A MESSAGE FROM THE PRESIDENT

We have had three events so far this year and we had a great turn out at each.

February 4th in conjunction with Animal Technician week we held our annual Awards Banquet. The raffle as always was a big hit and we were treated to a behind the scenes talk titled “The Oiled Wildlife Network” by Dr. Michael Ziccardi, DVM, MPVM, PhD.

April 16th we had a booth at the UC Davis Picnic Day. And with the perfect weather there were hoards of people there. As always there was plenty of literature to hand out and questions to answer. This year the UC Davis Mouse Biology Program graciously donated stuffed fluffy mice to give away.

Also last month we held our annual Membership Drive and we added a lecture to the agenda. Dr. Kate Wasson, DVM, PhD, DACLAM presented “What’s Wrong with my Mouse?”

So it seems fitting that our next event is a Mouse Necropsy Wet Lab to be held on Tuesday May 17th at the UC Davis Comparative Pathology Laboratory presented by Dr. Stephen Griffey, DVM, PhD. Attendance is free to SVAALAS members and if you are interested please RSVP to Roy Hoglund at rhoglund@ucmerced.edu.
A MESSAGE FROM THE PRESIDENT (continued)

The 62nd AALAS National meeting will be held at the San Diego Convention Center October 2-6, 2011. I encourage you to attend if you can. There will be panel discussions, seminars, special topic lectures, and work shops. There truly is something for everyone! It’s a great place to meet new people, visit with old friends and colleagues, and learn new things in the Laboratory Animal Science field. You have to visit the exhibit hall, or vendor floor as some call it, where you can view new equipment from cage washers to new styles of animal housing, meet with animal vendors, PPE reps, surgical instrument reps, etc. Then there are the parties! There is always something happening in the evenings whether it’s a reception hosted by an equipment vendor, an awards ceremony, or just going out to dinner with friends.

If you are interested in becoming involved with AALAS at the national level, attending the Leadership Academy is a really worth the time (see information insert). We can nominate someone to attend. So if you are interested please let me know. You may also contact our District 8 Trustees (see “Get to Know our Trustees”).

I encourage everyone to become more involved in AALAS. Whether you are attending activities or helping with the activities its rewarding and can help further your career. If you are not ready to get involved at the national level, the local branch is a great place to start. We have several committees to help with events throughout the year and we can always use the help. Below is a list of the committees with committee chairs noted. If you would like to volunteer please let me know.

SVAALAS Committee Chairs for 2011

Audit – Rachel Corbin
Awards – Katie Tsao/Jessica Davis
District 8 – Terry Hewitt/Roy Hoglund
Education – Roy Hoglund/Marina Jaquez
Membership – Brian Merical
Nominations – Katie Tsao/Shandell Solbach
Public Relations – Shannon Powell
Communications – Deneen Spence
Newsletter – Michelle Hoglund
Website – Maggie Tam

Board Meeting Dates 2011

The Board of Directors meets monthly the third Wednesday of the month by conference call or in person alternating months.

All members are welcome and notices will be sent out as to time and place prior to the meeting.
Don’t miss the opportunity to have your branch represented at the 2011 LEADERSHIP ACADEMY in San Diego.

The purpose of the program is to nurture and inspire people with potential to take on a leadership position in both their branches and in the national association. In addition the program will inform the participants about opportunities to participate in AALAS, how to get involved and the benefits of volunteering and the expectations of volunteers. The participants will learn both communications and leadership skills, as well as being provided a dynamic and fun experience. The participants will hear from and have an opportunity to interact with current members of the AALAS staff, committee chairs and members, members of the Board of Trustees, and the Executive Committee.

Nominations are now being accepted for the 2011 Leadership Academy session to be held at the National Meeting. Please see the attached letter which describes the program and the attachment with the nomination form. The nomination forms need to be signed by the nominee and the branch president, once both of these signatures have been obtained the form need to be emailed or faxed to the AALAS office to my attention at 901-753-0046. Should you have any questions or need any assistance with the form please contact me.

Thank you,
John

John E. McCutchen, CAE
Director, Member Relations and Marketing
American Association for Laboratory Animal Science
9190 Crestwyn Hills Drive    Memphis, TN 38125
(901) 754-8620    (901) 753-0046 - Fax
www.aalas.org
To: AALAS Branch Officers  
(Presidents, Vice Presidents or Presidents-Elects, TBR’s, and News Editors)

From: John McCutchen

Re: 2011 Leadership Academy

AALAS for the past several years has held a leadership skills training seminar in conjunction with the AALAS National Meeting. The AALAS Leadership Academy this year will be held in conjunction with our 62nd National AALAS Meeting in San Diego, California. This training session is open to representatives from each branch at no additional cost to the individual.

Branch members may nominate themselves or someone else; however, the nomination must be endorsed by the Branch President. Each branch is allowed one primary and one alternate individual to attend. A branch may submit additional alternates to be placed on a waiting list; this list will be used to fill any available vacancies that may be created should a branch not nominate any attendees. Branch officers are asked to ensure that this information is relayed to all branch members and we suggest this information be printed in your branch’s newsletter as a resource. In order for an attendee to receive their certificate of completion from Leadership Academy they must be prepared to attend the entire session.

The 2011 Leadership Academy session will be held on Sunday, October 2, 2011. The session will be held at the San Diego Marriott Hotel and will begin promptly at 7:00 a.m. Breakfast will be served and the Leadership Academy materials will be provided for each participant upon their arrival. A luncheon will be provided and the attendees will have an opportunity at the luncheon to meet with members of the AALAS Executive Committee and Board of Trustees. If the branch nominee has any special dietary requirements this information needs to be attached on a separate sheet.

Nominees who submit the nomination form to the AALAS office no later than April 30th will be notified of their acceptance on or before May 5th, and they will be able to make their hotel reservation prior to the time the National Meeting housing opens to the general membership. The deadline to submit the 2011 Leadership Academy nomination form to the AALAS office is July 15th. If you need any assistance concerning the Leadership Academy program please contact me by phone at 901-754-8620 or by email at john.mccutchen@aalas.org
Spotlight on your District 8 Trustee

Gene Rukavina, RVT, RLATG
District 8 Trustee (2011 – 2013)
grukavina@mednet.ucla.edu

What position(s) do you hold in your local branch?
SCB-AALAS Newsletter Editor and Webmaster.

How did you get involved with SCB-AALAS?
From the beginning of my LAS career (2000) I knew I wanted to be involved at the branch level, and figured the best way to make a difference was to serve on the Board of Directors of my local branch. I didn’t get enough ballot votes on my first attempt, but on my second bid I was elected as a board member and have been a part of SCB-AALAS leadership ever since.

How did you get involved at the national level of AALAS?
My first volunteer experience at the national level was as a participant on the CRB Job Analysis Task Force (2004). I was then appointed to serve on the Tech Talk Editorial Committee (TTEC) (2006 - 2008), which led to me becoming the TTEC Vice-Chair (2008), and Chair (2009). I was also involved with the Ad Hoc Veterinary Technician Committee (VTC) (2006 - 2007).

What was your first job working in lab animal science?
When I was a senior student in the Veterinary Technology Program at Los Angeles Pierce College, I made the decision to pursue the LAS career path. By the time I graduated in 2000, I had already accepted an Animal Health Technician (AHT) position with the Division of Laboratory Animal Medicine (DLAM) at the University of California Los Angeles (UCLA).

Where do you work and what is your current position?
I currently hold the position of Training Manager for UCLA-DLAM.

What are your qualifications?
I have an AS degree (Agriculture – Veterinary Technology), a Registered Veterinary Technician (RVT) license from the state of California, and RLATG certification through AALAS. My next goal is to add the CMAR acronym after my name!

What is your area of expertise?
My hard skill set comes from many years as a veterinary technician. My soft skill set is a work in progress, although I have been a teacher and a trainer in some fashion since entering the LAS field in 2000. I also do a great deal of work in the realm of website design. I continually strive to build on my expertise with regards to training, management, leadership, and web-based technology.

How long have you worked in the field of Laboratory Animal Science?
I have been working in the LAS field since 2000.
When did you realize you wanted to work with animals?
I have always loved animals, especially dogs. I actually didn’t realize I wanted to work with animals until much later in life. I originally moved to California in pursuit of a music career. When it became painfully clear that I would not be successful in the music business, I discovered a second lease on life with the pursuit of a veterinary technology education — which has lead to a rewarding journey along the LAS career path.

What is your favorite species to work with and why?
Although I have enjoyed working with a variety of lab animal species, dogs are my favorite. I had the privilege of working with some amazing canines during my time as an AHT with the Department of Comparative Medicine at Cedars-Sinai Medical Center in Los Angeles, CA. I truly appreciated every opportunity I had to help enrich the lives of so many research hounds!

Who are your mentors?
Well, I certainly wouldn’t be where I am today if it weren’t for all of the generous mentors that have helped me along my career path! To name a few: Liz White, the director of the RVT program at Los Angeles College, has been a wonderful mentor over the years. Jerry Werk (UCLA-DLAM) was the first person to hire me into the field and has always been a great mentor to me. Bruce Kennedy was the mentor that gave me the opportunity to get involved at the national level of AALAS, and I will always be grateful to him for that. Last but not least, both Tim Lawson (former UCLA-DLAM Executive Director) and Marcelo Couto (current UCLA-DLAM Executive Director) have been excellent mentors and role models for me — especially in the realm of training & management!

List your 3 greatest achievements
1. Going back to college (the second time around) and succeeding.
2. Attaining my RVT license by passing the exam on the first try.
3. Receiving the CVMA award: “Outstanding Registered Veterinary Technician In A Non Private Practice”.

If you could give advice to someone working with laboratory animals what would it be?
Love what you do and the rest will follow. Never stop reaching for that next rung on your career ladder. Pursue continuing education and never miss an opportunity to network with your LAS colleagues. Be proud of what you do and the contributions you make towards the advancement of medical science for the benefit of people and animals!

What are your hobbies?
My favorite hobby would have to be travelling! Other hobbies include reading (I love my Kindle), music (I love to dance), chess (although I feel like a patzer more often than not), snorkeling & scuba diving, meditation & yoga, NFL football (Da Bears and fantasy football), being a “Foodie”, and checking off all the other items on my “Bucket List” (way too many to mention here!)
Spotlight on your District 8 Trustee

Morag Mackay RVN, Cert. Ed, RLATG, SRS
District 8 Trustee (2010 – 2012)
morag@liai.org

What position do you hold in your local branch?
SDAALAS President 2009 and Past President 2010

How did you get involved with SDAALAS?
Mari Bray introduced me to the local SDAALAS branch 12 years ago when I first moved to San Diego. Diana Kelsey, who was the SDAALAS Program Chair for eight years prior to my accepting the position, recruited me. I think Diana needed a well-deserved break!! I served as Program Chair for several years then was elected as President Elect in 2008, President 2009.

How did you get involved at the national level of AALAS?
I served on the National AALAS Certification and Registry Board (CRB) for 3 years and then was elected District 8 Trustee (2010-2012). JJ

What was your first job working in lab animal science?
My first job was as a trainee veterinary nurse for Glasgow University Veterinary School. I worked in a multi-species facility that included dogs, cats, pigs, sheep, rabbits, rats, mice, guinea pigs, marmosets, baboons, and potoroos, which are now an endangered species.

Where do you work and what is your current position?
I work for La Jolla Institute for Allergy and Immunology and my position is Director of the Department of Laboratory Animal Care (DLAC). I am also an adjunct teacher for the Mesa College of Animal Health Technology RVT program where I teach practical lab animal science.

What are your qualifications?
I am a Registered Veterinary Nurse and have a Certificate in Education. I am certified at the RLATG level and also as a SRS (Surgical Research Specialist) by the Academy of Surgical Research. I also hold a certificate in Pet Store Management. Next stop – CMAR!

What is your area of expertise?
My area of expertise would be small animal surgery, followed closely by training, and of course management. Each day brings a new challenge. JJ

How long have you worked in the field of Laboratory Animal Science?
I have worked in the Laboratory Animal Field for my whole working career, 25 years, and still love every day of it!
When did you realize you wanted to work with animals?
I guess I realized (or my mum and dad did) when I was only three years old and was found “playing” with a wild mouse in some packing boxes when we were moving house. From here I developed a love and passion for working with animals and started working nights and weekends in a local veterinary practice when I was thirteen. My first paid weekend job was in a Pet Store where they sold a whole range of pocket and exotic pets.

What is your favorite species to work with and why?
I really love working with all the species but I had lots and lots of fun working with the pigs and training them to stand still and have injections and catheters placed without screaming the facility down. My other favorite must be the laboratory haggis, a quiet, mild tempered, shy little Scottish rodent, shown here is the female of the species and a few young.

Who are your mentors?
Having worked in the field for so many years I have had the privilege of working with many fine scientists and veterinary surgeons. They have all inspired and encouraged me for a variety of reasons and I have become very good friends with all of them.

List your 3 greatest achievements
1) When I qualified as a Veterinary Nurse (passing both my examinations on the first attempt)
2) When I received the Barry Sauer Award for achieving the highest score in the Surgical Research Specialist exam
3) When I completed my first half marathon in just over 2 hours and then went on to run another 2 that same year (Triple Crown).

If you could give one piece of advice to someone working with laboratory animals what would it be?
Love the work you do, take pride in your daily tasks, and never give up!! My motto is:
“If you think you can, you can. If you think you can’t, you’re right”

What are your hobbies?
Jogging, yoga, reading, taking care of my 12-year-old (13lb) cat and my 5 year old Black Labrador. Of course I also love to be part of the Lab Animal Community and volunteer my time and help where I can.
Become Somebody in AALAS

How can you get involved in AALAS...from the Branch Level to the National Level.

How do I get involved at the Branch Level?

- Most branches welcome new “blood” someone that has new ideas and a fresh outlook.
- Attend meetings regularly, meet new people and get a feel for how the branch is run.
- Become Involved. Run for a council position. Some branches may call this a trustee.
- Once your feet are wet and you are ready for a challenge, run for Secretary, Treasurer, President-Elect, or even President.
- Another route you can take is to run for your branch TBR. This will keep you in touch with your local AALAS community as well as the National Office.
- Join National AALAS at one of the three membership levels to receive more benefits and services from AALAS.
- If your branch hosts a District Meeting, work on the planning committee in some capacity such as local arrangements, registration and scientific program to name a few.

Some things to consider on your way to a Leadership Position:

- Achieve certification through AALAS at the highest level. ALAT, LAT, LATG, CMAR – it’s a great personal accomplishment.
- Attend the Leadership Academy held annually at the National Meeting. This is a training seminar geared toward preparing attendees for leadership positions at the Branch and National Levels.
- Attend ILAM and other AALAS sponsored training sessions and programs.

How do I get started at the National Level?

- Contact the National Office to volunteer for a committee that interests you. From here you may be asked to serve as the committee chair for that committee.
- If you have been a National Member for 5 years you are qualified to run as Trustee or Alternate Trustee. It is recommended that you have served at your local branch and/or district level in some Leadership capacity.
- Other positions you may run for are President-Elect and Secretary/Treasurer.

This is your professional association. The more you know about what AALAS offers, how it operates and the people who are involved – the better informed you will be to choose the right committee or leadership position for you.

Maintaining Leadership
Maintain strong sense of purpose
Maintain a positive atmosphere
Remain persuasive by showing commitment
Be persistent

"Leaders are not born. Leaders are made, and they are made by effort and hard work"

Vince Lombardi

For more information contact your AALAS Branch President, District Trustee, or the AALAS National Office.

By: Michelle Tussing, AS, RVT, RLATG; District 5 Trustee (2004-2006); tussing@battelle.org