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FEATURED SPEAKER:
Alexander de Lahunta, DVM, Ph.D.
More to come...
President’s Message

Cornell over the years, you will have the opportunity to see Alexander De Lahunta, DVM, on Friday and Saturday. Additionally, at the state level, we have provided necessary help for many regional continuing education programs by sending out announcements to speaker approval. The approval process continues to evolve, becoming faster and more user friendly. In the coming year, the NYSVMS is now ready to begin offering webinars for members to “attend” online CE tutorials through our website. The ability to obtain some CE on your own schedule will, as the many opportunities to speak with members on other issues. That should continue. If not with me, then with my successor. And, if not at the state level, then locally. Even more importantly, among you and your local colleagues.

In moving NYSVMS into position as a more vocal proponent for our profession both within New York State and nationally, we have taken strong positions on multiple issues facing our profession. Whether it be the change to the practice act that now specifically names “dentistry” as being under the purview of the veterinarian, that it can gain enough traction to continue. I do believe, as I do with our own regionals, that the more thoughts heard from those who are invested, the better the opportunity to provide a path to well-founded solutions.

Ahead of us lie many difficult issues which I have spoken of in previous articles or at various regional meetings: student debt; workforce and U.S. economic pressures on employment and earning potential; low-cost spay/neuter/vaccination programs; generational dynamics; gender dynamics. Those are just off the top of my head. I don’t claim to know the answers to any of them. I certainly know that I don’t have the market cornered on opinions regarding any of them. I know that because I’ve heard various opinions on all of them from many of you. It is the only way for the individual to express their concerns and thoughts to the broader profession. Please choose to read the articles covering these and other issues in our many trade magazines. Question critically the statements and the conclusions. Render your opinion at some level to the organizations that represent you as a professional.

“The inaugural event was well received by both the attendees and exhibitors. We are already looking forward to the second opportunity this Spring to enhance the experience for everyone. Be sure and join us at the Westchester Hilton, Rye Brook, May 15-17.”

Chris Brockett, DVM
NYSVMS President
Disposal of Unclaimed Animal Remains

Member Question: A client’s pet was euthanized several months ago, and they have not yet picked up the remains. What are the obligations for holding onto unclaimed animal remains, and how should they be disposed of? Do the remains need to be declared abandoned, and how would the client notification procedures apply?

NYSVMS Legal Counsel: The Agriculture and Markets Law provisions on “abandoned animals” apply only to a live animal, so these provisions do not apply to a dead animal, its remains or cremains.

The provisions in the pet cemetery law only apply to the method of disposal of the animal, and focus on ensuring that a dead animal or animal that will be euthanized is disposed of in accordance with the wishes of the owner. It does not have any terms for return of the animal remains or cremains to the owner who does not pick up the animal’s remains.

However, the remains/cremains of an animal are still the property of the owner, so a veterinary hospital should not simply dispose of them without appropriate notice to the owner and an opportunity for the owner to reclaim them—even if that opportunity has previously been offered to the owner. My recommendation would be for the hospital to send a certified letter (formatted for notification in the abandoned animal sections of the Agriculture and Markets Law) to the owner, notifying him/her that the remains/cremains of the animal:

- are still at the veterinary hospital;
- have not been claimed, despite notification from the veterinary hospital;
- must be claimed by the owner in the next 20 days (time period for reclamation in the abandoned animal law);
- if not claimed, the remains will be disposed of by the hospital. The notification should list the intended method of disposal by the hospital to ensure compliance with the pet cemetery law; the manner of disposal should be the manner of disposal used by the hospital for any unclaimed animal.

If there is no response from the owner and the hospital disposes of the animal, I would caution against charging the owner for this disposal, which technically has not been authorized by the owner.

Employee Notification

Member Question: Is there any requirement for employers to officially post in their office lunch room or staff room a notice advising employees whom to call and where to call to make a complaint against a licensed professional (a veterinarian or an LVT)?

NYSVMS Legal Counsel: There is no requirement. Keep in mind that the State Education Department’s responsibility is to protect the consumer of professional services. To do this, they take certain steps to make the information available to the public in a place where they might look (such as listing it in every Yellow Pages listing for any of the licensed professions).

There is no provision to post the notification for employees of a professional licensee because they are not the parties sought to be protected. Employee regulations are intended to protect employees, and many of them must be posted for employees, but this is not one of them.

Pharmacy/Unlicensed Staff

Member Question: Is a receptionist, or an unlicensed staff person, able to prepare medications needed for a patient?

NYSVMS Legal Counsel: In a veterinary clinic or hospital, the veterinarian is really acting as a pharmacist, and most of the rules that apply to licensed pharmacists in a pharmacy should guide the dispensing of drugs in a veterinary practice.

The law and regulations for pharmacies have changed in the past several years, and unlicensed persons are allowed to have a greater role in filling prescriptions, so the standard for unlicensed persons in a veterinary practice can also be broadened from the guidelines we published several years ago. My advice today is based on the additional duties that unlicensed pharmacy assistants can perform, and their limitations.

Consistent with those new rules, an unlicensed person in a veterinary practice can, acting on the written instructions of the veterinarian:

- obtain a drug (provided it is not a controlled substance) from the stock kept in the veterinary practice;
- count out the dosage units specified in the medical record and/or the written instructions of the veterinarian, and place them in an appropriate container;
- return the drug to the veterinary practice stock; and
- type out the prescription label and affix it to the container that will be delivered to the client/patient. All containers for prescription medications must be child-proof, as required by law; all labels must comply with the regulations that apply to pharmacies.

Controlled substances should only be handled by licensed persons authorized by the practice owner to have access to them. When these activities are performed by an unlicensed person, the veterinarian must “review and approve” the drug prepared by the unlicensed person before it is handed to the patient, as a pharmacist must if they are being assisted by an unlicensed person. The veterinarian or LVT must be the one to initial or otherwise record in the patient record the amount and strength of the drug dispensed. The veterinarian or LVT must be the person who counsels the client on the use.
of the drug, potential side effects, and any other relevant information, although the unlicensed person can physically hand the drug to the client.

In a pharmacy, a licensed pharmacist is permitted to have only two unlicensed individuals who work with them and perform these duties; the pharmacist must also provide the appropriate level of supervision over the unlicensed person performing these activities. My recommendation for veterinary medicine would be that a veterinarian using an unlicensed person must provide an appropriate level of training and supervision, which must include reviewing every prepared prescription medication before it is handed to the client by the unlicensed person.

Unlicensed individuals cannot “measure, weigh, compound or mix ingredients.”

Unlicensed individuals working in a veterinary practice are specifically allowed a limited role in giving medications to a patient. The Education Law provides that an unlicensed person may “provide supportive services to a veterinarian, including ... administering oral and topical medications, incidental to and/or concurrent with such veterinarian personally performing a service or procedure.” Although it is not specifically stated, I believe the law implies that the veterinarian should be present, or immediately available, if an unlicensed person is administering an oral or topical medication to an animal patient.

The regulations that outline the duties reserved to LVTs include among them “preparing and administering medications on medical orders of the supervising veterinarian.” This activity requires only general supervision by the veterinarian, a standard that is met if the veterinarian is readily available to communicate with the person they are supervising.

**LVT Duties**

**Member Question:** Can a licensed veterinary technician perform euthanasia?

**NYSVMS Legal Counsel:** Regulations that allow an LVT to induce and maintain anesthesia can be interpreted to also allow the LVT to use the same anesthetics to perform euthanasia on an animal. The regulations specifically provide for an LVT to induce and maintain anesthesia only under the onsite supervision of a veterinarian, the same level of supervision described in the Practice Guidelines for Veterinarians as “direct supervision,” where “the veterinarian must be on the same premises as the person under supervision.” This level of veterinarian supervision of an LVT will apply in the case of an LVT performing euthanasia on an animal.

As with all duties delegated by the veterinarian to the LVT, the veterinarian must determine that the licensed individual has sufficient experience and training to perform the task. Tasks an LVT performs must be performed at the direction of the veterinarian, and that direction should be recorded in the animal’s medical record. Remember that ultimately the supervising veterinarian is responsible for the actions of the LVT working under their supervision.

Whether the veterinarian or an LVT is performing the euthanasia, the owner’s written consent must be obtained and kept as part of the medical record.

It is wise to be cautious about performing euthanasia because of the number of complaints received by the NYSED Office of Professional Discipline from animal owners about euthanasias performed on their pets. Veterinarians have been disciplined not only for performing euthanasia without the consent of the owner, but also for improper administration of a euthanizing drug.

A different rule for individuals who can perform euthanasias applies in an SPCA or a municipal animal control facility (pound or shelter) where a veterinarian is not present. In the absence of a licensed veterinarian, euthanasias in those facilities can be performed only by individuals certified and registered with the NYS Department of Health to perform euthanasia on animals. LTVs are qualified by their education and training to obtain that certification and registration, but must meet additional qualifications as well.

A non-veterinarian registered or certified to perform euthanasia on animals must be employed by the SPCA or animal control facility, and must follow all NYSDOH regulations relating to euthanasias performed on animals at SPCAs and animal control facilities, including required recordkeeping of the euthanasia and the drugs used in performing the euthanasia. (See Section 80.134 in the Department of Health Regulations).

**Power of Attorney**

**Member Question:** If someone holds power of attorney for an elderly person, do they have the ability to make medical decisions, including euthanasia, for that person’s pet?

**NYSVMS Legal Counsel:** A few years ago, the New York State Legislature revised the form for Power of Attorney (POA) because they believed that people executing a Power of Attorney didn’t understand the authority they were delegating to another person, and they included new mandatory language on the POA form that requires the person giving a Power of Attorney to another individual to specifically state the types of decisions that the person holding the Power of Attorney is authorized to make on their behalf.

The new form is several pages long, and requires the person delivering the Power of Attorney to check off the different “powers” that their agent can execute on their behalf. The person holding the Power of Attorney who wants to authorize treatment or euthanasia of an animal owned by the person who gave them that Power of Attorney must have authority to act “with respect to ... (B) chattel and goods transactions [or] ... (N) all other matters” and the Power of Attorney may NOT contain a limitation preventing the agent from acting to authorize care and treatment of companion animals (limits on an agent’s authority are found in a section called Modifications).

A veterinarian faced with an individual who is not the owner and has not been designated...
by the owner as the agent for the purposes of authorizing consent to treatment, but claiming Power of Attorney for the owner, should ask to see the document granting the Power of Attorney (this request is not unusual) and review it to be sure that the person holding the Power of Attorney is authorized to act as agent of the owner for this purpose.

A sample form for granting Power of Attorney, for the purpose of determining whether the Power of Attorney is a valid one, can be found online at the New York State Bar Association site.

Euthanasia

Member Question: A client recently passed away, and according to the executor of the estate, had verbally requested her young, healthy cat be euthanized, cremated and buried with her.

While I know I could decline the euthanasia and give the dog to the caretaker to be euthanized by another veterinarian, I don’t want to do that.

I know animals are considered property, yet if an animal is abused by the owner they can be seized. I’m trying to figure out what to do.

NYSVMS Legal Counsel: It is true that animals are considered property, and that an owner may request that an animal be euthanized even if there is no compelling medical reason for the euthanasia. Euthanasia is not considered animal cruelty, provided it is performed in accordance with the AVMA’s guidelines on humane euthanasia. However, a veterinarian who objects to a euthanasia request from an owner is not obligated to perform the euthanasia; in such cases the veterinarian is required to return the animal to the owner (or owner’s agent).

The request from a deceased owner (either in a will or in other instructions from the decedent) that their pet be euthanized and cremated in order to be buried with them often presents a difficult situation for the animal’s veterinarian. Veterinarians who do not wish to euthanize a pet under these circumstances can discuss the issue with the deceased owner’s representative or executor, and explain their reasons for not wanting to euthanize the animal.

On several occasions, courts in other states have considered whether the direction in a will that an animal be euthanized must be followed, and have almost universally directed that this type of provision in a will should not be followed. The arguments that have been used in these cases may help a veterinarian resolve this issue with the deceased owner’s representative or executor.

Where this request or provision in a will has been challenged, the courts have looked at a number of factors, including the reasons behind the owner’s decision to direct that the animal be euthanized. In the case of an older animal, or an animal that was ill, and is probably unable to be successfully placed in another home, a court may uphold the provision. However, in cases where there is no clear reason for the owner to direct the euthanasia, or the reason was capricious, the court will typically direct that the will provision should not be followed. An important factor that has persuaded courts to overturn this provision in a will is whether a new home is likely to be found for the animal. If it can, a court is likely to direct that the will provision directing the euthanasia of the animal should not be enforced.

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Although I have not found a case where the owner wanted the animal killed simply so it could be buried with him or her, I think a court would consider such a request to be capricious. I would also note that it is not legal in New York State for an animal’s remains or cremains to be buried in a human cemetery, even when the remains/cremains are enclosed in a human coffin.

Veterinarians faced with elderly clients who are concerned about the fate of their pets upon their own death should encourage those clients to make provisions for the care of their animals after their death. New York authorizes the creation of a pet trust within a will, allowing an owner to set aside an amount of money for the care of their pet(s) after their death. Typically the pet owners are encouraged to designate in their will a person who will agree to take care of the animals with the sum of money set aside for that purpose. Any attorney preparing a will can assist a client in drafting a testamentary pet trust as part of the will.

**Necropsy**

**Member Question:** A veterinarian wants to do necropsy on a patient because scientifically he wants to know the reason why the animal died. Does he need owner’s consent?

**NYSVMS Legal Counsel:** You must have owner’s consent, always, unless testing is required by the state. In this case, if the owner is not requesting a necropsy and the veterinarian wants to determine cause of death, they may want to offer to do the necropsy without charging the owner—but that doesn’t eliminate the need for consent.

**Medical Records**

**Member Question:** A client adopted a kitten from a local rescue group. He was required to sign paperwork stating that the adoption monies were non-refundable if the kitten was returned. As you can guess, the kitten was returned.

The rescue group called the office of the veterinarian who treated the kitten during its short-term adoption, seeking a copy of the kitten’s medical records. However, the client refused to give permission for the release of the medical records.

Are the records in question legally still the past owner’s records? Is the veterinarian obligated to follow the short-term adopter’s wishes and not release the records to the rescue organization that now owns the kitten?

**NYSVMS:** Medical records are specific to the owner of the animal as well as to the animal. The individual or organization that was the owner of the animal at the time it was examined or treated is always entitled to request a copy of the medical record, and they must give authorization for the release of the record to another party, even if that other party subsequently becomes the owner of the animal.

If the medical records in question were created for the former owner at the time he was the owner of the kitten, then he can refuse permission for the records to be released to any other party; the records do not automatically transfer to another owner when ownership changes.

If the medical records in question were created for the rescue organization at the time it was the owner of the animal (either before the short-term adoption, or after the animal was returned to the rescue), a copy can be provided to the rescue organization.

If the records for a particular animal have not been segregated by owner, and a single medical record exists for the kitten under different ownership, those records must be separated so that each record reflects just one owner for the purpose of determining who is entitled to copies of the record.

**Change of Address, DEA**

**Member Question:** If I move my practice, can I use my existing prescription pad at my new location?

**NYSVMS Legal Counsel:** A practitioner who is moving their practice must make a number of changes in their prescribing and controlled substance prescribing registrations.

The most important of them is a change to the address submitted to the federal Drug Enforcement Agency (DEA) and printed on their DEA registration. The DEA Practitioners Manual provides the following guidance: Change of Business Address. A practitioner who moves to a new address must request a modification of registration. A modification of registration can be requested online at www.DEAdversion.usdoj.gov, or in writing to the DEA field office responsible for that state. If the change in address involves a move to a different state, the proper state-issued license and controlled substance registration must be obtained prior to the approval of modification of the federal registration. If the modification is approved, DEA will issue a new certificate of registration and, if requested, new Schedule II order forms (DEA Form-222, Official Order Form). A Renewal Application for Registration (DEA Form-224a) will only be sent to the registered address on file with DEA. It will not be forwarded.

The address on the practitioner’s DEA registration must match their NYS prescribing registration and the official prescription forms used to issue written prescriptions in New York.

After the practitioner’s address is changed with DEA, their address must be changed on the prescriber registration with the NYSDOH Bureau of Narcotic Enforcement, and on the prescriber’s Health Commerce System account. New prescription forms should be ordered with the practitioner’s new address imprinted on them. Any old prescription forms that are unused must be destroyed and the destruction reported to the Bureau of Narcotic Enforcement.

Contact the NYSDOH information helpline for specific information on making the address change in NYSDOH records and on the official prescription forms used by the practitioner: (866) 811-7957.
In 2010, the NYS Attorney General’s office opened an investigation into healthcare credit cards, including the CareCredit program, owned by General Electric, which is recommended by NYSVMS and a number of other professional associations for their members. The investigation was started because of complaints from consumers alleging that they were not informed by health care providers that the health care program was offered through a credit card, and that credit card finance charges would apply if the balance was not paid off within a certain period of time. Some consumers alleged that they were pressured by health care providers to use the financing program, and that they were charged fees through the financing program for treatments that were not provided until months later. Veterinary offices that choose to offer CareCredit to clients should give clients all the information provided by CareCredit, and allow the clients to make their own decisions about payment for veterinary services. Veterinary offices should also tell clients that CareCredit financing is provided through a credit card, and that credit card finance charges will apply to balances that are not paid off during a certain period of time, as explained in the CareCredit information.

Veterinary offices are entitled to request payment from clients at the time that veterinary services are provided, but the method of payment should be left up to the client.

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Evaluate These Solutions Before Renewing Medical Insurance

O
nce again, it’s that time of year. Employers need to evaluate their options regarding how they’re going to handle their medical benefits for 2015. Insurance companies tell us about everything they’re doing to keep increases to low double digits. Employers have been practically conditioned to accept a 12 percent medical renewal as the cost of doing business. However, before you accept the “trend” renewal, you should be sure all options have been evaluated and fully understood.

The implementation of health care reform and age-banded rates has made the evaluation process for employers more complicated and it has forced the industry to undergo an evolution of the solutions they’ve made available for employers. We’ll briefly discuss five solutions that all small employers should understand before they make their decision.

Moving to a High Deductible Plan
Reduced premiums open up employers’ flexibility to either invest the savings towards reducing the employees’ contribution, or help the employee fund the additional deductible. If employers don’t generate enough savings to help the employees offset the additional deductible, they can help their employees by offering certain voluntary benefits.

Defined Contribution
In simplest terms, this involves the employer giving employees a set dollar amount to spend towards benefits, while the employees pay any additional cost above that defined amount. Although the concept is simple, the implementation presents employers with many questions to consider. Is the contribution just for medical, or will it include ancillary benefits? Is this going to be a paper or electronic enrollment? If electronic, does the technology provider offer decision support and the carrier you prefer? How will employees find the help they need to make decisions? These questions can be answered, but employers need to give themselves time to research the answers.

Individual Policies
Does it still make sense to offer a group plan? What are the options in the individual market? With health care reform and no medical underwriting, the individual market has become a viable option for employees, even those with pre-existing conditions. While the individual market doesn’t offer employees the same tax advantages as buying group insurance through a section 125 plan, some employees may find cheaper coverage when you factor in federal subsidies and cost sharing.

The final two options we’ll discuss have become more viable with the pricing changes due to health care reform. Now that all employers in a particular area pay the same rates for the same plan, we have an environment where employers who are a better “risk” to insurance carriers are looking to find ways to find pricing below market rates.

Professional Employer Organizations (PEO)
PEOs allow an employer to outsource employee management tasks, such as employee benefits, payroll and workers’ compensation, and training and development. The PEO does this by hiring a company’s employees, thus becoming their employer of record for tax and insurance purposes. The advantage to small employers from a health insurance perspective is that since the PEO is not a small group, they can base the medical rates on preferred demographics and medical underwriting. Many employers can save money on their health insurance as well as consolidate additional administrative functions.

Self Funding
The concept of self funding isn’t new, but the options available to small employers under 100 lives have never been greater. From insurance carriers to third person administrators, it seems there’s a new self-funded platform introduced every week. The real advantage to self funding is that groups with better risk factors can get preferred pricing by going through underwriting and paying their claim costs, hopefully saving money instead of their excess premium being used to subsidize less healthy groups. When looking at these options, employers need to be sure of the maximize downside if claims are high. What is the liability if there are catastrophic claims?

If your health insurance policy has an expiration date in 2014, it is possible you have received a cancellation notice within the past month. These grandfathered policies do not comply with the Affordable Care Act requirements.

If you are looking for a new plan and need help navigating this new insurance landscape, USI Affinity is here to help you. USI is an NYSVMS Affinity Partner – a program chosen for its proven track record and for the benefit it could bring to your business. NYSVMS partnered with USI Affinity last year to provide members with insurance options when the AVMA announced its intention to cancel the GHLIT program. If you’d like to talk to someone about benefits options, call a USI Affinity Benefit Specialist at (855) 874-0267. You can also visit the NYSVMS Insurance Exchange at www.usiaffinityex.com/nysvms.

Often, this maximum cost can still be lower than a traditional plan, but employers still need to make sure they understand the risk.

There’s no one solution for every employer, and a good solution in 2015 may not be the right solution in 2016. The key to navigating health care reform for employers is making sure you have the resources to educate yourself on the options so you can make an informed decision.

Brian McLaughlin is vice president of USI Affinity’s Benefit Solutions Group.
In 2014, the NYSVMS Government Relations Committee screened more than 400 bills that could potentially impact the practice of veterinary medicine during the 2014 New York State Legislative session, in which more than 18,000 bills were introduced. The NYSVMS engaged successfully on a number of the bills, often in conjunction with your colleagues who serve in the Grassroots Legislative Network or assist Linda Jacobson, DVM, in the efforts of the Political Education Committee.

**2014 Summary**

It is becoming increasingly obvious that lawmakers are paying more attention to animal rights issues with an ever-growing list of “humane” groups regularly lobbying in Albany. The groups have been advocating on issues including Oreo’s Law restricting shelter euthanization, a devocalization ban, new ways of fulfilling continuing education (CE) requirements, greater restrictions on pet shops and “puppy mills,” as well as more local enforcement of these laws. The NYSVMS is engaging early in the process with many of these groups in an effort to provide a more reasonable legislative package being brought forth by them.

Attorney General Eric Schneiderman announced his office would also engage in the enforcement of animal cruelty laws after several meetings with the NYSVMS. Society representatives have met with senior staffers in Schneiderman’s office and, along with other interested parties, are planning further discussions to determine if NYSVMS priorities can fit within his new animal welfare agenda. The NYSVMS activated its Grassroots Legislative Network (GRLN) to help defeat a version of a bill banning canine devocalization. GRLN co-chair Dean Snyder, DVM, directed volunteers to call, email and fax lawmakers to explain how a ban would burden the profession and threaten the health of companion animals. While the Assembly continued to move forward with the bill, the Senate sponsor twice rejected this proposal and offered the advocates the choice of a compromise offered by the NYSVMS or no action on the bill. GRLN members once again played a key role in this effort, particularly those in the Buffalo area. A sign of your success is that a number of Assembly members reached out to us, asked our position and found it reasonable.

Lawmakers moved methodically through March, passing a budget with no tax or fee increases prior to the start of the state’s fiscal year on April 1; the legalization of medicinal marijuana; a comprehensive response to the growing prevalence of heroin as the “drug of choice;” and limited
campaign financing—limited to the Office of State Comptroller. The balance of the session ran smoothly and closed on June 20.

In addition to the challenges presented by the growing number of full-time “humane” group lobbyists, we were working with a legislature that is largely composed of members who have fewer than four years of experience in addressing the myriad of problems facing both the profession and the state as a whole. There is a growing trend in the expanding number of legislators who are submitting bills on behalf of “humane” groups and the increasing amount of time we must expend in educating legislators on the impact these bills would have on both animals and your profession. We are proud of our success and, as always, feel the state society’s future victories will be accomplished by working as partners in Albany and utilizing grassroots activities in the regionals.

Dentistry
This legislative session finally saw the resolution of a longstanding issue facing the profession — the inclusion of practice of dentistry on all animal species into the veterinary medicine scope of practice.

We thank long-time NYSVMS friends, Assemblyman Bill Magee (D-Nelson) and Sen. Cathy Young (R-C-I-Olean), for their ongoing support on this issue. As expected, lay practitioners, horsemen’s groups and agricultural interest groups originally expressed significant concerns with the bill; concerns that led to a massive lobbying effort both in Albany and at the grassroots level. The measure, with limited exceptions, would include veterinary dentistry within the scope of practice of veterinary medicine.

The NYSVMS Government Relations Committee (GRC), led by Chair Walter McCarthy, DVM, and GRLN Co-Chair David Leahy, DVM, and a number of equine veterinarians met regularly with the bill’s sponsors and with the New York Farm Bureau in an attempt to resolve differences. During the summer and fall of 2013, led by Dr. Leahy, the NYSVMS met with virtually every County Farm Bureau in the State and secured support for the proposal as part of that organization’s 2014 Legislative Program. The New York State Education Department (NYSED) helped develop the legislation’s language. We secured neutrality from the various horsemen’s groups and addressed concerns raised by “tooth floaters” and others. After weeks of work, the Legislature approved the legislation with only a single dissenting vote. The legislation was signed into law by Gov. Cuomo in August. Upon signature, it took effect immediately. This issue attracted nationwide attention and was the subject of a great deal of misinformation from opponents. We put a full court press on in the Legislature to make sure your voice was heard, an activity that was successful in large measure due to the outstanding grassroots work in which literally hundreds of veterinarian calls to Legislators were made, and more importantly, heard. We strongly believe that this is the single most significant accomplishment the NYSVMS can point to in an already solid history of legislative accomplishments.

Canine Devocalization Ban
As has been the NYSVMS stance in previous years, the association opposes the banning of canine devocalization. Given the contentious nature of the debate over devocalization, this issue consumed much of the Society’s legislative attention during the session, as it is critical we explain our position.

Senior Assembly staff and NYSVMS representatives began discussing this issue in the fall of 2010 while the Society surveyed its members about a proposed ban (A.1204/S.2271) as submitted by Assemblyman Kenneth Zebrowski (D-New City) and Sen. Mark Grisanti (R-I-Buffalo). Survey respondents overwhelmingly supported some restriction but agreed veterinarians must be allowed to exercise their professional judgment when deciding whether to perform the procedure in cases where behavioral modification failed, leaving the dog’s owner in the position of losing their animal that would likely be euthanized. Many of the survey respondents said they heard of or dealt with similar scenarios and encouraged the NYSVMS to include these concerns during discussions about the bill. The language of the bill advanced by the Assembly sponsor made it clear the NYSVMS should oppose the ban. The bill prohibited devocalization, except when the procedure is medically necessary to treat or relieve an illness, disease, or injury, or correct a congenital abnormality suffered by the animal.

The bill did not address the additional medical concerns raised by the NYSVMS. The bill also required veterinarians, performing allowable procedures, to report to their town or city clerk prior to performing devocalization surgery and to the Board for Veterinary Medicine once they finished. It would have made unauthorized procedures a Class-A misdemeanor, the highest level of non-felony misconduct in the state. Also, it would have made devocalization surgery grounds for license revocation or suspension.

NYSVMS representatives met with the bill’s sponsor and offered to support legislation that would accomplish the following:

• eliminate unnecessary reporting requirements;
• allow veterinarians to exercise...
1. **Tattooing and Piercing of Companion Animals**

   During the past year, a New York City-based newspaper wrote a number of articles relating to the cosmetic tattooing or piercing of animals. These stories led to the introduction of two bills. The first, S.6798/A.9058, was introduced by Sen. Martin Golden (R-C-I-Brooklyn) and Assemblywoman Nicole Malliotakis (R-C-I-Brooklyn, Staten Island) in 2012 and the second, S.6769/A.739, which was ultimately approved by both Houses. S.6769/A.739, sponsored by Sen. Tom Libous (R-C-I-Binghamton) and Assemblywoman Linda Rosenthal (D-WF-Manhattan), can be found online.

   The NYSVMS was sympathetic to the issue raised by the sponsors but had concerns about certain provisions. After meeting with the sponsors, they agreed to language that required that tattooing be performed by or under the supervision of a veterinarian and only when done in conjunction with a medically necessary procedure for the benefit of the companion animal and not for design purposes.

   As the bill progressed further, amendments were sought and given for various purposes, the final one being to specify that temporary dyes applied to an animal’s fur for events such as the Gay Pride Day festivities in New York City are not to be considered tattoos.

   We are pleased to note that the concerns raised by the NYSVMS were among the first amendments made to the bill and we remained deeply involved in and agreed to each of the subsequent amendments made as the bill worked its way through the Legislature.

   **Continuing Education (CE)**

   After lengthy discussions with the New York State Education Department in 2010, the NYSVMS and NYSED agreed to a bill meeting the criteria established by the Society’s Executive Board and NYSED’s programmatic requirements as part of NYSED’s efforts to implement CE for all of the professions that it regulates.

   The advent of mandatory CE prompted the inevitable proposals allowing veterinarians to earn CE credit for “public” services. Assemblywoman Rosenthal put forth the most notable bill allowing veterinarians to complete part of their CE requirement by performing spay/neuter procedures at humane organizations.

   In the face of NYSVMS opposition to this proposal, the bill was amended to allow for approximately 2.5 hours of CE credit for this kind of “public” service. Working with NYSED, the Society opposes the bill for three reasons.

   1. The Society wants this kind of CE credit to count for veterinarians seeking reciprocity in other jurisdictions and this function may not meet that standard.
   2. The NYSVMS wants to ensure any such procedures are only undertaken in facilities meeting NYSED veterinary standards of practice.
   3. The Society wants to ensure the legislation allows veterinarians the option of performing these procedures in their own facilities.

   The NYSVMS suggested it would support this legislation if it were limited to facilities that meet the appropriate provisions of the Standards of Practice established by the Board for Veterinary Medicine. This would ensure veterinarians were providing services in facilities that met these minimal standards and would ultimately serve as a response to the growing incidence of illegal practice by setting the first precedent that such not for profits be governed in the same fashion as veterinarians by the NYSED. Some of the advocates that the sponsor sought advice from found the suggestion to be reasonable but the sponsor rejected the NYSVMS offer and the bill died on the Assembly floor following the issuance of our Statement in Opposition. We will continue to push for reasonableness in the regulation of such not-for-profit organizations especially when NYSVMS members are

their medical judgment; and

- require a veterinarian to note in the veterinary medical record that previous behavioral modification attempts repeatedly failed, further attempts would be unlikely to succeed, and without devocalization surgery, the animal would likely have to be surrendered and probably euthanized.

Given recent cases in which animals were surrendered to the detriment of their owners, including a case in which an owner committed suicide following the euthanization of his dog, the Society’s position reflects the sentiment of the vast majority of its members and addresses devocalization in a rational manner.

The Assembly passed the bill despite the Society’s concerns while addressing some of the minor issues raised by the NYSVMS; however, the Senate sponsor, Sen. Grisanti understood the NYSVMS’ position. Sen. Grisanti met with NYSVMS legislative representatives and with Buffalo-area veterinarians and agreed with many of the points they raised. The advocates were given the choice of accepting many of the amendments sought by the NYSVMS with safeguards added by the Senate Sponsor or having the bill not see action. They chose the latter. GRLN efforts were not for naught, however. Several Assembly members were generally supportive of the legislation, asked for explanations of the revisions sought by the NYSVMS, and were sympathetic, some even to the point of encouraging the sponsor to work the bill out with the State Society.

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encouraged to perform voluntary services for them. There was a similar outcome on another bill (A.3360/S.2861) that would have inadvertently included veterinarians within its provisions. Responding to reports of increasing dependence on pain killers, legislation was introduced by Sen. George Maziarz (R-Newfane) and Assemblyman Michael Cusick (D-Mid-Island) to mandate that physicians take an eight hour course in the problems associated with these substances. When a later amendment to the Senate bill would have included veterinarians, the NYSVMS was able to secure a commitment to remove veterinarians from the bill that ultimately did not pass.

**Guardianship**

Several years ago, the NYSVMS opposed a bill allowing third parties to become guardians of companion animals and seek monetary damages for the animal’s pain, suffering and wrongful death, and mandating the award of punitive damages. Back then, the proposed legislation made it onto the agenda of the Senate Judiciary Committee. Such guardianship bills are becoming more popular across the country. Presently, A.3414 does not appear to be moving forward but we must work to ensure the bill does not take on a life of its own. This is a top priority for the NYSVMS. In recent months, the New York Farm Bureau, pharmaceutical companies, and other interests have joined the NYSVMS in opposing this bill, sponsored by Assemblywoman Deborah Glick (D-Manhattan). While it appears there is a lack of strong support for this proposal, support is growing led by trial lawyers and others. With it comes the threat of a vastly different relationship with animal owners and guardians. The NYSVMS will continue to lead the fight against this bill.

**Companion Animals**

The legislature has considered a number of bills addressing companion animal issues and directly affecting NYSVMS members. The Society has long supported the right of public housing residents to own pets. This year, S.1824/A.8470 was introduced by Sen. Adriano Espaillat (D-WF-Manhattan) and Assemblyman Marcos Crespo (D-Bronx) to address this issue. The bill reached the floor of the Senate but was not brought up for a vote. Based upon strong opposition from New York City area Housing Authorities, the Assembly bill has never shown a great deal of movement in that House. Concerns by the public housing authorities included dealing with dangerous dog complaints and sanitary issues. In years’ past, it has passed the Assembly or reached the Senate Rules Committee but has yet to make it to the Governor’s desk. We continue to press for this legislation, as long as it includes reasonable conditions to protect the interests of all parties.

Similarly Assemblywoman Glick has submitted legislation (A.3413) specifying that tenants shall not be denied occupancy of an apartment or evicted solely on possession of a pet. Legislation that had been submitted prohibiting clauses in leases requiring the declawing of animals reached the Assembly Floor but was not brought up for a vote, A.3362 (Glick).

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Assembly Michael DenDekker (D-Jackson Heights) also submitted legislation that would prohibit landlords from mandating the declawing of animals in apartment leases, A.4820. In light of increasing discoveries of companion animals living in unsanitary conditions, the NYSVMS urged the legislature to consider criminalizing “companion animal hoarding.”

As the legislative session was coming to an end, the ASPCA reached out to NYSVMS representatives and the Office of Attorney General Eric Schneiderman. These discussions are likely to be ongoing. To set its own position on the hoarding issue, the NYSVMS submitted legislation, S.3291, via Sen. Thomas O’Mara (R-C-Big Flats), making it easier to react to hoarding by empowering localities to enforce minimum standards of care at all animal facilities. This bill prompted discussions with senior staff in both houses and with legislators interested in establishing uniform standards for all companion animals, regardless of whether they are housed by not-for-profit groups or at municipal shelters, pet shops, or elsewhere.

As the legislative session was ending, the ASPCA reached out to NYSVMS representatives and suggested the two groups work together to get this legislation passed. These efforts are well underway. The Society’s Not-For-Profit Committee and GRC will continue to press for this type of legislation during the remainder of 2014 and in the 2015 session. The practical difficulties involved in these discussions involve both the fiscal reality that the state will be unlikely to provide significant financial support to any proposal and that definitions of hoarding, puppy mills and other targets of likely regulation are difficult to develop in a manner that will meet legislative requirements.

While the NYSVMS has taken the lead in this approach to animal welfare issues, the Society continues to oppose unduly restricting options available to shelters by essentially moving to mandatory no-kill standards. While the Society has never formally opposed the enactment of “Oreo’s Law,” it is concerned about the bill’s approach to animal welfare, including the allocation of increasingly scarce resources to unadoptable animals, and has shared these concerns with shelter groups. As the bill’s strongest proponent Assemblyman Micah Kellner (D-Manhattan) prepares to leave office at year’s end, much of the energy for this bill may dissipate in light of the greater understanding of the issues surrounding this bill that former Senate Sponsor Joseph Robach (R-C-I-Rochester) has come to have.

In reaction to reports of lost and kidnapped animals, Assemblywoman Joan Millman (D-Brooklyn Heights) and Sen. Ruben Diaz (D-Bronx) submitted legislation, A.3611/S.342, mandating the microchipping of all dogs and cats and establishing a registry of these animals at the New York State Department of Agriculture and Markets. While its members encourage companion animal owners to microchip their pets, the NYSVMS and others oppose this bill. It has not been moved from the Agriculture Committees in either House. The NYSVMS Executive Board has discussed this bill and while it supports the concept it is concerned due to the fact that many veterinarians are not taking this step and enactment of this legislation would likely be followed by a similar mandate on the profession.

A similar proposal requiring animal rescue organizations to examine animals for microchips did not see action. Efforts to track animal abuse more efficiently prompted a number of proposals to establish an animal abuse registry similar to the existing child abuse registry, including A.239 (Rosenthal)/S.2987 (Adams), A.2905 (McDonough), A.6951 (Ryan) and S.5036 (LaValle). Based on directions from the Society’s Executive Board, NYSVMS representatives requested the bill limit the registry to convictions for felonies committed against animals, standards that are becoming increasingly the norm in the drafting of these proposals.

Other legislators, including Assemblywoman Amy Paulin (D-Westchester) and Sen. Greg Ball (R-C-I-Patterson) and Sen. Grisanti and Assemblyman David DiPietro (R-C-East Aurora), have introduced similar legislation, A.5113/S.3804 and S.1384/ A.7363, respectively.

**Dog Licensure**

When dog licensure was ceded to local governments in the 2010 State budget, a unique situation was left, in which all municipalities other than New York City could regulate their own dog license fee levels. A bill allowing NYC to regulate its own testing requirements, A.415 (Paulin); mandating greater record keeping requirements on pet dealers, A.980 (Paulin)/S.4204 (Grisanti); imposing greater record keeping requirements on pet dealers, A.980 (Paulin)/S.4204 (Grisanti); and increasing the penalties for violations of the pet shop regulations, A.499 (Paulin); and increasing the penalties for violations of the pet shop regulations, A.499 (Paulin); Licensing and regulating pet groomers, A.415 (Paulin); Modifying the administrative hearing process for violations of the pet dealer law, A.1205 (Paulin)/S.3955 (Grisanti); mandating standards for groomers, licensing and testing requirements, A.415 (Paulin)/S.3156 (Kruger);
• Prohibiting the sale of birds that are not fully weaned, A.738 (Rosenthal)/S.1922 (Addabbo);

• Requiring installation and testing of fire alarms and sprinklers at pet shops, A.972 (Kellner)/S.3743 (Addabbo);

• Reducing the threshold for classification as a pet dealer, A.2115 (Paulin)/S.4202 (Grisanti);

• Defining and regulating animal breeders and so-called puppy mills, A.3371 (Titone)/S.3603 (Lanza);

• Establishing a 5 percent surcharge on sales of animals S.334 (Avella); or a 12 percent surcharge, A.3906 Glick/S.1028 (Serrano);

• Placing restrictions on the number of times a female animal may be bred and establishes conditions for animals and their young, A.7346 (Englebright)/S.5194 (Serrano);

• Allowing a consumer to return, exchange or seek reimbursement for an unfit dog or cat within six months of purchase, S.2570 (Ball);

• Authorizing a consumer to seek reimbursement for treatment for an unfit dog or cat within six months of purchase from a pet dealer, A.8786 (Titone); and

• Making violations relating to animal care by pet shops a misdemeanor, A.8892 (Zebrowski)/S.64436 (Tkaczyk).

**Production Agriculture**

Legislation to ban the tail docking of cattle, A.1893 (Rosenthal), was again introduced in the Assembly. The GRC worked on this issue with the New York Farm Bureau and other parties and found support from Agriculture Committee Chair Bill Magee but was unable to convince the sponsor to withdraw her proposal. Much the same can be said of our efforts on a proposal to prohibit the confinement of animal for food production, A.1928 (Rosenthal).

Early in the session, Assemblyman Kavanagh and Sen. Daniel Squadron (D-Brooklyn) introduced a proposal (A.769/S.233) to prohibit the non-therapeutic use of antimicrobial agents in production animals. The sponsors introduced the measure based on their concerns about antibiotic-resistant infections in humans, exposure to antimicrobial agents in the food supply, and health care cost increases rather than to address a perceived problem. Society representatives worked with the New York State Department of Agriculture and Markets, the Farm Bureau, and other groups on this issue, which was not given consideration in either house.

The same legislators introduced bills to mandate the vaccination of egg-laying hens against salmonella, A.105/S.6430. The New York State Department of Agriculture and Markets noted its regulatory system has helped reduce incidences of this disease and pointed to the high costs of complying with the measure. Neither house considered it.

Additional Production Agriculture bills included the following:

- Objections to the production of foie gras led to the introduction of a bill to ban the force-feeding of birds, S.2867 (Avella). The NYSVMS has taken the lead role in opposing these measures.

**Equine**

While most attention was directed at the pending New York City proposal to ban horse-drawn carriages from Central Park, a proposal whose ultimate fate remains very much in doubt, a number of other proposals were submitted to the Legislature this year, including:

- Requiring the Department of Agriculture and Markets to inspect the condition of horse stalls in New York City, A.129 (Cusick)/S.4382 (Serrano);

- Exempting landowners from liability for equine activities on their lands under many conditions, A.317 (Hawley)/S.2380 (Ranzenhofer);

- Completely prohibiting the operation of horse-drawn cabs in New York City, A.997 (Rosenthal)/S.667 (Avella);

- Establishing parameters of civil liability for persons engaged in equine activities, A.1513 (Magee)/S.4962 (Ritchie);
• Notifying horse owners and trainers of the responsible and humane retirement of the horses, A.8988 (Glick);
• Requiring attempts to find a not-for-profit group to take possession of an unwanted horse before it could be euthanized, S.2389 (Adams);
• Prohibiting the slaughter of horses for human consumption, S.4615(Marchione)/A.3905 (Glick);
• Exempting owners of horses pulling carriages from the provisions of law regarding torturing an animal, A.9384 (Pretlow); and
• Specifically authorizing the horse-drawn carriages in New York City, A.9385 (Pretlow).

Miscellaneous Animal Issues
A number of proposals designed to redefine the relationship between owners and animals drew attention of the NYSVMS this year. At the request of the State’s District Attorneys, Assemblywoman Rosenthal introduced legislation to provide for better enforcement of animal cruelty laws (A.893 and A.1659). The bill recodifies Agriculture and Markets law provisions as Penal Law, with appropriate gradations, based on the seriousness of the offenses. The Assembly Codes Committee and Senate Agriculture and Codes Committees gave serious consideration to these bills but did not act on them. The NYSVMS worked with the sponsors and the District Attorneys to ensure the proposed amendments did not impair sound agricultural practices and urged the expansion of the draft to better encompass prosecution of appropriate cases of animal hoarding.

The Society discussed the problems of loosely organized not-for-profits and animal hoarders and attempted to ensure the amendments address these. If the recodification succeeds, law enforcers will have to pay closer attention to animal cruelty and the State Division for Criminal Justice Services will need to spend more time teaching them in its educational programs instead of largely ignoring the Agriculture and Markets law provisions. We are encouraged District Attorneys are adopting a mantra familiar to many Society members, “an animal is an animal, regardless of who has custody of it.” This idea will help ensure these laws are enforced even-handedly. The NYSVMS will continue to support measures designed to eliminate hoarding and illegal practice of veterinary medicine throughout the state. Other legislation involving companion animals the Society has been tracking includes the following:
• Establishing of a Task Force to improve enforcement and investigation of animal abuse, A.741 (Rosenthal);
• Mandating an audit of schools to determine compliance with humane education mandates, A.207 (Rosenthal);
• Increasing the penalties for aggravated cruelty to animals, A.835 (Ryan);
• Providing a tax credit for spay/neuter services, A.976 (Kellner)/S.2795 (Ball);
• Providing a tax deduction for unreimbursed veterinary expenses, A.977 (Kellner)/S.4305 (Serrano);
• Providing a tax credit for adoptions of companion animals from animal shelters or humane societies, A.979 (Kellner)/S.5896 (Parker);
• Establishing an income tax check off for donations to the Animal Population Control Program, A.980 (Kellner);
• Creating the rescue animal spay and neuter fund, A.1333 (Lentol);
• Making the theft of dogs and cats grand larceny in the fourth degree, a class E Felony, S.1495 (Marcellino)/A.3769 (Glick);
• Establishing first-and second-degree pet theft offenses, A.1643 (Lentol)/S.2336 (Klein);
• Prohibiting tail docking except when medically necessary and when performed by a veterinarian, A.3428 (Glick);
• Making numerous modifications to Buster’s Law;
• Increasing penalties for animal cruelty committed in the presence of a child, A.706 (Rosenthal);
• Requiring animal shelters to file an annual report on animal intake and disposition, A.6768 (Weprin) and A.7526 (Katz)/S.3429 (Krueger); and
• Requiring that anti-freeze cannot be sold if it contains less than 30ppm of designated bitering agents, S.3518 (O’Brien).

A.4331, introduced by Assemblywoman Millman, would prohibit the confinement of animals in extreme temperatures. While the NYSVMS is concerned about animal confinement in high temperatures, it is not known whether animal confinement in cars in cold temperatures is truly a problem. In some cases, cars provide better shelter than animal huts. An amendment to the bill included the provision: a police officer must believe an animal is in imminent danger of immediate death or serious injury and the legislation dealt only with high temperatures. It subsequently died on the Assembly floor without a vote. A similar bill, A.2798 (Rosenthal), would prohibit the tethering of a dog for more than six hours a day. However, this bill did not receive serious consideration.

Assemblyman Englebright and Senator Serrano submitted legislation that would, among other things, revisit intracardiac euthanization and specify the procedures a veterinarian and animal owner would have to comply with prior to the euthanization of a companion animal, A.7589 (Englebright)/S.6218 (Serrano). The bills were not given consideration in either house.

Sen. Marchione and Assemblyman McDonald submitted a bill authorizing the use of Animal Population Control Funds for local trap, neuter and release programs for feral cats (A.9487/S.7290). This ASPCA proposal was supported by the NYSVMS Executive Board as a reasonable use of these funds.

Sen. LaValle and Assemblywoman Glick submitted the “Veterinary Emergency
Response and Mobility Act of 2014 following Superstorm Sandy and its aftermath. The bill, A.9786/S.7595, included language requested by the NYSVMS to prevent abuse of the provisions. It passed the Assembly but was not considered in the final hours of the Senate session despite strong support from its sponsor, Sen. LaValle.

Sen. Boyle and Assemblyman Brook-Krasny proposed a bill mandating that all dogs and cats at research facilities be offered through private placement or to a rescue or shelter organization prior to euthanization, A.9900/S.7475. The bills were not considered.

Dangerous Dogs
New York State law prohibits breed-specific dog laws but despite this, a number of proposals dealing with dangerous dogs were introduced including proposals:

- Increasing penalties for knowingly harboring dangerous dogs, A.8842 (Tedisco);
- Prohibiting discrimination against the owners of specific breeds of dog, A.6949 (Zebrowski);
- Prohibiting cancellation of a homeowner’s insurance policy based upon the ownership of a specific breed of dog, A.6957 (Rosenthal)/S.2568 (Ball); and
- Prohibiting an insurer from refusing to issue or renew a policy based upon the breed of a dog owned by the policyholder, S.624 (Sampson), S.3092 (Robach), S.4822 (LoValle) and A.3952 (Glick).

Rabies
Once again, the legislature considered, although only briefly, a bill allowing farmers to vaccinate their own livestock against rabies, as introduced by Assemblyman Angelo Santabarbara (D-Rotterdam). As always, the NYSVMS strongly opposed this measure (A.676). The Assembly Agriculture Committee Chair Bill Magee held the bill in committee under the sponsorship of a newly elected member in place of the now-retired Jack McEneny. Understanding the political nature of this move and the risks of its enactment, Sen. Young did submit the bill this year. The NYSVMS applauds Assemblyman Bill Magee and Sen. Cathy Young for their leadership on this longstanding issue.

Finally, legislation to exempt police work dogs from the confinement and observation periods was submitted, by Sen. David Carlucci (D-Rockland/Westchester) and Assemblyman Zebrowski (S.1993/A.1282).

Hill, Gosdeck and McGraw has been proud to represent the NYSVMS for two decades and, while the faces may change, it is looking forward to working on behalf of the Society and to future successes working with the GRC and GRLN. The GRC will continue to review all bills impacting veterinary medicine and we must remain vigilant and proactive as state lawmakers respect veterinarians but have a growing tendency to react “from the heart” on issues near and dear to various advocacy groups.

If you have thoughts about current legislation or ideas for future bills, we encourage you to contact GRC Chair Walter McCarthy, DVM, GRLN Chair David Leahy, DVM, or NYSVMS Headquarters. The NYSVMS is your voice in state government. We encourage you to participate in GRC and in the GRLN or by contributing to the Society’s Veterinary Political Education Committee.
This year’s New York State Fall Veterinary Conference (NYS-VC Fall), held Oct. 10-12, at the Cornell University College of Veterinary Medicine, was a rousing success! The Seventh Annual NYS-VC Fall drew nearly 650 attendees to the popular multi-species, multi-track event. In addition to providing the regular multi-discipline tracks, the conference featured a number of new opportunities for attendees, including: the DeeDee Arrison Holistic & Integrative Wellness Seminar featuring a series of seminars by veterinary acupuncturist Linda Boggie, DVM; Clinical Investigator’s Day; the New York Veterinary Educator’s Exchange and the John W. Whitfield Surgical Short Course; and more.

Saturday’s CE seminars were punctuated by the DeeDee Arrison Concert for the Animals, featuring rising stars of the Stradivari Society Tim Fain and Ben Beilman, accompanied by pianist Robert Koenig. The concert, sponsored by Clement and Karen Arrison in honor of their beloved Briard, DeeDee, was open to NYS-VC attendees, the public and well behaved animals of all species.

The culmination of the conference was the annual Celebration Dinner, held Saturday, Oct. 11, at the newly renovated Stocking Hall. Those honored at the celebration included:

- NYSVMS Merit Award – D. Anthony Beane, DVM
- NYSVMS Veterinarian of the Year – Francis Fassett, DVM
- NYS-VC Speaker of the Year – Mark Peterson, DVM, DACVIM
- Daniel Elmer Salmon Award For Distinguished Service – Lila Miller, DVM

Additionally, David Leahy, DVM, was awarded an NYSVMS Merit Award during the Society’s Annual Business Meeting, Sunday morning, for his work in securing the passage of the animal dentistry legislation in New York State.

Many thanks to our attendees, exhibitors and conference sponsors for making NYS-VC such a smashing success.

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Malcom Kram, DVM, presented the Daniel Elmer Salmon Award for Distinguished Alumni Service to Lila Miller, DVM, for her dedication and advancement to the field of shelter medicine.

Margret Thompson, DVM, DACVR, presented the 2013 NYS-VC Speaker of the Year award to Mark E. Peterson, DVM, DACVIM. Pictured with NYS-VC Conference Committee member and 2015 President-Elect Susan Wylegala, DVM (pictured on right).

NYSVMS President Chris Brockett, DVM, presented the NYSVMS Merit award to D. Anthony Beane, DVM, in recognition of his outstanding contributions to the society, the veterinary professional and for the Northern New York regional VMA.

NYSVMS President Chris Brockett, DVM, presented the Veterinarian of the Year award to Francis Fassett, DVM, in recognition of his outstanding professional and public service.
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Single doctor with 15 years’ experience is looking to purchase a 1-2 doctor Small Animal practice in Queens, Nassau or western Suffolk. Pre-approved and financing ready. All responses will be kept confidential. Please e-mail exoticdoc15@gmail.com.
The NYSVMS is now accepting submissions for the role of NYSVMS Delegate and Alternate Delegate.

Candidates interested in officer positions should send their nomination to NYSVMS Executive Director Jennifer Mauer, CAE, by Feb. 1, 2015. There is no formal application form. Letters of interest and all pertinent credentials can be sent via email to jmauer@nysvms.org or mail to:

NYSVMS
100 Great Oaks Blvd., Suite 127
Albany, NY 12203

The NYSVMS Executive Board will interview candidates beginning in March 2015 through June 2015. The Executive Board will vote to recommend their candidate for these positions in August, and the candidate will be presented for a membership vote at the Annual Business Meeting in October.

The AVMA Delegate and Alternate Delegate will assume responsibilities of office on Jan. 1, 2016, serving a four-year term.

The House of Delegates holds its regular annual session in conjunction with the AVMA’s annual convention and holds a regular winter session in conjunction with the January AVMA Veterinary Leadership Conference. Travel and expenses are paid for both positions.

Candidates interested in the position should send their nomination to NYSVMS Executive Director Jennifer Mauer by Feb. 1, 2015.

For more information, call NYSVMS Executive Director Jennifer Mauer at (800) 876-9867.