

Society for Veterinary Medical Ethics Newsletter

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VETERINARY MEDICINE
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Message from the President

To the Membership:

I wish I could announce a doubling of membership and that we had received material suitable for our newsletter from at least a dozen members. But, alas, neither would be true. What is surprising is the increased interest in veterinary ethics, and so I take this opportunity to thank all of you for your silent, but effective work.

Just think what could have been accomplished with a few suitable items to our "editor" Bob Speth!!

This may be an appropriate time to remind you that the \$20.00 dues is overdue and needed if we are to ethically pay for a legal charter.

Noteworthy accomplishments by members included the appearance of Dr. James Serpell, University of Pennsylvania School of Veterinary Medicine and Dr. Andrew Rowan and Jerrold Tannenbaum of Tufts University, as presenters at a 3-day conference - "In the Company of Animals" - sponsored by the New School in New York

With the publication last month of the 2nd edition of Prof. Tannenbaum's "Veterinary Ethics" doubled in content, we are assured of the finest available text; see my "testimonial" below.

I look forward to a successful meeting and seminar in Pittsburgh. Nominees for offices include, President-elect Jerrold Tannenbaum, Secretary-Treasurer Robert Speth, Parliamentarian Kathleen Potter, Historian Richard Fink. I welcome additional nominees for office. The elections will be held at the business meeting which will follow the formal program. We also need volunteers for committee appointments. Thank you.

Robert R. Shomer, VMD
President, Society for Veterinary Medical Ethics

Robert R. Shomer, V.M.D., President
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

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, in the Regency B Room of the Hyatt Regency Pittsburgh, 112 Washington Place.

Hopefully, the starting time will not be delayed because of the AVMA Members and Exhibitors Breakfast, which is being held that same morning at the Pittsburgh Convention Center.

Following the presentations on ethical issues, a short business meeting and election of new officers will be held in the same room.

The program features 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.

The second presentation by Dr. Albert Dorn of Knoxville, TN, will be "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 presentation by Dr. Richard Fink, of Hacienda Hills, CA, will be "Convenience Euthanasia" (see abstract below). This controversial subject has many important ethical and value issues, and should generate a great deal of discussion.

The format of each presentation will be informal to stimulate discussion from the audience. It is hoped that the members and attendees will present opinions which both support and countermand the

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major theme and ideas of the speakers. Discussion of these issues is the most effective method of developing ethical opinions and, hopefully, these discussions will guide the development of appropriate ethical positions for the veterinary profession.

Abstract of presentation

Richard B. Fink, D.V.M. Parliamentarian and
Featured Speaker

Each day every clinician faces the decisions of "convenience euthanasia." It could be easy, such as the old, nephritic, incontinent animal; or very difficult, i.e., the 5 year old health castrated male that the senior citizen cannot take to the retirement home. On the other hand, the doctor might be presented with a 7 week old kitten with generalized ringworm, owned by a 7 year old youngster. Is this a public health problem? What would the veterinarian recommend to the owner of a paraplegic dachshund with no bowel or urine control for two months? How does one handle the distemper case with irreparable neurological damage? Then the bottom line: the economics of health care for the chronically ill patient. These subjects and other should make for some interesting discussions for our meeting on July 11, 1995.

Treasurer's Report

As of May 31, 1995 the assets of the Society were \$601.63. Dues payments have been coming steadily, but slowly. We sincerely thank all of you who have sent checks to support the Society. We are pinching pennies as tightly as possible, but to remain a viable organization we need more pennies to pinch. Your help will be most appreciated.

As noted in the previous newsletter, dues payments received now will be credited for next year when we expect to have a formal dues structure in

place. Checks should be payable to: "Society for Vet. Medical Ethics" and sent to me:

Dr. Robert Speth

VCAPP

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VETERINARY ETHICS

ANIMAL WELFARE, CLIENT RELATIONS, COMPETITION AND COLLEGIALLY

With the recent publication of the 2nd Edition of "Veterinary Ethics," Prof. Jerrold Tannenbaum has further distinguished himself in this important field.

The revisions and additions are as timely as today's news, but timeless as a source of philosophical concepts for veterinary student, practitioner, researcher, animal welfareist, animal rightists, veterinary licensing agency and academician. All members of our Society should avail themselves of a copy.

Indeed, the author provides a rich source of references, together with his own observations couched in a fashion that provokes one's own thoughts and attitudes. Even when one disagrees (rarely), further reflection directs the reader toward comfortable and acceptable conclusions.

Published by Mosby, ISBN 0-8151-8840-4 at a cost of \$35.95 in soft cover, 600+ pages, it will be on sale at the AVMA meeting by Mosby. It is also available from booksellers, or directly from the publisher at (800) 426-4545.

"Testimonial" By Robert R. Shomer, V.M.D.

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.