

# Society for Veterinary Medical Ethics

## Newsletter

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### Annual SVME Meeting at AVMA Meeting in New Orleans

SVME Plenary Session is part of  
AVMA's Personal and Professional  
Development Program

With the rapid approach of our Annual Meeting comes the recognition that another year has sped by. Our meeting in New Orleans in July will be our Sixth Annual Meeting. This year marks another milestone in the development of the Society for Veterinary Medical Ethics. For the first time our proceedings are part of the regular AVMA program in contrast to being an allied organizational program.

Our Plenary Session will be held on **Saturday July 10<sup>th</sup> in the New Orleans Convention Center, Room 213**. The session part of the Personal and Professional Development Program. The **Morning session will begin at 9:00 AM** and will focus on Veterinary Ethics. Featured speakers will be **Don Draper** whose topic is "Ethical Issues Facing New Graduates" and **Donnie Self**, whose topic is "Moral and Ethical Development of Veterinary Students and New Graduates".

The **Afternoon session beginning at 1:30 PM** will focus on the issue of Animal Rights. Featured Speakers include **Bob Speth** "Veterinary Medicine and the Animal Rights Movement", **Joe Bielitzki** "Animal Rights, Ethics and Veterinary Ethics and regulations in animal care and use. Medicine" and **Ron McLaughlin** ". Ethics and regulations in Animal Care and Use."

**Robert C. Speth, PhD, President**  
**John R. Boyce, DVM, Ph.D, Past-President**  
**Ronald M. McLaughlin, DVM, President-Elect**  
**Ione L. Smith, DVM, Secretary**  
**Hal L. Jenkins, DVM, Treasurer**  
**Albert S. Dorn DVM, Interim Parliamentarian**  
**Larry G. Carbone, DVM, Historian**

Previews of the presentations of each of the speakers are presented on pages 2-3 of this Newsletter.

The Society's Annual Business Meeting will be held at 4:30 PM immediately following the Plenary Session in Room 213 of the New Orleans Convention Center (same room as the Plenary Session). The Slate of Officers and the Agenda for the Business Meeting are presented on pages 5 and 6 of this Newsletter.

**Robert C. Speth**



Please note: The views expressed in this newsletter are those of their authors, and are not of SVME or any of its other members. The Society is dedicated to the free and open exchange of ideas. All members are encouraged to submit articles or opinions for the Newsletter. Please contact the interim editor, Bob Speth if you have an article, opinion piece, book review, announcement, news item or anything else that you would like to have published in the SVME Newsletter.

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Medical Ethics

## Special Note:

Due to a severe back injury, **Jerry Tannenbaum**, is unable to continue as the Editor of the Newsletter of the Society for Veterinary Medical Ethics. On behalf of the Society, I extend my sincerest thanks to Jerry for his excellent service to the Society this past year as the Editor of the Newsletter. Jerry developed several advances in the Newsletter that we hope to carry on in the future.

This edition of the SVME Newsletter is being edited by **Bob Speth**. My apologies for the tardiness of the Newsletter and the need to return to our old format.

The Society is soliciting applications for a new Editor of the Newsletter to replace **Jerry Tannenbaum**. Please send your applications to **Bob Speth** [speth@wsu.edu](mailto:speth@wsu.edu) or mail them to Bob Speth, VCAPP, WSU, Pullman WA 99164-6520.

Bob Speth



## Synopses of 1999 SVME Plenary Meeting Presentations

### Ethical Issues Facing New Graduates.

**Donald D. Draper, DVM, Ph.D, MBA**

The findings of a survey of 187 recent graduates are reported and contain some indication of ethically troubling issues of new veterinarians. Completed surveys were received from 111 recent graduates for a return rate of 59.4%. Thirteen (12%) of the respondents indicated that they had not experienced any ethically troubling issues. Eighty eight percent of the respondents reported experiencing one or more ethically troubling incidents. A total of 332 ethically troubling incidents were reported. Of these 273 were related to items asked on the survey while 59 were issues that were

not identified on the original survey. All 332 incidents were condensed into nine categories based on recurring ethical themes. The categories and their frequency of occurrence (number of incidents reported), ranked from most common to least, are employment agreement misunderstandings (69); requests for unethical procedures (65); unjustified treatments or diagnostic procedures (53); regulatory and legal issues (47); compromising skill situations (34); sub-minimal standards of practice (19); employer integrity (16); chemical substance abuse (14); and employee mistreatment (13). Two reported ethical incidents did not fall into the above categories. Multiple examples of each of the ethical categories are provided.

## Moral and Ethical Development of Veterinary Students and Graduates

**Donnie J. Self, Ph.D.**

A brief review of ethical theory is followed by a more detailed summary of Kohlberg's cognitive moral development theory. This theory serves as the foundation for the assessment of moral development in veterinary students. Then a series of empirical studies of the moral development of veterinary students and practitioners, using various instruments of measurement, reports on findings from different types of studies including intervention, gender, cross-sectional, and longitudinal studies, as well as comparisons of various groups such as large animal and small animal practitioners.

## Veterinary Medicine and the Animal Rights Movement

**Bob Speth Ph.D.**

The animal rights movement, by virtue of their leaders' ability to manipulate the media, and their massive 'junk mail' campaigns has created the impression that they are the only ones who can speak out on behalf of the interests of animals. Yet it is the Veterinary Profession that possesses the knowledge

and understanding of animals necessary to act as the primary advocate for the best interests of animals in our society today. There is reason for concern that animal rightists, acting unchecked by rational logic, will not only adversely affect human society, but will in the long run adversely impact animals. The basis for concern for the well being of animals posed by the animal rights philosophy will be described. Actions that the Veterinary Profession can take to counteract the threat to animal well-being posed by the animal rights movement will also be described.

### **Animal Rights, Ethics and Veterinary Ethics and regulations in animal care and use.**

**Joseph Bielitzki, DVM**

The general application of ethics in veterinary medicine is to define a code of conduct for our professional activities. The issue of animal rights has questioned not our professional conduct as veterinarians but rather our personal value system as it relates to animals. The veterinary profession covers a full spectrum of animal uses from pets to the livestock industry. At points an animal rights philosophy may come into direct conflict with our charge as a veterinarian, that of care provider and animal welfare proponent.

In research the use of animals has significant benefit both for human and animal health. The use of animals in research should be conducted with a clear recognition of Albert Schweitzer's reverence for life philosophy. To this end NASA has adopted a set of bioethical principles which serve as a benchmark in resolving difficult ethical questions relating to animal use in research. These principles are 1) respect for life; 2) societal benefit; and 3) non-maleficence. The principles are an agreed upon set of tenets, which clearly define responsibility to both the scientific community and to society at large. Equal consideration for animals is not part of the question regarding animal use. The primary issue is

the mandate for moral concern to living things and how to determine the moral obligation we have to living things through some assessment of the moral status of the animal of concern.

### **Ethics and regulations in animal care and use.**

**Ronald M. McLaughlin, DVM**

This paper explores some ideas about the balance of the contributions of ethical concern versus regulations to the welfare of experimental animals in the United States. The first Animal Welfare Act (AWA) in the U.S. occurred in the midst of an important transition within the biomedical research community. It was a period in which there were both growing concern about the welfare of experimental animals and the simultaneous development of a) knowledge that poor welfare and poor health caused profound detrimental effects on experimental results, and b) some tools to improve animal health and welfare. Competing claims are now made that the preponderance any increment in welfare of experimental animals in the ensuing 33 years has been due to either the enforcement of AWA regulations or the concern and knowledge of scientists. Also of interest is the prospect of the future balance of the contributions between regulation and ethical concern to the welfare of animals and the good of society.



### **President's Message**

This past year has also been noteworthy in that the number of student members of the Society has nearly doubled. I am encouraged by the increased interest in ethical matter on the part of Veterinary Students. I welcome all of you to the Society. As representatives of the future of Veterinary Medicine it is heartening to me to see Veterinary Ethics gaining in importance to

Veterinary Students. Several individuals have approached me regarding the establishment of Student Chapters of the Society for Veterinary Medical Ethics. I find this idea very appealing and will include this suggestion as an agenda item at the Society's Annual Business Meeting.

As we age we also face the inevitability of the passing of our founders. This year we mourn the passing of our founding **Parliamentarian Richard "Dick" Fink**. Dick provided considerable guidance in the formation of the Society and on many occasions provided valuable counseling to me. A memorial to Dick was published in the March 1, 1999 issue of *JAVMA*, Vol. 214, page 609. On behalf of the Society I extend our condolences to his family and our appreciation of his many contributions, especially those to this Society.

As I look back upon my tenure as President of the Society a variety of issues come to mind. The continuing challenge of the animal rights movement continues to be a central focus to my interest in Veterinary Ethics. The acceptability of the use of animals by humans varies greatly between individuals. It is unlikely that there will ever be a universal consensus on how animals can and can not be used. Because of this diversity of sentiment, it will continue to be critically important to have a voice of reason to balance the needs of humans to use animals with the interests of animals and people's perceptions of the interests of animals. I believe that the Society for Veterinary Medical Ethics can provide such a voice of reason and hope that society will increasingly look to ethical organizations such as ours for guidance on this issue.

Another issue that has caught my attention is the use of "nutraceuticals" and "alternative" or "complementary" medicines. At the April Experimental Biology Meeting held in Washington, DC I attended a session on "Alternative Therapies" and found that there is a wide difference of opinion on the validity of such therapy. Some are of the opinion that alternative medicines have efficacy and offer benefits to their consumers. Others note the

lack of quality assurance and the plethora of unsubstantiated claims of efficacy as a health risk and fraud. An interesting quote regarding the extremes of opinion toward alternative medicine was: "For some, no proof is necessary, for others, no proof is sufficient." Of note, it was reported that 50 % of the adult population is taking some type of botanical or herbal preparation in the expectation of receiving some health benefit. Given this high proportion of human use of such preparations, it is no surprise that Veterinary Medicine finds itself faced with consumer demand for similar products for its patients.

As a Pharmacologist, I recognize the potential value of many botanical and herbal preparations, however without proper validation and rational usage of such preparations, the risk of harm arising from their use far outweighs their potential benefits. We should recall the words of Paracelsus who said "All substances are poisons. The right dose differentiates a poison and a remedy." We should also be aware of the fact that the cure for one disease may exacerbate another disease. As one who has an interest in ethics, I strongly encourage the study of alternative therapies to bring them into the realm of mainstream medicine so that they can provide benefit to animals without exposing them to unnecessary risks. For a comprehensive discussion of questionable therapies there is an excellent web site: <http://www.quackwatch.com>.

The other issue that has been of considerable recent interest is the use of the internet to discuss issues relating to Veterinary Medicine and in the practice of Veterinary Medicine. On the one hand, individuals should be free to express opinions about topics of interest to them, even when they do not have all the pertinent details. On the other hand, when do statements made on the internet reach the point of practicing Veterinary Medicine without a license or without a valid patient-client relationship? It seems like the internet continues to provide new challenges to all aspects of life, including Veterinary Ethics.

I look forward to seeing as many of you as possible at our Annual Meeting this year. And, I thank all of you for your continuing support of the Society for Veterinary Medical Ethics.

**Robert C. Speth**



### President-Elect's Message

I thank the members of the SVME for this opportunity to participate in the organization's leadership. I believe that the veterinary medical profession, in the interests of society, animals and the profession, owns responsibility for a lead role in the continuing metamorphosis of society's perception of the status of animals. I hope that the SVME will continue to grow in size and substance, and that it find effective means of outreach in order to ensure appropriate ethical consideration in the profession's contributions. I also believe that SVME contributes much to its members in opportunities to share ideas and opinions and learn how they stack up. Not only because it's important to us, but because it's an interesting learning experience, and it's fun.

Today I reviewed my SVME file and found my member application, which was dated March 1996. I indicated in the application that my interests in veterinary medical ethics were "The range of issues related to animal experimentation and food animal management." At the time I thought that sounded pretty broad. Nevertheless, in the three years since then my veterinary medical ethics interests have expanded considerably. I recognize many more categories and subcategories to be of interest and see them more clearly. Areas in which my interests, or perhaps my awareness of interests, have been piqued or revived include a host of veterinary practice issues.

Some of these don't even directly involve animals but rather are people interactions, among practitioners of various types in myriad

combinations, between practitioners and clients, practice owners and institutions, staff, and regulators, and notably, interactions between faculty and veterinary students.

To say the least, I have gained many additional veterinary ethics questions through my participation in SVME. Through my participation in SVME, specifically attending the SVME program at Reno, NV, reading the proceedings of the meeting in Baltimore, the SVME Newsletter, and the SVME VETETHIC discussion list, I've gained some insights and ideas that I value. I ask for your support in continuing the development of these media, your participation in contributing to them, and recruiting new members. I didn't make any promises to SVME in running for this office, but I'll make one now. I promise thorough consideration, by the Society's leadership, to any member suggestions made to me for furthering the "MAJOR OBJECTIVES OF THE SOCIETY."

**Ronald M. McLaughlin, DVM**



### Slate of Officers Proposed

Following the death of our Parliamentarian **Dick Fink**, **Al Dorn**, DVM, the co-founder of SVME was appointed by SVME President **Bob Speth** to serve as Interim Parliamentarian.

As Chairman of the Nominations Committee, Dr. Dorn convened a meeting of the Committee and respectfully submits to the members the following nomination for 1999 - 2000 officers of the Society.

President: **Ronald M. McLaughlin, DVM**

President Elect: **Donald D. Draper, DVM, Ph.D., MBA**

Treasurer: **Hal L. Jenkins, DVM**

Parliamentarian: **Albert S. Dorn, DVM** (2 year term)

**Ione Smith** will continue in her second year as Secretary of the Society, **Lary Carbone** will continue in his second year as the Historian of the Society, and **Bob Speth** will automatically become the Immediate Past President.

**Donald D. Draper** is Professor of Biomedical Sciences in the College of Veterinary Medicine at Iowa State University in Ames, Iowa. He is a longstanding member of SVME and participated in last year's plenary session in Baltimore.

**Al Dorn** is Professor of surgery at the College of Veterinary Medicine at the University of Tennessee in Knoxville, TN. He co-founded (with **Bob Shomer**) the Society in 1993.

**Hal Jenkins** is the owner of Baseline Animal Clinic in Tempe AZ and the current Treasurer. A full biosketch of Dr. Jenkins can be found in the May 1998 Newsletter, Vol 4, Numbers 1 & 2.



## Agenda for Annual Business Meeting of the Society for Veterinary Medical Ethics

**July 10, 1999 4:30 PM**

Call to Order - Bob Speth, President

Minutes of July 1998 Meeting - Ione Smith, Sec'y

Old Business

New Business

Sponsorship of Student Chapters of the Society for Veterinary Medical Ethics

Replacement of Editor of the Newsletter of the Society for Veterinary Medical Ethics

Presentation of Slate of Officers - Albert S. Dorn, Interim Parliamentarian

Vote for New Officers

Inauguration of Ron McLaughlin as President of SVME

Inauguration of New Officers of SVME

Adjourn



## Accolades

It was recently announced during grand rounds at the University of Pennsylvania Vet School that the two veterinarians enrolled in the University of Pennsylvania's Masters of Bioethics program (one of whom is **Lili Duda**, a member of this list and an all-around great person) have the highest GPAs of the enrollees.

**Hillary Gorman**



## Treasurer's Report

As of June 1, 1999 the balance in our Treasury was \$6382.77. At the present time there are 222 members of the Society.

Dues notices were sent out at the beginning of this month and there has been a terrific response. Thank you for your prompt dues payments.

**Hal Jenkins**



## Meeting Report

On March 19<sup>th</sup> 1999, the Society for Veterinary Medical Ethics sponsored a mini-symposium on Ethical Issues in Veterinary Medicine

at the Student American Veterinary Medical Association Meeting in Pullman Washington.

The Symposium was organized and moderated by SVME President Bob Speth who also presented some brief introductory comments regarding the role of the Veterinary Profession as the leading advocacy group for animal interests. There were five veterinary student presenters, two from Oregon State University and 3 from WSU. Sheila Kilponen a second year student from OSU, and former member of the Rodeo club talked about the life of rodeo animals. Shawnette Anderson a second year WSU student and the student member of the AVMA animal welfare committee, spoke about the activities of the AVMA animal welfare committee. Alycia Butchman a third year student from Oregon State University talked about the value of the non-consumptive, alternative surgery training. Kamela Able a third year WSU student and the daughter of a fur farmer described fur farming. Sarah Hoggan a second year WSU student spoke on the issue of pet abuse, child abuse and the role of the veterinarian in dealing with these issues.

The session was well attended, attracting approximately 50 participants, and there was an active question and answer session focusing largely on the Alternative Surgery Course and the activities of the AVMA Animal Welfare Committee.



### Book Review

Creating Mind: How the brain works, 1998. John E. Dowling. W. W. Norton & Co., New York.

Dowling, Maria Moors Cabot Professor of Natural Science at Harvard University, is an accomplished neuroscientist and, this book confirms, a skilled teacher. As is explained in the book's Preface, "the first five chapters provide the nuts and bolts necessary for an up-to-date understanding of the brain." The discussion therein includes a broad

range of brains from squids, horseshoe crabs, and slugs to humans. There are >extensive sections on neurotransmitters. Chapter 6 explores the visual system, Chapter 7 brain development, and Chapter 8 neurology methods. Chapter 9 discusses emotions, personality, and rationality; and Chapter 10 deals with consciousness. The first 5 chapters constitute a clear and concise overview of comparative neurology that is presented, largely, in layman's terms.

What does the subject of this book have to do with veterinary medical ethics? Perhaps differences among species in mental abilities, based on species differences in development of the brain, are a basis for differential moral status. As Dowling notes, the human brain is "qualitatively similar to the brains of other animals, but quantitatively different." Because of the function of vastly more numerous nerve cells and greater development of the cerebral cortex, he says, "new facets of mind emerge." It is clear that the extraordinary level of higher cortical functions evidenced in humans, for example in creativity and language, create a unique kind of being, capable of a life of unique value. Dowling's discussion of consciousness and awareness contains several important observations that seem to me relevant to moral status. Much of animal behavior that appears to be conscious behavior is probably unconscious.

Page 184. "We possess mental abilities beyond those of any other organism. With language being the most obvious example. Humans can communicate ideas and images to one another either orally or by the written word, and this communication readily evokes images and emotions. We do not need to actually see something to visualize it—a poem or a narrative passage in a book can evoke intense images, sensations, and feelings."

Creating Mind is an excellent book for those interested in the phylogeny of brain and mind.

**Ron McLaughlin**