

SVME NEWSLETTER

Newsletter of the Society for Veterinary Medical Ethics

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January 2001

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PRESIDENT'S MESSAGE

Drs. Robert Speth and Sylvie Cloutier deserve a lot of thanks for their implementation of the new list serve and the new web site for SVME. They put in a lot of effort into these activities. Unfortunately, we have not had a lot of activity on the list serve nor have there been many visits to the SVME web site. As I write this letter, the web site was visited 91 times and there were only 40 some messages on the VETETHIC list. May be everyone is very busy and we haven't had any major ethical issues lately. These services were created for SVME members and if they are not meeting your needs, then we need to know. Are there features that you would like to see that should be added to the SVME web site? If there are things that you would like to see changed or improved, please let us know.

Over the holidays, I read Robert Ludlum's latest novel entitled Prometheus Deception. Although the escapades of the hero in the book are often far fetched, the underlying theme of the mystery has significance to our society. The story is about privacy and the control of information about individual citizens. The premise was that there are very powerful organizations that are gradually obtaining all sorts of information about individual citizens and thus potentially destroying all forms of privacy. Does the veterinary profession need to be concerned about this issue? Do we have the right to obtain and use information about our clients when they may not be aware of what we are doing much as what happens to us when we purchase groceries, clothing, drugs or a variety of other items either conventionally or on the Internet? If we use this information to enhance our services to them is it ethically correct? From a marketing perspective, the more we know

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about our clients the more we can anticipate their needs and provide appropriate services accordingly. With modern technology, there are many ways that we can obtain information about our clients. This information will help the veterinarian and may or may not help the client. It seems that there may be a fine line that one has to follow and that we must be careful to not invade the privacy of our clients without their permission.

This past semester I had the opportunity to teach 100 students in a course entitled "Ethical Issues in Veterinary Medicine". The course was well received. Only two or three students missed class all semester and everyone participated in the course. Not once did anyone sleep in class. The reason why the course may have been well received is that for a portion of the course, we invited practitioners to present ethical cases to the students. The students analyzed the cases and discussed an ethical plan of action with the practitioners. The students also participated in a point-counterpoint activity in which one group of students would present ethical arguments in favor of an issue and another group presented opposing views. Each side was allowed time for rebuttal. Following the presentation and

rebuttals there was class discussion. This was voluntary and amazingly the discussion lasted for nearly an hour each time and many students participated. The issues the students debated included the veterinarians first duty is to the patient versus the client, convenience euthanasia, use of animals in research and teaching, and the ethical mandate of veterinary practice is to maximize profits. Students were required to write a mock letter to the AVMA Judicial Council stating why the Council should or should not change its position on these ethical issues. If any of you have an opportunity to participate in such a course, I would encourage you to do so. It is stimulating and a lot of fun. It is a good way to illustrate to students that ethics is important in our profession.

Again, please let us know if there are things that the Society for Veterinary Medical Ethics can be doing for you. We want it to be a meaningful and beneficial organization.

Don

Donald D. Draper, DVM, PhD, MBA
President, SVME

PRESIDENT-ELECT'S MESSAGE

INFORMATION ABOUT THE ETHICS SECTION FOR THE AVMA MEETING IN BOSTON

The Ethics Section of the AVMA Annual Convention in Boston has been established with two different programs. On 7/14/01 in the AM, Dean W.W. Armistead will deliver two introductory topics. The first topic: "What is a profession?"(8:00AM), will cover the historical evolution of the true professions: human medicine, veterinary medicine, and law. I have heard this lecture previously, and it is fascinating. He will speak on this subject for 50 minutes and entertain questions afterwards. The second morning topic is: "What are the ethical foundations of the veterinary profession?"(10:15AM). It was my intent in asking Dr. Armistead to speak to get everyone on the same page about the basics of veterinary ethics. The afternoon section will cover a future serious ethical dilemma in our profession: providing veterinary services electronically over the Internet. First up at 1:00PM are Dr. Duane Flemming and Jerry Tannenbaum delivering "Ethical Considerations in Online Veterinary Services". Jerry and Duane are longstanding SVME members and highly qualified to discuss this subject from legal and ethical points of view. At 3:15 PM, Dr. Anthony Schwartz will present opposing views. Dr. Schwartz was involved in the Tufts University online consulting service, and will discuss the many problems associated with providing this service. The morning sessions by Dr. Armistead should prove to be fascinating. He is an icon in our profession. The afternoon session should be more entertaining and controversial, and should stimulate a lot of discussion. I'm really excited about this lineup and hope it will stimulate interest in the SVME.

Sincerely,

Bill

Bill Folger, D.V.M., M.S., A.B.V.P (Feline)
President-Elect, SVME

TREASURER'S REPORT

The present assets of the SVME are \$301.42 in the checking account, and \$24,688.31 in the savings account (total of \$24,989.73), as of 1/5/01. The large increase in the assets of the Society is due to a bequest from the estate of the late Dr. Robert Shomer, in the amount of \$15,400.81.

Recent expenditures included \$30.00 to Dr. Ron McLaughlin for refreshments for the University of Missouri student chapter of the SVME, \$198.00 to VCAPP, Washington State University for newsletter printing expenses, and \$52.00 to Dr. Ed Stephenson to reimburse speaking expenses at the AVMA meeting last July.

Mary

Mary D. McCauley, DVM
SVME treasurer

BOOK REVIEW:

Dr. Leland Shapiro has written a comprehensive and useful text on animal ethics. The text *Applied Animal Ethics* is oriented towards the college student, however, it should be of value to many readers. The book is divided into two major sections. The first section contains 12 original chapters written by the author. The second section contains a series of seminal papers and reference material representing different ethical viewpoints.

The book begins with a presentation of why it is important to study animal ethics. The author reviews the past and current teaching of animal ethics in the public school system and at the college level. It is his view that too many one-sided perspectives are being presented. His premise is that all sides of an issue should be presented and then the reader or listener can make up their own mind. The author therefore does not directly present his own views on issues involving animal ethics. Chapter two contains a historical perspective of the various philosophies that have influenced the animal rights and animal welfare movements. The different views on animal ethics of all major modern religions are presented and contrasted with those of the American Indian. Subsequently the views on animal ethics of classical philosophers such as Socrates, Bentham, Descartes and Mill are compared with the views of modern philosophers such as Regan, Singer, Cohen and Frey. The history of the animal rights and welfare movements are chronicled in a succinct and informative matter. The origins of various humane groups, laboratory animal science, and medical research groups are described. A review of all major federal acts related to the

By Leland S. Shapiro
Delmar Thomson Learning
August 1999
512 pages
Retail Price \$50.95
ISBN 0827384947

use of animals is presented in chapter 3. Subsequent chapters contain material on the origin and need for institutional animal care and use committees (IACUCs) and a brief review of federal regulations associated with the animal welfare act, NIH, NSF, and FDA.

Classic animal welfare cases that attracted a lot of media attention and that had major legislative impact are summarized in chapter 6. The chapter is very informative and provides a good historical perspective for readers who are not aware of the nature and outcome of these cases. Examples covered include gunshot wound studies in cats, baboon whiplash studies, deafferented monkeys as models for human stroke victims, the Baby Fae baboon heart implant, and the Draize test. The author condensed a lot of information into a very brief chapter on why animals are needed in research. He includes animals used for models of human

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I encourage any member who would like to review any other books that could be of interest to the members for future issues to let me know.

Sylvie Cloutier, PhD
Editor, SVME

BOOK REVIEW (CONTINUED)

disease, parts of animals used in human medicine, processes studied in animal models, innovations that have resulted from animal research, vaccines that have been developed for various diseases, and medical advances that resulted from animal research. The chapter entitled “ethics of animal use” is disappointing in that there is little ethics presented except for a brief discussion of speciesism. Instead there is a discussion of animals’ biological rights, a classification of people who work with or for animals, alternatives to dissection of animals, and a

superficial coverage of genome manipulation and patenting of animal forms. The many ethical

considerations of livestock production are covered in chapter 9 and include comments on pain, anesthesia, analgesia, food safety, residues and the Delaney Clause, veal production, environmental considerations, cosmetic surgery in domestic animals, puppy mills, transportation and slaughter of farm animals and intensive animal production. Unfortunately only eight pages are devoted to the veterinary aspects of animal welfare. The author does cover ethical considerations associated with pain relief, euthanasia, castrations, tail docking, dehorning, and debeaking. Chapter 11 contains a brief review of some of the ethical issues associated with zoo animals, wildlife, animals in entertainment, and utility animals. Again the coverage is superficial but does highlight major issues. In the last chapter, the author presents information on “America’s New Extremists” and describes

Examples (of animal welfare cases) covered include gunshot wound studies in cats, baboon whiplash studies, deafferented monkeys as models for human stroke victims, the Baby Fae baboon heart implant, and the Draize test.

acts of terrorism that have been attributed to various animal rights groups.

Each chapter of the book has a brief introductory scenario. Learning objectives and then the textual material follow this. Each chapter contains a self-test over the material, discussion questions, and a list of recommended readings. Although some of the chapters are superficial in their coverage, the student should have a good basic understanding of animal ethics if they complete all of the learning objectives, self-assessments and recommended readings.

Section two is a compilation of papers on various aspects of animal ethics from many different philosophical views. Some of the groups represented include the American Medical Association, American Veterinary Medical Association, PETA, Americans for Medical Progress Education Foundation, American Association for Laboratory Animal Science, Foundation for Biomedical Research, and others. This section also contains seminal papers from noted authors such as Adrian Morrison and Temple Grandin and from journals such as the Journal of the American Medical Association, Journal of the American Veterinary Medical Association, Journal of Animal Science, Kennedy Institute for Ethics Journal and the Drug information Journal. Collectively, the author has compiled a useful set of articles for anyone engaged in the teaching of ethics or anyone whose work involves issues of animal ethics.

Reviewed by
Donald D. Draper, DVM, PhD, MBA

EDITOR'S NOTE

The end of the past year has seen a few changes for the society. The SVME listserv and web site have moved. The address for the new SVME web site is http://www.vetmed.wsu.edu/org_SVME/

The listserv address is svme@listserv.vetmed.wsu.edu
If you want to access the listserv (to check previous messages, for example) the web site address for the listserv is:
<http://listserv.vetmed.wsu.edu>

The web site is not completed yet. Many sections are still under construction. Anyone having suggestions to improve the site is welcomed to contact me. It is my hope that the SVME web site becomes a primary source of information on Veterinary Ethics and all related questions. I welcome your suggestions regarding matters you would like to see in the Newsletter and on the web site. I would like to thank the people who made these changes possible, Ron McLaughlin, Don Draper, Bob Speth, Jeanne Jensen, and Cheryl Dhein.

I would like to wish all SVME members all the best for the coming year. I hope that the SVME will continue to raise interesting, fruitful discussions on the ethic of veterinary medicine and the well-being of animals.

I can be contacted at <scloutie@vetmed.wsu.edu> or c/o Department of VCAPP, College of Veterinary Medicine, Washington State University, PO Box 646520, Pullman, WA, 99164-6520.

Sylvie Cloutier, PhD
SVME Editor

OFFICERS OF THE SOCIETY

<i>President:</i>	Don D. Draper, DVM, PhD, MBA
<i>President Elect:</i>	William R. Folger, DVM, MS, ABVP (Feline)
<i>Treasurer:</i>	Mary D. McCauley, JD, DVM
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<i>Immediate Past-President:</i>	Ronald L. McLaughlin, DVM
<i>Past-Presidents:</i>	Robert Shomer, VMD Albert Dorn, DVM, MS Jerold Tannenbaum, MA, JD John R. Boyce, DVM, PhD Bob Speth, PhD

The following Comment on governmental licensure was contributed by **John R. Boyce, DVM, PhD**

LICENSURE AND CONTINUED COMPETENCE:

IS THE PUBLIC BEING PROTECTED?

A license to practice is a government sanctioned professional monopoly. It allows license holders to perform certain tasks that people who are not licensed cannot legally do. Practice acts are laws enacted by legislatures that define the scope of practice and the qualifications for licensure.

The principle behind licensure is public protection. Licensing boards are charged with ensuring that license holders meet certain minimum standards of competence, so that the public health and welfare is protected. Licensing boards also have the responsibility of enforcing practice acts and disciplining licensees who fail to perform in a competent manner. Most licensing boards also have the authority to act against persons practicing without a valid license.

Licensing boards have only two tools to use for assessing competency. First, they generally require that licensees be graduates of accredited training programs, or holders of certificates that attest that they have knowledge and skills equivalent to graduates of accredited programs. Second, licensing boards

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usually require candidates to pass one or more standardized examinations before they are granted a license to practice. In some cases, boards have access to additional examinations for use in disciplinary cases.

In veterinary medicine, almost all licensing boards require that candidates for licensure be

graduates of veterinary schools accredited or approved by the Council on Education of the American Veterinary Medical Association, or holders of a certificate issued by the Educational Commission for Foreign Veterinary Graduates (ECFVG). By requiring graduation from an accredited school, licensing boards recognize that the knowledge and skills taught in accredited veterinary schools are important for competent practice. Boards are also relying on the ability of the Council on Education to properly evaluate veterinary schools. For veterinarians who are graduates of non-accredited schools, there are essentially three options available to boards. One is not to license such graduates at all. Clearly, that option would open the board up to criticism and potential challenge. Another option, that taken by most boards, is to accept candidates who have completed the requirements of the ECFVG program as equivalent to candidates from accredited schools. Most state practice acts specifically reference the ECFVG certificate. The third option is for the board to accept graduates of non-accredited schools if they can demonstrate to the satisfaction of the board that their education is essentially equivalent to that of a graduate of an accredited school.

It should be mentioned here that the licensing boards themselves, through the American Association of Veterinary State Boards (AAVSB), are establishing a new certification program for graduates of non-accredited veterinary schools. This new program will eventually replace the ECFVG program operated by the AVMA. Unless the AVMA agrees to transfer the ECFVG program to the AAVSB, as the AAVSB

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has requested, most boards will have to amend their practice acts in order to be able to adopt the new program.

In the past (prior to 1954), each licensing board administered its own examination to assess a candidate's qualifications for licensure. These state board examinations were frequently a combination of oral, written, and practical sections. At that time, accreditation standards were not what they are today, and there were many veterinarians out there who had not graduated from accredited schools. Boards needed some kind of examination to ensure that licensees met minimal standards of competency. These state board examinations tended to be expensive and time consuming to develop, difficult to standardize, and somewhat subjective. This was especially true for oral and practical examinations.

In the 1940's, boards began to see the need for a standardized national licensing examination. This coincided with the development of the "objective" method of testing, using examinations composed of multiple choice questions. Also, veterinarians were becoming more concerned about their ability to move from one jurisdiction to another. With each state having its own licensing examination, it was hard for a veterinarian who had been in practice for some time in one state to move to another state, because the state board examination posed a formidable barrier. A national board examination offered a standardized measure of minimum competence.

The National Board of Veterinary Medical Examiners (NBVME) was formed in 1948 as a quasi-independent organization operating within the AVMA structure. It included representatives of licensing boards, the AVMA, and various practice areas within the profession. In 1954, the first National Board Examination (NBE) was offered to candidates in eight states. There was concern at the time on the part of many licensing

...The US Constitution provides that licensure of professionals is a right of the individual states.

boards that the new national board examination would usurp the state's right to determine

qualifications for licensure. The NBVME went out of its way to assure the boards that this was not the case. In fact, the US Constitution provides that licensure of professionals is a right of the individual states. Therefore, there will never be "national licensure" in this country unless the Constitution is amended. Some boards remained skeptical, however, and it was over 20 years until the NBE was eventually adopted by all states as a standard entry requirement. The NBVME was reorganized and became the National Board Examination Committee (NBEC) in 1980.

In the 1960's, the consumer protection movement began to gain support. One of the outcomes of this was a renewed interest on the part of licensing boards in their primary mission, public protection. Of course, this wasn't always the case, and licensing boards were justly criticized in many cases for functioning more to keep veterinarians from entering the state, in order to protect the "turf" of veterinarians already licensed in that state. This new focus on the consumer that began in the 1960's was enhanced by the addition of public members to licensing boards, reform of the appointment system for board members, and sunset provisions for licensing boards. The latter requires boards to justify their continued existence every few years, by demonstrating to the legislature that they are still fulfilling a public protection need. Today, most licensing boards include public members.

Why do we even need licensing examinations? That is a question that I am often asked. In the United States (and Canada), essentially all professions require candidates to pass one or more standardized examinations in order to be licensed. Actually, our national

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Comment: Is the Public Being Protected? (continued)

licensing examination is far less extensive than the examinations required for licensure in certain other professions, including medicine, law, and architecture.

Why can't boards just automatically license all graduates of accredited programs? That is another question that is frequently raised. In fact, the accreditation process is applied to institutions, not individuals. The essential requirements of an accredited veterinary school include things like finances, physical facilities, and faculty. It can be argued that all graduates of accredited schools are not qualified for licensure. In the option of many, schools are unable or unwilling to "weed out" students who are not performing up to a minimal standard. It may be easier for a school to move students through the program than to give them a failing grade in a course and require them to repeat part of the curriculum and/or reassess their

career goals. In countries where there is no licensing examination (England, for example), veterinary

students must pass rigorous comprehensive examinations prior to graduation. These examinations function in much the same way as our national board examinations, to ensure that all practicing veterinarians meet a minimum standard of competence.

Licensing boards have an ethical obligation to protect the public, so they need valid, reliable, and defensible tools to use in evaluating the competence of licensees. The above discussion has focused on standardized licensing examinations, but these are aimed exclusively at the entry-level candidate. Evaluation of continued competence of experienced practitioners is another issue altogether. Is it reasonable to assume that a veterinarian who was issued a license 20 years ago and has managed to stay out of trouble since then is still competent to practice? How do we know? I am sure that any practitioner could name one or more colleagues who hold valid

licenses to practice, but whose continued competence might be called into question. Is the public really protected when these people continue to practice?

Mandatory continuing education is one approach to dealing with this issue, but it has not been shown to offer any significant effect on continuing competence. In spite of the fact that supporters of mandatory continuing education tell the legislature that it is a means to ensure continuing competence of licensees, its main benefit is to increase attendance at veterinary meetings.

Another approach boards can use is to use examinations to assess the competence of veterinarians facing disciplinary action. For the past three years, the NBEC has made available to licensing boards two disciplinary examinations (one in small animal and the other in equine medicine). Boards can use these examinations to help determine if a veterinarian has a minimum level of knowledge in the appropriate practice area. These examinations have been useful, but they are limited in that they are only available in the two practice areas.

Further, because they are multiple choice examinations, they can assess only knowledge of the content area, not clinical skills, communication skills, and ethical understanding. Frequently, boards take disciplinary action against a licensee for failure in these latter areas, not for a lack of basic medical knowledge.

The time is coming when licensing boards will need valid, reliable, and defensible tools to use to evaluate the continuing competence of all licensed professionals, not just those seeking to enter the profession or those facing disciplinary

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Comment: Is the Public Being Protected? (continued)

action. In Canada, most licensed professions have adopted some form of continued competency assessment, and it will be only a matter of time until this concept reaches the US. In my opinion, the public will soon demand that licensing boards come up with serious methods to ensure that all licensees continue to be competent to practice. Passing an entry-level examination and then managing to stay out of trouble won't suffice very much longer.

Dr. Boyce is Executive Director of the National Board Examination Committee for Veterinary Medicine (NBEC), P.O. Box 1356, Bismarck, ND 58502. He served as President of the Society for Veterinary Medical Ethics from 1997-98.

—ANNOUNCEMENTS-PROGRAMS MEETINGS—

ISAE Meeting at UC Davis

The 35th Congress of the International Society for Applied Ethology (ISAE) will be held at the University of California, Davis, on August 4-8, 2001. The ISAE is a member organization of scientists and others interested in research on the behavior and welfare of domesticated, captive, and managed wild animals. The primary themes for this Congress are "Companion Animal Behavior" and "Influence of Genetics on Behavior and Welfare," but abstracts on any topics relevant to the mission of the society are welcomed and will be considered by the organizers for presentation as posters or free papers. Abstracts are due February 15, 2001. The ISAE meeting will be held in sequence with two other meetings on the UC Davis campus. The first is Nature in Legend and Story (NILAS) on August 1, with a theme of "Animals in Folklore and Literature". The second, on August 2-3, is the annual meeting of the International Society for Anthrozoology (ISAZ), with a theme of "Human-Animal Conflict". There will be a discounted registration fee for individuals attending more than one meeting.

For information see the ISAE Congress website at <http://animalwelfare.ucdavis.edu/conference/ethology/ethologyconf.html> or contact Dr. Joy Mench, Center for Animal Welfare, University of California, One Shields

Avenue, Davis, CA, 95616; email address: isae2001@asmail.ucdavis.edu

The ISAE conference is being coordinated through the Center for animal welfare at UC Davis, the website for the center is:

<http://animalwelfare.ucdavis.edu/>

Websites for the ISAE conference, and the ISAZ and NILAS conferences running back to back can be linked to at:

<http://animalwelfare.ucdavis.edu/conference/ethology/isaeannouncement.html>

The National Animal Technician week

The second National Animal Technician week will be held January 28th - February 3rd, 2001. For more information check the AALAS web site.

<http://www.aalas.org/>

Geraldine R. Dodge Summer Research Grant for Veterinary Students

The Frontiers for Veterinary Medicine, summer grant program will be not be offering grants this year. But do check the Foundation web site this fall for possible updates on the program. <http://www.grdodge.org>.

SVME DUES NOTICE

Donald D. Draper, DVM, Ph.D., President
William Folger, DVM, President-Elect
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Ione L. Smith DVM, Secretary
Mary D. McCauley, JD, DVM., Treasurer
Albert S. Dorn, DVM, Parliamentarian
Jerry Tannenbaum, MA, JD, Historian

January 2001

DUES NOTICE

Dues for 2000-2001 are now payable. We appreciate your past support and look forward to a new and even better year for the Society. The dues payment of \$20.00 (\$5.00 for students) is payable to: ***Society for Veterinary Medical Ethics or SVME.*** Membership will be in force from July 1, 2000 to June 30, 2001.

Send checks to: SVME c/o Mary D. McCauley,
541 Quail Valley Drive,
Zionsville, IN 46077

Payment Date: _____ Check Number: _____

Please return this section of the form with your dues payment (see amounts above) to help us keep our records up to date.

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(Email address is required)

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