Teresa, a veterinary technician in the ophthalmology ward at school. He and Teresa had bonded almost immediately for two

THE HEALING POWER OF THE HUMAN-ANIMAL BOND: COMPANION ANIMALS & SOCIETY

June 2-4, 2005 Hollywood, California

This unique conference will be held at the beautiful Renaissance Hollywood Hotel, Hollywood, CA (www.renaissancehollywood.com). The highlighted themes include: Understanding the roles of Service/Emotional Support Animals; Animals and Human Health; Accommodation Issues for Disabled Animal Owners (Housing, Public, Legal Assistance) and the Evolution of Human-Animal Support Services (HASS) organizations. Additional conference topics include: Community & Education (Health Benefits, Advocacy, Public Agencies/Officials), Cultural Attitudes Toward Animals, Innovative Animal Assisted Therapy programs and the impact of Animals on Mind, Body and Spirit.

This conference is a collaboration between Pets Are Wonderful Support (PAWS - www.pawssf.org) and Pets Are Wonderful Support Los Angeles (PAWS LA – www.pawsla.org). Featured speakers confirmed to date are:

Dr. Lynette Hart, University of California at Davis

Larry Norvell, President, Delta Society

Elizabeth Pierson, Pierson, CEO/president and General Counsel of the Fair Housing Council of Orange County

Dr. Rebecca Johnson; University of Missouri –Columbia

Dr. Judith Siegal, University of California at Los Angeles

Gretchen Wyler, Ark Trust/Humane Society of the United States

Dr. Pamela Frank, FIREPAW

Dr. Joan Esnayra, Founder, Psychiatric Service Dog Society

Dr. Ilana Struble, Founder, Vet SOS

We are currently accepting abstracts! Abstracts will be accepted on behalf of individuals and groups on the topics stated above. Please follow the abstract submission process below.

More details will continuously be published and distributed in the upcoming months. Check the PAWS website www.pawssf.org for the latest information. For more questions and information, please feel free to contact Conference Co-Chair Andrea Brooks (abrooks@pawssf.org).

Registration Cost is \$175 until May 15th; \$200 after. However, if you register by March 31, the fee is only \$165.00 Registration Cost is \$175 before May 1st; \$200 after May 1st. This includes reception Thursday evening, breakfast and lunch on Friday and breakfast on Saturday. The Renaissance Hotel is offering specially discounted rooms at \$139 a night for conference participants. The hotel is a lovely venue with views of the Hollywood Hills, and is mere footsteps away from endless local attractions, museums, cinemas and restaurants.

Well known for her support of animal causes, actress Betty White is the Honorary Chairperson for the Conference. In addition to creating and hosting the TV series “The Pet Set” and a daily radio show, “Betty White On Animals”, Betty is the author of “Pet Love: How Pets Take Care of Us.” Best known for her Emmy winning roles in “The Mary Tyler Moore Show” and “The Golden Girls”, Betty is a long time supporter of PAWS/LA. She currently shares her home with her Shi Tsu Panda, her Himalayan Bobcat, and her Golden Retriever Kitta.

We look forward to seeing you In June!

PAWS Veterinary Externship Program Seeks Applicants

The PAWS Veterinary Intern/Extern Program was established in 1998 to address the lack of training in the field of the human-animal bond in traditional veterinary medical education. Currently, there are very few opportunities for veterinary students to gain practical experience in issues involving the human-animal bond. For this reason, a month-long veterinary externship program was established to provide firsthand experience in the context of a private, nonprofit organization such as PAWS. The objective of the program, for which only two externs are selected through a competitive process each year, is to train and educate potential leaders and professionals who will have an impact in the field of the human-animal bond. The closely supervised externship involves public speaking experiences, direct interaction with clients and PAWS staff members, short term projects, interactions with the local veterinary community and participation at the PAWS Food Bank.

To date nine veterinary students, along with another student who helped initiate a pilot study on the diversification of PAWS' client base, have completed the program. Their collective efforts have resulted in such landmark

activities as the PAWS sponsored Healthy Pets/Healthy People Project, which published and presented valuable information on the risks of zoonotic diseases to both the general public and health professionals, the development and distribution of PAWS' Large Animal Safe Pet Guidelines, the organization of the Healing Power of the Human-Animal Bond Summit 2000, and the compilation and distribution of the Summit 2000 proceedings.

The PAWS Veterinary Intern/Extern Program is supported by external competitive grants. PAWS is proud of this program and hopes that it will continue to grow and develop in the future as more and more people recognize the significance of healing and the human-animal bond.

For more information about the Pets Are Wonderful Support veterinary externship in 2005, contact Andrea Brooks, PAWS education coordinator, at abrooks@pawssf.org or check out the webpage at www.pawssf.org.

Tasty News From San Francisco!

After surviving a recall of our governor for the Governor, enjoying the celebration of gay marriages at City Hall until the California Supreme Court stopped the weddings, still recovering from an intense election, San Francisco's Ilana Strubel and Michelle McAnanama and their animal companions hosted their annual Kugel-off at their home in Bernal Heights. The eighth kugel bake-off came after David Muir, partner of Will Carr, took the Kugel Queen title for the past two years. The energy surrounding this year's kugel-off was building and finally happened on December 19 at 4PM. The votes were tallied this year making Ilana Strubel the 2004 Kugel Queen of San Francisco! Congratulations!



reasons: first, Teresa had a gay brother whom she loved very much and didn't get to see very much – the young man was kind of a substitute brother. And second (and perhaps more importantly at the beginning) they found they both shared a mini-crush on the same guy in the young man's class in vet school.

Sitting at the kitchen table in Teresa's small trailer a few miles from vet school, the young man told his friend about his plans after graduation. Most of these plans involved moving to a big city and finding a way to combine his life as a gay man with his career as a veterinarian – perhaps by doing some volunteer work with an AIDS service organization which helped people and their pets. Even though at that point, he had never heard of Pets Are Wonderful Support in San Francisco (which was only three years old at the time) nor of PETS—Washington DC (which would officially come into existence just a few months later in October 1990). But he knew somehow, he wanted to be able to say he was proud of being both a gay man and a veterinarian at the same time. And who knows? He might even be able to find one or two other gay veterinarians out there in the world.

ACT III – May 2005: That little 5-year-old is about to turn forty and has spent fully half his life in veterinary medicine, first as a veterinary assistant, then in vet school, and for the last 15 years, practicing small animal medicine. He has worked with both PAWS-SF and PETS—DC and considers himself lucky he can call the founders of both of these organizations “friend”. And not only did he find one or two other gay and lesbian veterinarians over the years, he was a founding member

and two-time President of a group called the Lesbian & Gay Veterinary Medical Association, now entering its second decade with over 200 members in North America and Europe.

But the job he loves doesn't provide the same satisfaction it once did – there are only so many times you can list the causes of otitis externa or explain the in and outs of anal glands. So before he starts to hate the profession which he loves and which has brought him much personal and professional satisfaction, he decides its time to move on. He decides just as much as he has loved private practice, he would equally loathe either research or becoming a product salesman – just not up his alley. He asks himself two simple questions: what do you love and what are you good at? The answer to the first question is films and film history, the answer to the second is computers and graphic design. Decision made – simply go back to school to become a film editor or cinematographer or computer animator, whichever comes most naturally.

So in the Fall of 2005, this 40-year-old is going back to school. Part-time at first, taking some photography and film history classes to make sure he is heading in the right direction. Next year he'll end his second term as LGVMA President in Honolulu, Hawaii, (make your reservations now) and will be preparing to retire completely from veterinary medicine within the next 4-5 years. He figures 25 years is long enough to do anything, even something someone loves as much as he has loved being a vet.

Can't wait to see where ACT III takes me.

- Dr. Tim Withers

LGVMA Celebrates 10 Years!

LGVMA celebrated their tenth anniversary during the AVMA Convention in Philadelphia last July. On Saturday, July 24, LGVMA members and friends met at Bump bar and restaurant for a reception organized by longtime member Dr. Malcolm Kram. Guests at the reception included representatives from the American Veterinary Medical Foundation (AVMF) and current AVMA Congressional Fellows. LGVMA contributes annually to AVMF at a level comparable to most state VMA's. After a lovely outdoor reception, a group of

attendees went out for an enjoyable evening of dinner and drinks in Center City, the heart of Gay Philadelphia.

On Monday, July 26, Dr. Vic Spain organized a dinner outing to Philadelphia's Chinatown. Thank you to both these members for helping to make Philly a fun and successful meeting.

