

# Society for Veterinary Medical Ethics Newsletter

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## Message from the President

The Society for Veterinary Medical Ethics will hold its annual meeting at the AVMA Meeting in Louisville, KY on Tuesday July 23, 1996. All members and other individuals are invited and encouraged to attend this session.

A full day of meetings and discussions on a variety of ethical and value issues are proposed for the meeting this year. Preliminary plans are to organize a half-day session on Ethical Issues of Animal Ownership. Topics for discussion would include the human-animal bond, quality of life of animals, convenience euthanasia, and animal welfare.

The other half-day session will discuss the Ethics of Veterinary Specialization. topics for discussion would include the growth of veterinary specialties, the relationship of general practice to specialty practice, duty to refer, fee-splitting, representation of specialists to the public, and the development of subspecialties.

If any members or other individuals are interested in presenting a paper or leading a discussion on one of these topics, please let me know by March 15, 1996. Dr. Jerrold Tannenbaum is also involved with the program planning and may be contacted about this meeting.

If you do not wish to present a paper or lead a discussion, your attendance at this meeting will be appreciated. There is no registration fee and your thoughts and ideas are important for the development of ethical and value issues for the veterinary profession.

I look for to seeing you in Louisville!

Albert R. Dorn, DVM, MS  
President, Society for Veterinary Medical Ethics

Albert S. Dorn, D.V.M., President  
Jerrold Tannenbaum, M.A., J.D., President-Elect  
Robert R. Shomer, V.M.D., Past-President  
Kathy Potter, D.V.M., Secretary  
Robert C. Speth, Ph.D., Treasurer  
James Harris D.V.M., Parliamentarian  
Richard Fink, D.V.M., Historian

## Message from the President-Elect

To the members of our Society, a problem for your consideration.

At a conference on animals and society held at the New School for Social Research in New York City in April of 1995, I presented a historical review of the treatment of animals as property by the English and American legal systems. The paper has been published in the Fall 1995 issue of SOCIAL RESEARCH, which contains the proceedings of this very interesting conference. I argued that the concept of property -- as it is actually employed by the law -- is consistent with substantial legal and ethical constraints on how people may use or treat animals. I suggested that the categorization of animals as property, based on 1,000 years of Anglo-American legal history and rooted in deep-seated societal attitudes reflected in this history, is here to stay. I argued that, because animals are not likely to be considered persons, or the legal or moral equals of persons, it will be more fruitful to work within present legal parameters, which not only afford opportunities for legal protections but also rely substantially on ethical discussion, deliberation and improvement.

My discussion provoked controversy among some attendees of the conference who described themselves as "animal protectionists." Some of these people found the categorization of animals as property to be regressive, and fundamentally inconsistent with appropriate ethical behavior toward them.

**Message from the President-Elect (continued)**

And so I pose the following questions for your consideration, and invite your responses to our editor for inclusion in the next issue of our newsletter: Should animals be categorized as property? If they are not considered property, how should the law classify them? How would the practice and profession of veterinary medicine be affected by any such approach?

-- Jerrold Tannenbaum

Editor's Note: Send your messages to the Editor via regular mail to:

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**Treasurer's Report**

As of February 1, 1996 the assets of the Society were \$ [redacted]. Dues payments have fallen to a trickle, but we now have [redacted] paid members. Enclosed with this Newsletter is a list of paid members with addresses and phone numbers. My apologies in advance for any errors. Again, we sincerely thank those who have sent checks to support the Society. We encourage you to talk with your colleagues and invite them to join our organization. A membership application was sent with the last Newsletter. If you need a new one please contact me and I will FAX or mail another one to you.

See above, how to reach me to correct any errors.

Bob Speth

**Miscellaneous Items**

[redacted] forwarded information about the new MS in Animals and Public Policy program offered by the Tufts Center for Animals and Public Policy at the Tufts University School of Veterinary

Medicine. He is very pleased with the development of the program.

Speaking of Tufts, [redacted] relates that [redacted] presently Associate Dean for Research and Graduate Studies at the University of Florida Veterinary School will be the new Dean of the Tufts University School of Veterinary Medicine.

Offerings from our prolific membership include: [redacted] whose book "*Some Bastardly People*" chronicles interactions between people of the same or different color, and lauds the actions of black pioneers. The book is available for \$15.00 + \$2.50 S&H from McClain Printing Co. P.O. Box 403, Parsons, WV 26287 or call 1-800-654-7179.

[redacted] whose book "*Farm Animal Welfare: Social, Bioethical and Research Issues*" deals with philosophical, ethical, social and scientific aspects of treatment of animals in large scale production facilities. The book is available for \$29.95 from Iowa State University Press, 2121 S. State Ave., Ames IA 50014-8300. or call 1-800-862-6657.

New members of the Society include:

[redacted] DVM, Ph.D. who is the Dean of the School of Veterinary Medicine at Louisiana State University in Baton Rouge.

[redacted] DVM, MS, Ph.D. is a Laboratory Animal Veterinarian at North Carolina State Univ. who has 30 years of participation in issues related to research animals.

[redacted] DVM is a small animal practitioner from Eagle Michigan who works at a leadership level in Veterinary Medicine and commonly encounters ethical issues.

[redacted] DVM operates the Crabapple Animal Hospital in Alpharetta, GA and is the former Chair of the Georgia Veterinary Ethics Committee and is also President-Elect of the Georgia Veterinary Medical Association.

[redacted] DVM operates the Mill Creek Animal Clinic, in Shawnee, Kansas. He is the Kansas State Chair of the Ethics Committee.