President's Corner

Greetings from muggy and humid Tucson. The monsoon gods have not been kind to us this year in rain distribution.

We hope that those of you who attended the District 8 meeting enjoyed yourselves and received what you anticipated from the meeting. We enjoyed hosting the meeting and I would like to personally thank each of you who participated and to committee chairs, committees, lab organizers and general volunteers who worked to ensure a successful meeting. The survey that was sent to attendees came back very positive. The things people liked most were: the location, wet labs and the wide range of sessions. Participants top three reasons for attending were: continuing education, personal enrichment, and an opportunity to meet with vendors.

Our last general meeting was on Monday, June 24th. We viewed a videotape of the Metropolitan Washington Park Zoo’s environmental enrichment program for zoo animals. The attendees found the tape interesting and informative.

The Board of Directors met on Friday, August 2nd and discussed the District 8 survey results as well as our awards event scheduled for October 19th. We plan to tour the Phoenix Zoo and present awards and introduce next year’s new board at lunch. Nomination forms for Technician and Member of the Year awards as well as new officers have been sent to the membership. A raffle will be held at the event and will again benefit the Childlife Activity Center at University Medical Center Hospital in Tucson. Grace has been receiving donations from Flagstaff, Tucson and the Phoenix area along with our very supportive vendors. You will be receiving raffle tickets which I encourage you to sell, as a very special prize will be presented to the member who sells the most raffle tickets.

I look forward to a cooler fall and to seeing you at the Phoenix Zoo.
1996 Arizona Branch Officers

President
Jane Criswell (520)621-1621

President Elect
Timothy Martin (602)406-4003

Immediate Past President
Cynthia Richner (520)621-1330

Secretary/Treasurer
Grace Aranda (520)621-1330

Board Members
Mark Barton (520)626-7874
Dennis Dreher (520)779-2771

Technician Branch Representative
Leigh Kleinert (520)626-4707

Committees

Awards
Louise Brooks (520)626-6707
Penny Trovillion (520)779-2771

Speakers
Timothy Martin (602)406-4003
Cynthia Richner (520)621-1330

Newsletter
Dennis Dreher (520)779-2771
Grace Aranda (520)621-1330

District 8 Trustees
Peg Murphy-Hackley (97) (415)855-5499
Ron Orta (96) (206)691-6364

AZ Branch News

The District 8 meeting, held this year in Tucson, raised approximately $3000.00 for the branch. About 200 people attended from all over the District. Thanks to all who helped make the meeting a success.

Phoenix will be the site for the Arizona Annual Branch Meeting this year. It will be a casual event, scheduled for the 19th of October and will include a tour of the Phoenix Zoo. Make plans to attend this Saturday meeting, located in the state’s center, a convenient drive for all members. Annual awards presentations will be made (don’t forget to nominate your favorite candidate), and new officers will be installed.

The branch will again sponsor a raffle to benefit the Child-life Activity Center. Grace Aranda will coordinate donations for the raffle, please contact any potential sponsors.

National AALAS Meeting
November 3-7, 1996
Minneapolis, Minnesota

The deadline for advance registration for the national meeting is September 15th, 1996. With Hugh Haroff at the helm, this year’s meeting should turn out to be a great time. Instead of the tried and true style of keynote speaker, Hugh has invited Baxter Black, former large animal veterinarian and cowboy poet. Baxter’s poetry and commentary is a regular feature on National Public Radio. His first book, Hey Cowboy, Wanna Get Lucky? was declared funny enough “to make a dead man sit up and laugh.” His performance at the meeting should be terrific.

In addition to big fun, the meeting will feature the usual range of scientific presentations, management seminars, and full featured displays of the vendors to the laboratory animal sciences. For the first time, this year the meeting includes a “Train the Trainers” session designed to cover the basic fundamentals of teaching, targeted to folks who are responsible for providing training in their facilities (aren’t we all?). Workshops are scheduled on a wide variety of topics, including facility design, anesthesia, computer applications in lab animal science, diagnostic and therapeutic skills, biomedical photography, and many others. The national meeting remains the best event of the year for networking with other lab animal professionals from around the country, and the absolute best place to learn about the enormous variety of equipment, animals, and diets that we use in our work.
Hey, this could be about you!

C'mon, don't be shy! Everyone is invited to use the form on the back of this page to submit their own profile to Contemporary Topics, one of the publications of national AALAS. Only national, certified members will be profiled in CT, but hey, this newsletter is just begging for copy, certified or not, member or not. Just fill out the same form, drop it in the mail to me (your loyal editor), send along with a photo if you've got one. It would be a great way for folks to get to know each other in the branch.

SAMPLE

## TECHNICIAN PROFILE

Lisa Duvall, ALAT  
Dept. of Comp. Med.  
Univ. of Washington  
Seattle, WA

(Your photo here)

AALAS member since: 1992

Person who influenced me the most: Frederick Davenport. He was my 3rd grade teacher.

Most useful tip for other technicians: Use ivermectin for the treatment of pinworms in mice.

Most embarrassing moment: Getting my hand stuck in a rabbit cage.

I'd like to see AALAS... continue to support technician training.

Hobbies and interests: arts and crafts, camping, photography.

Goals: To become unit supervisor by next year.
CONTEMPORARY TOPICS
IN LABORATORY ANIMAL SCIENCE

TECHNICIAN PROFILE SHEET

Purpose: Each issue of Contemporary Topics will highlight one or more national AALAS certified technicians (ALAT, LAT, LATG) in a short, boxed article called “Technician Profile.” These profiles will allow technicians and other AALAS members to learn more about their fellow workers in the field of laboratory animal science.

Instructions: Complete the form below. Please type or print your responses. Return this form with a black-and-white or color photograph of yourself to AALAS at the address shown at the bottom of this page.

Check here if you want your photograph returned.

Name: __________________________________________ Certification Level: ____________

Institution, Dept., Address: __________________________________________________________

________________________________________________________________________________

City, State, ZIP: __________________________ Daytime Phone: __________________________

AALAS national member #: __________________________ Member since 19__________

Person who influenced me the most: __________________________________________________

Most useful tip for other technicians: ________________________________________________

I’d like to see AALAS . . . : _________________________________________________________

________________________________________________________________________________

Most embarrassing moment: _________________________________________________________

________________________________________________________________________________

Hobbies and interests: _____________________________________________________________

________________________________________________________________________________

Goals: _________________________________________________________________________

________________________________________________________________________________

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4,588,069  6,000,100
5,148,766  5,307,737
The Science Center at W.L. Gore and Associates in Flagstaff has positions available for dedicated people in the field of laboratory animal sciences.

Positions are currently available in the following categories:

**Animal Technician**  
Opportunity for a person who enjoys and works well with animals. Duties include animal husbandry and handling of a variety of lab animals.

**Anesthesia and Post-Operative Care**  
We currently need a technician who has experience in anesthesia and post-op care in a variety of species. The successful candidate will provide a variety of surgical support functions, and should be comfortable with operating room and diagnostic equipment.

For information on either of these positions, call Dena Anderson at W.L. Gore and Associates (520) 779-2771

You may FAX your resume directly to the Employment office at (520) 527-2280  
Reference Job #JR1082

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RABBITS

Rabbits have become increasingly important as animal models for medical research. Improvements in the rabbits' health through better nutrition and sanitation has allowed the raising and maintenance of rabbit populations easier and, in the process, has made them more useful as a research tool. This improvement in the quality of life for the rabbit would not have happened without medical research, which often relied upon the rabbit as a research animal.

The general physiology of rabbits is similar to that of humans, and like mice and rats, rabbits also suffer from many of the same diseases as human beings. Young rabbits often die from a disease called mucoid enteritis, which resembles cystic fibrosis and cholera; scientists believe rabbits will contribute to our understanding of these human illnesses. Louis Pasteur used rabbits to develop his rabies vaccine. Rabbits also produce antibodies that can be used to detect the presence or absence of disease.

The rabbit has been very important in the study of cardiovascular disease, in particular, hypertension and atherosclerosis. For recent research involving one of the most promising new medical tools, the surgical laser, the rabbit provides an excellent model system to simulate the response of human tissue to this form of radiation. Examples of laser advancements made possible by research on rabbits include eye surgery and the dissolving of plaque buildup on the walls of arteries. From cancer to glaucoma, eye and ear infections to growth studies, skin disorders, diabetes, emphysema, and more, the rabbit continues to play a key role in medical research.

*The Watanabe Rabbit and Cholesterol*

Medical researchers are indebted to the so-called Watanabe rabbit. This breed of rabbit suffers from a rare genetic defect that causes fatally high levels of cholesterol in the blood, a condition similar to a fatal gene defect in humans. The flaw that causes the high cholesterol levels was originally discovered in Japanese white rabbits by veterinarian Yoshio Watanabe just over a decade ago. By mating the afflicted rabbits with other breeds, researchers have since introduced the lethal gene into a variety of rabbits, all of which are now called Watanabe rabbits.

Rabbits with this flawed gene produce defective versions of proteins called LDL-receptors, which are normally present on cell walls and are particularly abundant in the liver. These receptors bind to fatty substances called low-density lipoproteins. The receptors latch on to the cholesterol-LDL complex and move them into cells, where a certain amount of cholesterol is needed for normal tasks -- to build cell membranes, for example.

Because the Watanabe rabbit's cells fail to take LDLs out of circulation, cholesterol levels in their blood soar dangerously high. Too much cholesterol in the blood causes atherosclerosis, a buildup of fatty plaques in the arteries, and these rabbits usually die of a heart attack by age two.

Similarly, human children with the genetic disease familial hypercholesterolemia, who inherit two copies of the defective gene, have cholesterol levels three to seven times higher than normal, and usually die of heart attacks before they reach their teens.

Watanabe rabbits are proving crucial to the search for better treatments for these children, as well as the tens of millions of Americans with less severe cholesterol problems. Among other things, they have been used in the development of an artificial liver to clean out LDLs from the blood of children with familial hypercholesterolemia.

TBR CORNER

It was great seeing some of you at the district meeting. The meeting went well and many thanks go to the various committees and Grace for all their hard work. There were many interesting talks and posters and the social events had a good turn out. Now for some updates.

NATIONAL AALAS NEWS

National AALAS is now on the web!
Visit them at: http://www.aalas.org

AALAS Information: Includes the AALAS mission statement and information on membership, governance, publications, policy, and principles.
Membership Information: Provides information on the various categories of membership and the benefits associated with each.
National Meeting Information: Here’s where you can get the scoop on what’s planned and direct links to the website of the hosting city.
World Wide Access: Provides web links to other web sites of interest.
Members Only Services: (still under construction) - Offering services especially designed for national AALAS members such as the upcoming CareerLine. Watch for all the new additions!!!

"Fax-on-Demand"

The latest member service from AALAS gives you access to the information you want, 24 hours a day! Now you can have detailed information faxed to you on topics concerning the National Meeting, Technician Training and Development, Branch Services, Publications like TechTalk, Test Process Flow Chart and many other areas. From your touch-tone phone, call (901) 754-2546 and follow the simple voice prompts. Have your AALAS National Membership number handy when you place the call. The information you request will arrive within minutes to your fax machine.

Redlands LATG Course Info

Redlands College is busy working on the curriculum for the LATG Correspondence Program. For registration and course information, contact Dr. Delores Meyer at Redlands (405) 422-1256.

The Importance of Certification in Today’s Employment Market

Have you recently applied for another position in the field of laboratory animal science? If so, you have probably noticed that more and more facilities are requiring AALAS certification as a condition of employment.

In today’s climate, employers are pressed to find skilled, knowledgeable technicians and have discovered that maintaining high quality animal care in their facilities is best accomplished by having technicians who are AALAS certified ALATs, LATs, or LATGs. Being AALAS certified truly means something to employers and to you too! The AALAS certification designations are recognized worldwide as a symbol of professionalism in the field of laboratory animal science. So, if you have been considering a career move or desire to advance in your own facility, do not hesitate to take your AALAS certification exam!!!

Call Carol or Jill at AALAS at (901) 754-8620 for more information on the value of certification or call me for information to start you on your way.

Not much else new. We’re looking forward to the Fall awards meeting and will get details to you as soon as we can. If you have any questions, please call me (Leigh) at (520) 626-4707.
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Without question, the best choice in changing times.
MYTH: Much research with animals is unnecessary.

vs.

FACT: Since 1968, the use of animals in medical research has been reduced by 40%, according to statistics compiled by the U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA). Aside from humane concerns, there are strong economic pressures against the unnecessary use of laboratory animals or any other research resources. There are only limited funds available for study of the wide range of human health problems that require research. Funding agencies, therefore, must restrict support to those studies that will lead to new knowledge of the body and greater understanding of the cause, cure and prevention of diseases. For example, the National Institutes of Health, the nation's largest single source of support for medical research, is able to fund less than 25% of all research proposals due to limited funding.

LEADING CAUSES OF DEATHS AMONG CHILDREN AGES 1-14 IN U.S., 1990

**Accidents**: Development of ways to restore muscle function to human limbs paralyzed by spinal cord damage: primates.

**Malignant neoplasms**: More rapid evaluation of treatments in animal models with specific types of cancer: rodents.

**Congenital anomalies**: Repair of congenital heart defects improved with development of extracorporeal membrane oxygenation: sheep.

**Homicide**: Studies of drugs that will improve recovery from brain wound injury: cats.

**Heart diseases**: Development of prosthetic devices for replacement of heart valves: dogs.

**Pneumonia and influenza**: Studies of influenza viruses: ferrets.

**Suicide**: Only animal model for severe depression exhibits symptoms similar to humans: rat.

**Human immunodeficiency virus**: Major advance for vaccine and therapy studies is development of HIV infected animal model: pigtailed macaque.

**Conditions originating in perinatal period**: Development of first animal model for cystic fibrosis will allow much quicker exploration of new treatments: mouse.

For more information contact:

**AMERICAN MEDICAL ASSOCIATION**

312/644-4558

**NC ASSOCIATION FOR BIOMEDICAL RESEARCH**

919/829-5911

In California contact:

CBRA at 916/528/1515

KEY FACTS ABOUT ANIMAL RESEARCH

Disease prevention, diagnosis and treatment are based extensively on data from experimental research. Medical progress depends on the interplay between both basic (animal) and clinical (human) studies.

...Virtually every major medical advance of the 20th century has involved the use of animals. Today, science is on the doorstep of startling advances in the diagnosis and therapy of Alzheimer's, cardiovascular disease, genetic disorders, HIV and many other conditions. Animal research has and will continue to play a critical role.

**NUMBERS**: 90% of research animals are rodents, bred specifically for research.

**SAFEGUARDS**: Stringent federal regulations govern lab animal care. In addition to humane considerations, scientists must care for their animals properly, or they may compromise their data.

**ALTERNATIVES**: There are few valid replacements for whole animal studies. Although some non-animal methods exist, many questions can only be answered in a complete living system.

**ANIMAL WELFARE IS NOT ANIMAL RIGHTS**: Animal welfare proponents support responsible, humane care for all animals. Animal rights proponents believe humans and animals are equals and that any use of animals, for any purpose, should be abolished.
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