



Arizona Branch AALAS Newsletter

Vol. 20 No. 4
November 2007

Arizona Branch of the American Association for Laboratory Animal Science

Have you sent in your membership renewal? If not, see form on last page.

Hope to See You at the Holiday Installation Event December 8th in Mesa!

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President's Farewell Message

Greetings! It's true, the Holidays are here! And, one of the most important Holiday events to attend is our annual AZAALAS Installation on Saturday, December 8th in Mesa. I love getting to visit with members from all over the state and learning who our new officers and award winners are. But, truth be told, it's the food and all those terrific raffle prizes that really get me excited!

It has been a big year for us in Arizona. We started out celebrating International Tech Week; which is coming up again this January 27-February 2, 2008! The 2008 theme will be "Laboratory Animal Technicians... Heroes Behind the Science." I believe we deserve a piece of cake for that!

Later in February, AZAALAS put on our bi-annual Spring Symposium in Phoenix. We enjoyed a number of educational presentations, posters and games. We were fortunate to also have several generous and informative vendors displaying some of the newest innovations in animal care. And, of course, there was lots of yummy food. Also in February, AZAALAS and SwAEBR set up tables at the Sally Ride Festival at ASU and shared games, education and gave out "Research Saves Lives," wrist bands to the young ladies at the festival.

We held an educational and informative Summer Video Conference in July. Our topic was Avian Flu with guest speaker Dr. Keith Ameiss. Thanks to Jeff Williams for his work on this.

In late October, several members and their friends and families enjoyed a very special day at Kartchner Caverns. Unfortunately, I had to miss it, but everyone I spoke with thoroughly enjoyed the adventure, especially the special bat

Important Branch Dates

Holiday Installation - 12/8/07
Tech Week - Jan 27-Feb 2, 2008
MSMR/SWAEBR Conference - Feb
14-15/08 at Tempe Palms Resort
District 8 Meeting - 4/23-24/2008 in
Seattle, WA

presentation given by Debbie Schaeffer.

I would like to thank and congratulate Arizona AALAS for your participation in making 2007 an outstanding year. Arizona Branch membership reached an all time record high this year. In addition, AZAALAS won the National Branch Challenge this year by increasing national membership by the highest percentage of any other AALAS Branch! You can read more about this honor in Jeff Williams article.

I would also like to congratulate the following individuals from ASU on receiving the following certifications. In March 2007: Susan Niell Eastwood LAT, in July 2007: Randy Dalbey ALAT, Nathan Lawyer LATG, In August 2007: Heather Davies ALAT. Barbara McNally LAT, Shawn Bitsuie LAT, and Jaime White James LATG. And in September 2007, Charles "Jeff" Williams earned his CMAR. Wow! Way to go ASU!

In closing, I hope you will join me on December 8th at the home of our incoming President, Jeff Williams and help us celebrate what will surely be an even greater year yet! Thank you, Jeff Williams, Sandra Schenone, Cindy Madura, Paula Johnson, Patsy Coffin, Jaime White-James, Frank McFadden, Tim Martin, and of course Grace Aranda for all your hard work and dedication.

Member Profiles

Nathan Lawyer is an Animal Technologist at Arizona State University

Nathan received his BS in biology from Radford University (Virginia) in 2002. He has been a pet store manager, a veterinary technician, a research assistant, and a pharmaceutical study technician. He has worked with rodents, rabbits, non-human primates, insects, fish, amphibians, reptiles, birds, and cnidarians (corals, jellyfish, anemones, etc.). His dad has been the biggest influence in his life, taking Nathan into the lab to work with research animals from the time he was 4 years old. He spent Saturdays working in his dad's entomology lab in Florida helping with everything from feeding an opossum to feeding sand flies. Next, Nathan helped on Saturdays at the Walter Reed Army Institute of Research in Washington, DC at the Department of Entomology (where he later interned), working with sand fly colonies. A few years later he joined his father in Nairobi, Kenya, where he had a chance to help out at the Kenya Medical Research Institute. "As a kid I thought I was just hanging out. I enjoyed it so much I never realized that I was being put to work."

Nathan came to Arizona last year. He is an AALAS member and passed the LATG exam this August. He is married with 3 children, a beagle, a corn snake, and a pair of hermit crabs. He is a big fan of animal enrichment because he doesn't want animals in his care to be bored, and believes that animals are easier to work with if they have some means of occupying or entertaining themselves. He also loves to watch animals at play. Nathan enjoys his pets, bird/wildlife watching, horticulture, playing the guitar, target shooting, and fishing. When asked about influencing others, he said. "My dad always told me, 'Choose a career doing something you love and you will never work a day in your life.' I have always loved working with and being around animals. I try to help people to love them as much as I do. It seems to have worked on my kids. I'm hoping it will work on others, too."

Natalie Williams, Animal Technician, St Joseph's Hospital

Natalie Williams dreamed of becoming a train engineer and she attended UTI for an Associate's Degree in Automotive and Diesel Mechanics over 10 years ago and is now currently in school to earn a BS in Industrial Design. She worked at PetSmart for 5 years, spent 3 years as a dog groomer, 10 years training horses, and one year wrangling (leading on trail rides). Early in 2005 she applied to an ALAT position online at St. Joseph's Hospital and started in March of that year. She works mostly with primates and the bird breeding colony, but also works with frogs, mice, rats, guinea pigs, swine, dogs, cats, and rabbits. She is especially interested in the enrichment of the animals in her care. At home, Natalie and her daughter take care of 2 cats, 6 horses, a flock of chickens, over 30 finches, canaries, fish, and one dog. Her hobbies include RC Model Airplanes, taking care of and riding horses, building stuff, computers, the arts. She says no one would guess that "I can rebuild automatic transmissions". Natalie credits Tim Martin with greatly influencing her current direction in life. She said, to influence others, "I tell people that my job is to make the animals as happy as possible. It definitely helps people realize that research is not people torturing animals, but people trying to make a difference."

If you have any questions or comments feel free to contact me. Jeri Ellis - (520)621-9699 or jkellis@u.arizona.edu.

Past Meeting Minutes

Minutes of the 7/19/07 Board Meeting

Meeting began at 12:07. The meeting was held at the University of Arizona, St. Joseph's Hospital, Northern Arizona University and Arizona State University via conference call. President Jeri Ellis called the meeting to order.

Jeri asked the board to review and comment on the minutes

of the last meeting on May 17, 2007. Minutes were approved as submitted.

Treasurer Grace Aranda distributed the financial report. Current balance is \$8,015.63. Some outstanding items such as Schenone poster award check, Kartchner Caverns payment and the UMC raffle donation.

Grace reported that the Buyers guide needs to be set, printed and mailed. A revised list was emailed to the board today. If you don't see the companies you deal with listed on the revision you need to approach them to sponsor us next year. A few of our regulars did not participate this year but we

did get some new companies.

Grace reported that we will need to start thinking of who to nominate for 2008 officers. Nominations and raffle information will be going out in the fall.

Secretary Sandra Schenone distributed the AZAALAS membership roster. There are currently 142 members in good standing. This is up from previous reports and is believed to be the highest ever.

Grace discussed the July newsletter. We have received positive feedback about it from other branches. Grace also requested new items for the fall newsletter, saying submissions are gladly

**Celebrate Int'l Lab Animal
Technician Week
January 27-February 2, 2008**

By Ramona Bober, Animal Care
Technologist, The Bionetics
Corporation

The theme for 2008 Tech Week is "Laboratory Animal Technicians...Heroes Behind the Science." There could not be a more fitting slogan to capture the essence of what animal technicians are for the animals they care for. Their feats are certainly notable achievements and worthy of celebration.

Lab animal technicians have been officially celebrated since 1999, when the first Lab Animal Technician week was approved by the AALAS Board of Trustees. This acknowledgment was part of the AALAS 50th year anniversary celebration. The annual celebration recognizes technicians for their essential and heroic contributions to laboratory animal care and welfare. In 2002 it was expanded to include technicians worldwide and was renamed Int'l Lab Animal Technician Week. AALAS and the Int'l Council for Lab Animal Science (ICLAS) continue to work together to acknowledge technicians for their roles in the biomedical/biological research field.

What a great opportunity to show appreciation to those hardworking individuals who make the wheels turn effortlessly for your institution/facility. Special items of recognition for technicians are available at the AALAS National Meeting each year and from the AALAS Bookstore at www.aalas.org.

(From Tech Talk, October 2007)

The Arizona Branch will be providing pins, certificates, etc for Arizona AALAS members so let us know how many of each you need and we will get them to you - aazalas@ahsc.arizona.edu

accepted. President Elect Jeff Williams suggested that the newsletter include National AALAS comments from chapter attendees which will push the date back to November.

Technician Branch Representative Cindy Madura and Southern Board Representative Paula Johnson reported that Kartchner Caverns has been booked for 4 tours October 27 for a total of 54 people. Our speaker Debbie Buecher will give the bat talk at 1 pm in the main auditorium. Tours starting at 1:45, the last to depart at 4:45. The first two have been reserved to include the kids. Tours start promptly and wait for no one. There are no concessions at the park, but there are stores at the exit off of the highway, and the town of Benson is very near by. Check the website for information on restaurants in the area.

Northern Board Representative Chrystal Redding has offered to attend Leadership Academy prior to National this year, with Jeri Ellis as the alternate. Both may be able to go if not all branches send a representative, with registration required by mid August. AZAALAS will cover airfare and registration for Chrystal as the 2006 Member of the Year and for Dustin McAndrew, who was Technician of the Year.

Jeff has scheduled the Summer Video Conference to be held July 25 at noon with Dr. Keith Ameiss to give presentation of his work with Avian Influenza. Jeff will confirm with the ASU tech staff. A volunteer from each area will need to provide refreshments, with Jeff volunteering for ASU and Chrystal for Flagstaff. Jeff will be the moderator and will send notice today after speaking with ASU Technical staff.

Grace reported that members Michael Rand and April Wagner have purchased the AALAS Foundation raffle item and mailed it to National for us. Many thanks to them for their time and trouble. AZAALAS will submit the usual calendar and AZAALAS poster for the branch box at national.

Meeting adjourned at 12:27

**Minutes of the 9/20/07 Board
Meeting**

Meeting began at 12:05. The meeting was held at the University of Arizona, Northern Arizona University, St. Joseph's Hospital and Arizona State University via conference call. President Jeri Ellis called the meeting to order.

Jeri asked the board to review and comment on the minutes of the last meeting on July 19, 2007 that were submitted by Secretary Sandra Schenone. Minutes were approved as submitted.

Treasurer Grace Aranda distributed the financial report. A number of outstanding checks have cleared including the Kartchner Caverns, Schenone poster award and Child Life charity. Some items yet to clear are conference depot for past board meetings, Technician of the Year and Member of the Year national expenses. We have not yet received receipts for any summer video conference reimbursements and these need to be sent to Grace with the sign in sheet from your region if it has not already been turned in. Total in accounts (rounded out) is \$7,469, with \$858 in savings, \$2692 in checking and \$3319 in the money market account.

Grace reported that the Buyers guide has been delayed but is in the final stages and will need to be printed and mailed. It should be out by October.

Grace put award and officer nomination forms on the forms page of the web site as well as sent out to the listserve. She has already received some nominations from the new email version and hopes this will increase the number of nominations submitted for awards and officers. Each officer is required to nominate someone for each position and award as well as encourage others to do so.

Jeri asked for articles for the November newsletter. We will need the Presidents farewell message, kartchner fall event synopsis, and articles from the 2006 award winners and other attendees about their

participation in the National AALAS meeting in October. Membership profiles, vendor articles and any announcements will fill out the rest of the newsletter. Items need to be submitted by Oct 31 to be included and allow for printing, etc. President elect Jeff Williams announced Board member Jaime White-James passed her LATG exam in August. Sandra will send recent certifications to Jeri for inclusion in the newsletter.

Vendor Liaison Frank McFadden attended the District 8 Council meeting in Las Vegas in August. He will send Grace the minutes to distribute to the board. The council is discussing how funds are distributed after a district 8 meeting, and if there is a profit, where would they go. The council will also be meeting at the national meeting in Charlotte. There will be a district 8 caucus for all branch members to attend after the general session and anyone attending the national is encouraged to attend to get a district report.

Board member Paula Johnson reported that 51 people are confirmed for Fall Fun Event at Kartchner Caverns on October 27. The bat presentation by Debbie Beucher will start promptly at 1 p.m. Tours to start at 1:45. No food will be at the event, but places to eat nearby off highway and in Sierra Vista are listed on the website. Some tickets are still available due to cancellations so spread the word. Directions and reminders will go out to those registered prior to event.

Grace announced Board member and 2006 Member of the Year award winner Chrystal Redding will attend the Leadership Academy prior to National this year. AZAALAS will cover air fare and registration for her and Tech of the Year Dustin McAndrew. There are a number of meetings Grace usually attends at the national that will need to be distributed to those going to Charlotte. Grace will be sending out the info via email for folks to check their schedules.

Grace reported that the Louise Brooke Raffle page has been updated on the web site. Jaime pointed out a date change needs to

be made to the letter. Grace will make the revisions and send out notice to our companies for donations. Raffle tickets should be out in the mail soon. Board members are encouraged to get out and get some local donations and encourage ticket sales. Grace will be updating the site as donations come in. Raffle will be drawn at the Installation event to be held at Jeff's home in December.

Meeting adjourned at 12:40

Are you Happy or Sad?

By Bruce Kennedy, AALAS President

That is the question I've been asked a lot lately as my time presiding over the 58th year of AALAS is drawing to a close. The answer is undeniably both yes and no! It's been great to be the president, but it also demands a lot of a person. Some ask me whether I am happy that I will regain the time used for being president. Yes, sure. But don't we all devote our energies and make commitments of our personal resources to something we believe in? On the other hand, no, I'm not so happy. Serving as president is an ultimate honor. So, I'll just be looking for another way to contribute to AALAS. Of course, the past president still has obligations, such as the Nominations Committee and the National Meeting Site Selection Committee. However, I am also interested in working closely again with the professional development committees.

I will miss organizing and coordinating the energy and talents of others to accomplish the goals, objectives, and tasks (the GOaTs) of our organization. But, there are capable leaders behind me—Chris Newcomer, Scott Perkins, and Deb Donohoe, plus others just now being mentored into leadership roles—and I've had my turn at the helm.

Some have contemplated what being president for two years would be like. Indeed, it would be an opportunity to have more time to accomplish goals. But, in my opinion, the fortune of being president is something that should be experienced by more persons in

Soak up the Knowledge!

AALAS District 8 Meeting Seattle April 23-24, 2008

Topics to Absorb:

- Geckos
- Humor in the Workplace
- Murine Norovirus
- Rodent Colony Management
- Humane DNA Sampling
- "Lean" Management

Guest Sprinklers:

- Kathy Laber - AAALAC Council President
- Helen Diggs, UC Berkeley Veterinarian
- Chris Newcomer - 2008 AALAS President
- Ann Turner - AALAS Executive Director

Get Wet Workshops:

- Xenopus Frogs Handling
- Rodent Handling
- Blood Draw Techniques
- Rodent Necropsy
- Gas Anesthesia
- Rodent Imaging Technology

Also Featuring:

- Technician Fun Fair
- AALAS Certification Exams

More Still to Come...

Find More information at:

- www.wbaalas.org
- or www.district8.org

our membership. Actually, the AALAS presidency is a commitment of four years, from being elected vice president-elect, stepping up to the position of vice president, then to president, and stepping back as the past president. In each year-long step one learns the ropes and spreads our mission statement of "advancing responsible laboratory animal care and use to benefit people and animals."

AALAS is simply an amazing gemisch of persons and institutions working towards our common GOaTs. During the year, I've worked at the three elements of my presidential campaign platform: training and the opportunity to learn, researcher support for investigators and techs, and international relations. I've seen the results while at the branch, regional, and international meetings I've attended and presented at; when doing outreach talks for our advocacy groups, such as the California Biomedical Research Association; through encouraging more managers to participate in CMAR; while promoting the scientific forum on cancer for the National Meeting; when engaging commercial member support for AALAS and talking about their products for animal research; in electronically signing the high numbers of persons passing the technician certification examinations; via support to the new veterinary technician committee; and by informing the membership about the training materials that we have developed and made available. I think I can speak for past presidents to say that it is very rewarding to see the fruits of the collective presidential and membership labors.

I met a lot of folks while spreading the word of AALAS this year. One of the best "jobs" of being president is attending functions as a representative of AALAS. I can count AALAS friends everywhere. I've shaken many hands, stood in many airport lines, accepted many complimentary glasses of wine, answered and made many phone calls, engaged in many conversations, and written many emails to accomplish the AALAS

mission statement. I've also sponsored several new individual and commercial members around the world.

On reflection, it's been a great year for me, and I believe for the association as well. Truthfully, I'm neither happy nor sad about my presidency coming to an end. I am just very satisfied. Thank you for the good fortune to serve as your president and for the opportunities you've shared with me. Take care!

(From AALAS in Action, October 2007)

Fall Fun Event at Kartchner
by Stephanie Munger, UA
Physiology Department

Bacon, popcorn, scallops, soda straws, fried eggs, and strawberries; these are not things people think off when going spelunking (cave exploring). However, different formations are often nicknamed for various food items they resemble.

On Saturday, October 27, AZAALAS had its Fall Fun Event at the Kartchner Caverns outside Benson. The event started at 1:00 p.m. with a bat presentation by Debbie Buecher. She did an amazing job educating all ages with numerous facts about bats, particularly those in Arizona. The highlight of the presentation was definitely getting to see some real bats that have been rescued, but are unable to be released and are therefore used for public outreach. One was even very accommodating and showed off his arm JUST as she was talking of his wing span!

After Debbie's presentation, we had the opportunity to shop at the gift shop and tour the museum to learn about the Caverns while we waited for our tour. The caves were at 99% humidity, but after the first minute, you forgot about that in the wonders of the cave. Our family was lucky enough to complete both tours. We first saw the Rotunda/Throne Tour with the Kubla Kahn-the tallest column in AZ. The lighting and music really allowed you to enjoy how beautiful these caves really are. We

also got to see the trail the discoverers made wading through mud as they 'explored.'

With barely time for a bathroom break, we were back to the cave entrances with the same guide for our AALAS Big Room Tour. All of our family and friends agreed that this was our favorite of the two. It is only available over the winter months when the bats are not in residence. It seemed longer both in length and time, but also seemed to have a greater variety of formations. We were surprised that the guano (bat poo) did not have the strong odor we expected this early in the Fall with the bats recently vacated. Again, the lighting was spectacular allowing us to see many fantastic scenes in the rocks! There were formations that made you think of Disney, and others of Tolkien.

There was so much to see with this tour, that the guides are always listening for new descriptions of formations to share with others at later dates. Our group was having so much fun pointing out different items. One of us asked about a 'silver-looking' thing and the guide was so curious he gave up his flashlight so that it could be pointed out. He highlighted the guard rail on the trail above us! It actually did generate an interesting discussion on how the railings were welded in place without disturbing the caves—tents were built over the areas during installation to contain all debris. Clever.

You should definitely see the Caverns if you haven't yet. You might want to eat first, though. If you aren't hungry going in; with all the food references, you will be coming out!

The National AALAS Meeting in Charlotte, NC through the eyes of some attendees...

Dustin McAndrew, Arizona State University, DACT

As Arizona technician of the year, I was given the opportunity to join thousands of people at the National AALAS conference in

Charlotte this year. It was much larger than I expected, with members practically taking over the uptown area for the week.

Even though I am not too familiar with cancer research which was the conference's focus, I was able to find some presentations and roundtable discussions that were beneficial to me. My favorite class was about gas bubble disease in *Xenopus laevis* which I have wanted to know more about for awhile. I also went to a packed roundtable on keeping up technician moral. Many people had great things to say and it was interesting hearing views from both managers and techs at different facilities.

I was amazed at the size of the vendors' area. I couldn't believe the amount of products. I was also impressed with the growing number of aquatic systems that different companies are making and how different each of them is. I was disappointed that all the vendors had to close so early because there was more I wanted to see, but it's got to end sometime.

During periods of free time I was able to walk around the slow-paced city and take in the surroundings and great weather. I also had some amazing food and met some great people. All in all it was a great week and I hope I can go to another national conference in the near future

Nathan Lawyer, Lead Technologist, Arizona State University, DACT

My first business trip ever took me to Charlotte, North Carolina to attend the AALAS National Meeting. I arrived in Charlotte late Sunday afternoon, with just enough time to check into the hotel before heading to the Charlotte Convention Center to check in for the National Meeting. After receiving my name badge and a few other goodies, I went to the Opening General Session, where roughly 4600 other attendees and I were greeted by Bruce Kennedy, the 2007 AALAS President. During the session, numerous awards were presented, officers were introduced, and various

business items were discussed. The Opening General Session also featured a very entertaining presentation by the Galileo Players, a Chicago-based sketch comedy troupe that caters to audiences within the scientific community.

During the course of my stay in Charlotte I attended several lectures and seminars on topics ranging from Effective Use of Bio-Safety Cabinets to Improving Job Satisfaction for Laboratory Animal Technicians. I also attended a hands-on workshop at the Carolinas Medical Center on Jugular Vein Blood Collection in Rats, where I learned new skills, and received continuing education credits toward my certification registry. And no visit to the National Meeting would be complete without a visit to the vendors' exhibits for demonstrations, networking, and lots of free stuff.

The National Meeting wasn't all about business, lectures, and vendors, however. From the moment I first walked into the Convention Center it became obvious to me that the social aspect was every bit as important as the lectures, seminars, and workshops. As I looked around I saw people becoming reacquainted with former co-workers, friends making plans to meet for dinner, and a general display of people setting the stage for fun. And there was plenty of fun to be had, from the reception following the Opening General Session, to the Lab Products party on Tuesday night that featured a live band, dancing, and a chance for everyone to really let their hair down. My view of what it means to be a member of AALAS has changed. I am no longer a member of an organization. My trip to Charlotte showed me that I am a member of a very large family.

Arizona Branch AALAS Wins Branch Challenge

By Jeff Williams, AZAALAS President elect, and Manager, Arizona State University, DACT

Good new!...AZAALAS won the National Branch Challenge contest! We won because our

branch had the largest percentage increase in national AALAS members over the past year. This reflects positively on all the institutional members of the branch and those involved at the various institutions that encourage their staff members to participate in the technician certification program.

The banner was presented during the Opening Session, Sunday Night by Bruce Kennedy (currently past President) and Chris Newcomer the 2008 President of AALAS. To say the least this was a "Big" surprise. Being the introverted person I am, I waited for another Branch Officer to rise and go to the podium to receive the banner. To my astonishment, I was apparently the only officer in attendance at the Opening Session.

It was an honor to represent AZAALAS in accepting this distinguished award. Currently the banner is displayed in the DACT office section on the main campus of ASU. The banner will be displayed for all to see at the Installation Event in December.

Tuesday night at the Branch Leadership meeting, another surprise was in-store. At the meeting a beautiful "National Branch Challenge Award", plaque was presented to Sandra and I. The plaque was mailed to Grace to display at U of A.

As one of the smallest branches, this award exemplifies the dedication of all officers and members of AZAALAS and is awarded to all members. YOU, AZAALAS members should be very proud to receive national recognition. My sincere desire is that this is just the beginning of many more awards to come to our branch.

Thank you all and hope to see you in December.

Sentiments about Ron Orta from Allentown's Upper Management

To our friends and colleagues:

Most of you have already heard of Ron Orta's untimely death. We are deeply saddened by his passing, and we know that many of

you were also close with him, and mourn this loss, as we do. We share with you our condolences and hope that you will join us in expressing heart-felt sympathy to his family.

In the nearly 15 years Ron was part of our organization, he left an indelible impression on all of us. His compassion and gentle nature were ever present, and he had a rare gift of converting everyone he met into a personal friend. He amazed us all with his work ethic; his emails often began at 5 a.m. PST, and his days ended with client appointments well into the evening. We will miss Ron as a colleague, friend, and extended family member.

To honor Ron's legacy, Allentown will be creating a memorial scholarship in his name. We are working out details with AALAS at this moment, and will circulate and announcement when this is set. We know that this act pales in comparison to the contributions Ron has made to the animal research community, however we know that he would be pleased to be remembered in this way.

We at the Allentown home office appreciate all your calls and notes with well wishes and condolences. While it is extremely difficult to do at this trying time, we are appointing new staff to continue to serve the industry in the aftermath of Ron's passing. We will be in touch with our clients shortly.

Sincerely,

Michael A Coiro, Sr
Allentown
CEO

John Coiro
President

Vince Pombo
Vice President
Sales & Marketing

Editors Note: Here is the link to the Everett Herald Newspaper which has Ron's obituary where there is a guest book to sign online.
<http://www.legacy.com/HeraldNet/DeathNotices.asp?Page=Lifestory&PersonId=97049536>

A New and Cost Effective Way to Treat for *Pneumocystis murina*

Immunodeficient mice and rats are susceptible to lung infection by the microscopic fungus *Pneumocystis murina* (formerly *P. carinii*). This includes models genetically lacking cell-mediated immune capability or B- and T-cell assisted humoral immunity such as athymic (nude) mice and rats, SCID mice, and a variety of immunodeficient mutant and transgenic models. Immunosuppressive therapies such as the administration of corticosteroids may render an otherwise competent mouse or rat susceptible to *P. murina* as well. Susceptible rodents infected with *P. murina* develop a progressive pneumonia which will eventually lead to death if left untreated. The source of *P. murina* spores that infect susceptible rodents, may be immune competent rodents which are not susceptible to diseases caused by *P. murina*, but shed large amounts of spores especially from 6-12 weeks of age.

The dihydro-folate reductase inhibitor combination of trimethoprim and the sulfonamide sulfamethoxazole has been successfully used in preventing *Pneumocystis* pneumonia in rats and mice. However, the drugs are typically administered in the drinking water which requires considerable time and labor and these compounds can be quite costly. Also, it is critical that the concentration of drugs in water be correct. A low concentration may be ineffective in preventing *P. murina* from growing while too much may cause hypothyroidism.

To meet the need for a more cost effective and convenient means to treat susceptible mice and rats for *P. murina*, irradiated diets have been developed which contain Uniprim[®], a tasteless powder containing the drugs trimethoprim and the sulfonamide sulfadiazine. By incorporating the medication into the diet, normal feeding will provide prophylactic treatment of rodents. No time consuming mixing procedures are required. In addition to saving

time and labor, the Uniprim[®] diet is less expensive than the trimethoprim and sulfamethoxazole drug combination added to drinking water.

For further information on medicated diets for laboratory animals contact our technical team at askanutritionist@teklad.com

A Case for Automating the Vivarium

by J. Preston Van Hooser, Senior Compliance Analyst, University of Washington, Office of Animal Welfare, and Manager of the UW Animal User Training program

Researchers, lab managers, technicians and veterinary staff in the vivarium spend their days performing research procedures, providing animal and veterinary care, and ensuring that the facility conforms to the comfort and regulatory requirements of research animals. These highly trained animal laboratory professionals perform daily tasks that are standard in the industry. Animal husbandry, sample collection, surgical procedures; the list is endless. They know first hand that a great piece of equipment or a cumbersome process can have a major impact on research.

For example, different species are used to study a variety of research aims every day. Each species requires a different method of handling and care, and the processes for performing standard research procedures vary by species and facility capabilities. Ineffective procedures and lack of proper equipment can be costly in terms of time, finances, and labor hours.

Although the vivarium isn't typically thought of as a hotbed for automation, there have been innovations and more are continuing to be developed. Some include:

- Automated Bedding Dispenser – Rodents
- Water Bottle Fillers/Automated Watering Systems - Rodents
- Squeeze Cage – Non-human Primates

- Tethers for Animal Infusions - Rodents
- Automated Blood Samplers - Rodents
- Telemetry - Automated data collection

Each of these technologies provides value and helps to make life easier for staff and safer for research animals by:

- 1) Reducing labor costs;
- 2) Avoiding compromising research by improving cage disinfection processes through better coverage;
- 3) Improving the overall health and well-being of the research animal e.g. too much too little bedding and the consequences of each;
- 4) Providing for more efficient use of time for animal laboratory professionals.

One of the latest technical developments, introduced just this year, addresses the use of low-tech spray bottles used for disinfecting. Called an SPF misting station, it is a mobile, automated cage disinfecting device that provides safer handling of rodent cages and reduces the risk of pathogen contamination by providing better coverage. As those in the vivarium know, using hand-held spray bottles to disinfect rodent cages is time consuming and inefficient process. Repetitive stress injuries are common, yet personnel working in these facilities must adhere to strict guidelines and standard operating procedures to avoid introducing pathogens into their animal colonies.

Effective procedures and state of the art equipment like these have the potential to dynamically increase production, reduce work place injury, and provide for better veterinary care and husbandry practices and allow for more reliable data. Each is advancement worth considering as you move to automating procedures in your own vivarium.

Author bio: In 2006, Van Hooser applied for and was awarded a Technology Gap Innovation Fund

(TGIF) grant through the UW Tech Transfer and Washington Research Foundation (WRF) to reduce his conceptual idea for an SPF Misting Station into practice. Afterwards he launched Cirrus BioSystems, where he serves as president and Chief Scientific Officer. Learn more at www.CirrusBio.com

Choosing Vivarium Lighting

Many animal behaviors are strongly influenced by the amount of ambient light. Lighting is a critical factor in both circadian rhythms and breeding cycles. Knowing the importance of lighting in the vivarium, how do you select the best lighting solution?

Commercial lighting systems focus on energy efficiency, not on verification. Lights can be turned off automatically, dimmed if sunlight is available, and linked to occupancy sensors so that light (electricity) is not wasted in unoccupied areas. This system combined with manual overrides works well for offices, but is less than optimal for the vivarium. These systems can be adapted to vivarium use, but the following issues should be addressed:

- How will the lighting be verified, do we have evidence of the lighting experienced by the animals?
- How will failures be detected; the bulbs/tubes, ballasts, and lighting relays can all fail over time how will we know?
- Will manual overrides automatically return to the correct light state/scene?
- Can overrides be prevented in rooms with critical lighting?

In contrast to these systems are lighting systems that have been specially designed for vivarium use. Vivarium specific lighting systems are usually sold with direct, independent light monitoring. Independent monitoring means that light records are based on an in-room photocell reading and alarms will be generated if light levels in the room are incorrect, no matter what the cause (bulb, ballast or relay).

These systems also have adjustable override systems that automatically return lights to the correct state after a timeout period.

Vivarium lighting should be designed for animals and the staff that care for them. Energy efficiency is important, but it is secondary to reliability and verification of lighting. Animals cannot override the lights if the lights are not correct and verification of lighting provides evidence of the lighting experienced by the animals. Additionally, it is important that lighting schedules and allowed deviations are controlled and recorded by vivarium management as they are held accountable for animal care.

For more information contact Angelo Sarto, Watchdog, angelo.sarto@edstrom.com

Time to renew your 2008 memberships

You can find a membership form on the last page of this newsletter for Arizona AALAS, but don't forget other important groups: CFAAR, LAWTE and SwAEBR too. There are links on the AZAALAS Forms page for your convenience:

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