

Society for Veterinary Medical Ethics

Newsletter

VVF

Volume 1 Number 1
March 1995

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WASHINGTON STATE UNIVERSITY

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Albert S. Dorn, D.V.M., President-elect
Philip A. Bushby, D.V.M., Secretary
Robert C. Speth, Ph.D., Treasurer
Jerrold Tannenbaum, M.A., J.D., Historian
Richard Fink, D.V.M., Parliamentarian

Message from the President

Dear Members:

The Society is progressing with the legal details involved in procuring a charter, which accounts in part for the delay in soliciting members for dues; but since our expenses have been kept to a minimum, just relax and be patient!

In this Newsletter, our Program Chairman, Dr. Albert Dorn, describes the scientific and business sessions for the next annual meeting, scheduled for Tuesday morning, July 11, 1995, in conjunction with the American Veterinary Medical Association meeting in Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania.

One of the objectives of our Society is to exchange viewpoints, opinions, even dogma if you insist, with one another. To that end, I invite material that can be developed into an in-depth discussion at the meeting. We anticipate the presentation by former AVMA president and SVME Parliamentarian Richard Fink, on the general topic of "Convenience Euthanasia". To some the very notion of role reversal from that of preserving life to taking it, is not only difficult, but odious; to others it provides a release from pain and suffering.

Clinicians are often called upon by an owner to oblige a "demand/request/plea" for euthanasia of a healthy animal or on one that is ill or injured.

Whether this be for the owner's convenience or lack

of funds in instances of illness or injury, questions arise as to the clinician's obligation to respond. Should/can society provide full services for care and/or treatment remains an ethical question for debate!

Brief comments, suggestions, rhetorical questions, position statements are welcome. Please submit material via letter or FAX.

I am pleased to report that our membership, now in excess of 100, consists of members in disciplines such as theology, history, psychology, law, etc., though the majority are veterinarians. We have not, as yet, made a broad appeal for members. We do invite and urge volunteer participation as presenters and candidates for service on committees and as officers.

I wish it were possible to share with you the many kind and supportive statements that were included on so many membership applications.

As your first president and one of the co-founders, I can only say, keep communicating!!

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President-elect's Report

The program for the Annual Meeting of the Society which will be held at the AVMA meeting in Pittsburgh, is scheduled for 9:00 a.m., Tuesday, July 11, 1995. The exact location has not been assigned, but when this information is available, it will be communicated to the membership.

This program will feature three speakers. Dr. Gregg Scoggins of Richmond VA, will discuss "Ethics of Species Specialization in Equine Practice". This topic should be of interest to all veterinary practitioners who work with many different species of patients.

A second paper will be presented by Dr. Albert Dorn of Knoxville, TN, on "Ethics of Discipline Specialization in a Multi-Person Veterinary Hospital". This topic should compliment the first topic, by addressing veterinary specialization from a discipline instead of species point of view.

The final paper will be presented by Dr. Richard Fink, of Hacienda Hills, CA, on "Convenience Euthanasia". This is a controversial subject with many important ethical and value issues, and should generate a great deal of discussion.

The format of each of these presentations will be informal and open in order to stimulate discussion from the audience. It is hoped that the members and attendees will present opinions which both support and countermand the major theme and ideas of the speakers. This is the most effective method of developing ethical viewpoints in veterinary medicine today.

Treasurer's Report

As of January 31, 1995, the assets of our Society are \$353.27.

We thank all of those who have contributed funds to the Society to help in its inception. I regret that I could not convey individual acknowledgments other than the canceled checks.

We have yet to send out a request for dues, primarily because we first want to have the Society properly chartered as a non-profit professional organization. However, if you wish to make a contribution to the Society equivalent to the anticipated dues of \$20.00 per year, such donations are welcomed. While such donations may not qualify as charitable contributions for income tax purposes, the donations will be credited toward the first year's dues when we begin to collect dues. Checks should be payable to: "Society for Vet. Medical Ethics" and sent to me:

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Editor's Note: This newsletter is being transmitted by FAX to most members, to save on distribution costs. If you have problems receiving this, please contact Bob Speth (509) 335-8631 (voice) or (509) 335-4650 (FAX). For those receiving this by mail, please send me your FAX number if you have one.