Thanks and Praise from Grateful Clients

“Dr. Winnie Ybarra is a very professional young lady with a gentle, caring soul, whom any animal would be lucky to have as its doctor. Dr. Ybarra and her team discovered that Charlie did, in fact, have some respiratory failure, as well as some other minor issues which are controlled with medication. I am happy to inform you, he has not experienced an episode since that day. (This has) re-affirmed for me my decision to reciprocate my appreciation to you and your staff by becoming a benefactor to UC Davis.”

– John L. Sullivan & Family, Granite Bay, California

“Thank you to Dr. Kilezyne and the students and staff who helped with my horse’s care. I look forward to a long relationship with your hospital.”

– Mark Mitchell, Portola, California

Continuing Education Events Abound in Early 2013

The Continuing Education (CE) Office has been busy as of late, with several events in January and more planned for February.

On January 12, UC Davis hosted two large animal CE events. Along with the Food Animal Reproduction Medicine (FARM) Club, we presented the 4th Annual Food Animal Practitioners Symposium. UC Davis faculty who gave presentations at the symposium included Drs. Munashe Chigere, Ashley Hill, Birgit Puschner, Heidi Rossow, Joan Dean Rowe and Dennis Wilson.

Meanwhile, along with the FARM Club and the Behavior Medicine Club, the Livestock Medicine and Surgery Service presented the 2nd Annual Beef Improvement and Low Stress Cattle Handling Seminar. UC Davis faculty speaking at the seminar included Drs. Matt Cuneo, John Maas, James Olthof, Jeff Scott, Cassandra Tucker and Anita Varga.

Special appreciation goes to Dr. Varga for her integral role in organizing the seminar, which, along with the Food Animal Practitioners Symposium, drew an audience of more than 100 livestock practitioners, veterinarians and students.

On January 13, VMTH specialists lectured at Sacramento Valley Veterinary Medical Association’s Winter Symposium in Valley Hall. Dr. Frank Verstraete, Chief of Dental and Oral Surgery Service, presented “Recent Advances in Maxillofacial Surgery in Dogs.” Dr. Julie Meadows, Chief of Community Practice Service, presented “Veterinary Family Practice: Addressing the Challenges in Wellness Care.” Finally, Dr. Philipp Mayhew, Surgeon in Soft Tissue Surgery Service, presented “Minimally Invasive Surgery: Where are we now?” The presentations, which helped the three Services build relationships with potential referring veterinarians, were well received by the nearly 30 practitioners in attendance.

All three events were introduced by SVM Dean Michael Lairmore. Special thanks go out to Jan Harlan, Roxy Rose and Saundra Waas for their help in planning all of our CE courses. With their continued efforts, we are able to accomplish our mission of leading veterinary medicine by sharing educational expertise and best practices.

Upcoming CE events include the 8th Annual Camelid Symposium (to be spotlighted in the February issue), 27th Annual Charles Heumphreus Memorial Lecture (featuring Drs. Larry Galuppo and Sarah Puchalski), the 9th Annual Behavior Medicine Club Symposium (featuring Drs. Tami Pierce and Anita Varga), and the Wildlife and Aquatic Medicine Club Symposium. Registration for these and all upcoming CE events can be found on the CE website at www.vetmed.ucdavis.edu/ce.

Small Animal MRI Updated

Magnetic Resonance Imaging (MRI) services at the Small Animal Clinic recently went through an extensive upgrade that will greatly improve patient care at the VMTH.

The biggest benefit of the upgrade will be higher resolution images with shorter imaging times. Since all veterinary patients require general anesthesia to receive imaging, these faster acquisition times translate into reduced anesthetic time, which is always safer for the patient.

“The MRI upgrade consists of a combination of mechanical, electronic and software updates,” states Dr. Erik Wisner, Associate Director of Imaging Services at the VMTH. “This brings our imaging capability approximately to the level of our human medicine counterparts at the UC Davis Medical Center.”

In addition to better anatomic imaging capability and shorter scan times, the MRI upgrade will add new capabilities previously unavailable at the VMTH. As an example, the newer MR techniques that the upgrade brings will provide information about tissue function that will better help VMTH clinicians to determine the likelihood of recovery in patients with brain and spinal cord injury. Lesions of the brain, spine and other anatomic areas are now more accurately characterized, leading to more precise diagnosis and more effective therapy.

As imaging technology changes so rapidly, it is crucial for VMTH to stay at the forefront of that technology.

“This upgrade is a tremendous asset to the VMTH,” states Dr. Rachel Pollard, Chief of Diagnostic Imaging at the hospital. “It was absolutely necessary for us to do this in order to continue to provide the best and most advanced services to our clients. The improved imaging capabilities will benefit patient care enormously.”

Cheryl Stafford Wins Safety Star Award

Cheryl Stafford, Supervising Nurse of the Small Animal Clinic, was recently presented with the campus Safety Star Award. This award is bestowed to an employee who, based on co-worker nominations, supports a strong safety culture and models the UC Davis Principles of Safety.

In Cheryl’s 17 years of employment at the VMTH, she has always put safety first. Whether it’s accommodating ergonomic interventions with employees, conducting injury investigations/corrective actions, trying out new safety equipment, or facilitating injury prevention training, she has always given safety a priority. Cheryl keeps impeccable safety training records for her employees, and she continues to be proactive with injury prevention.

Only one person on the entire UC Davis campus wins this award each month. That’s quite a statement for the dedication Cheryl has made to patient and staff safety here at the VMTH.

Congratulations, Cheryl!
Planning for New Hospital in Full Swing

A Special Report from Dr. David Wilson

While attempting to bring order to the seemingly chaotic mass (mess) of paperwork in my office over the holidays, I came across a highly organized set of binders containing detailed planning documents for a new hospital as part of the VMJ facilities planning exercise. At that time, I was Chair of the VMH Planning Subcommittee. The date on the “summary of space needs” document in one of those binders was December 1994. Yes, that is 18 years ago. Some of you may remember all the work that went into that exercise, cataloging every square inch of the existing hospital facilities and projecting future programs and the space needs to accommodate them.

In the intervening 18 years, much has changed on the Health Sciences Campus. However, little has changed with regard to our clinical facilities (with the exception of addition of new clinical facilities to house Oncology, Radiation Oncology and Community Practice in CCAH, new equine treadmills in the Claire Giannini Hoffman Equine Athletic Performance Laboratory and minor remodels within the VMTH and VM2). Up until a few years ago, it seemed to many that the pressing facilities needs of an ever-expanding clinical program in the VMTH had fallen “off the radar.”

That situation changed when the VMTH Leadership started to move forward with plans to renovate the ER/ICU, Dentistry and Oral Surgery, Small Animal Surgery and the wards. The reality check occurred about 18 months ago when the cost estimate for these proposed projects—and the building upgrade that would trigger them—came in at a staggering $40 million! Clearly, it was time to revisit the concept of building a new hospital complex rather than investing such a large amount of money in renovating a 43-year-old building that would still not meet our future needs, even after extensive renovation. Campus and SVM Leadership concurred. Planning for new hospital facilities began in earnest in the spring of 2011 with the formation of a planning committee and, ultimately, selection of an architectural company—SRG Partners—to lead the effort. SRG is well known to the SVM Leadership. These meetings have defined a vision for the future, and have allowed us to come up with a district and site master plan. That plan documents and validates current and future space needs, functional relationships, operational issues and “user friendliness.” This phase of the project is currently being finalized.

Shortly, the planning committee will receive estimates of cost, timelines and phasing of construction. The current goal is to have initial architectural renderings available by this spring so that all can gain a vision of what the project will look like. These renderings will also give the SVM Development Team the tools necessary to move forward with fundraising. While I do not want to pre-empt this important next step in the planning process, I can share some of the overall themes that have emerged to this point. First, the project will not be one building, but several buildings that will be designed to improve access, flow, efficiency and the overall experience for clients, patients, staff, students and clinicians.

From The Director’s Corner

Happy New Year, and welcome to the first VMTH View of 2013. I hope you all had an enjoyable and relaxing holiday season. The New Year is always a time for reflection, but also a time to look forward in anticipation of the many opportunities that lie ahead. We should take great pride in the multitude of successes accomplished in the VMTH during 2012. Thanks to your efforts, we continued to advance veterinary medicine and provided state-of-the-art, compassionate care to more patients than ever before; we welcomed both first- and second-year students in our “new curriculum” into the VMTH for the first time; we earned re-accreditation by the AVMA Council on Education; and we finished in the black financially for the first time in several years, despite absorbing yet another budget cut.

We cannot rest on our laurels, however, as we pursue the SVM’s mission of continually advancing the health of animals, people and the environment we share. As has been the case over the past 43 years, achieving our goals will inevitably involve growth in the number of cases seen at the hospital, the number of students, and the number of personnel needed to deliver the cutting-edge patient care and student instruction we have all come to expect. As many of you experience every day, we are bursting at the seams in our cramped and aging (old) clinical facilities in the VMTH, VM2 and the barns. We will not be able to deliver on our promises to the many constituent groups we serve unless we provide modern hospital facilities that match the high quality of the clinical programs housed within them. So as we begin a new year at the VMTH, this is a good opportunity for us to explore the biggest piece of that projected growth—a new hospital.

While ground will not be broken on a new hospital for at least another four years, planning is well underway for the new hospital complex. VMTH Leadership, faculty and staff have worked hard over the past two years to get us to this point in the planning process. We are excited to bring you some of those preliminary details in this issue. As planning continues in the coming months, we will engage you in the process, and keep you updated on our progress, as we write the next chapter in the rich history of the VMTH together.

Let us begin 2013 with a renewed enthusiasm to “lead veterinary medicine and address societal needs.” While caring for animals and people comes with the territory in veterinary medicine, I want to thank all of you for going above and beyond in that call every single day.

Enjoy this issue of VMTH View. May it be just the beginning of a year-long presentation of wonderful highlights for our hospital, as well as the accomplishments of all the great people who work here.

Happy New Year,

Dr. W. David Wilson, BVMS, MS
Director, William R. Pritchard VMTH
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These renderings will also give the SVM Development Team so that all can gain a vision of what the project will look like. Plans are underway for the development of a new hospital.

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Upgrades. The current west entrance will likely become the service entrance. While ground will not be broken on a new hospital for at least another 4 years, planning is well underway for the new hospital complex. VMTH Leadership, faculty and staff have worked hard over the past two years to get us to this point in the planning process. We are excited to bring you some of those preliminary details in this issue. As planning continues in the coming months, we will engage you in the process, and keep you updated on our progress, as we write the next chapter in the rich history of the VMTH together.

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