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# From the Office of Alumni Affairs

The Cornell University College of Veterinary Medicine is pleased to share the following information:

**Alumni Association  
Annual Meeting**

October 1, 2009 at 2:00 pm  
ILR Conference Center, Room 425  
Ithaca, New York

*Open to all alumni*

In addition, alumni are encouraged to vote for officers of the Alumni Association Executive Board and revisions to the by-laws and constitution.



**Vote Here**

The Alumni Association Executive Board operates exclusively for the educational and charitable purposes that advance the interest of Cornell's College of Veterinary Medicine by assisting in the recruitment of students, the raising of funds for the College, the promotion of alumni involvement in academic and students affairs, the enhancement of opportunities for interaction between alumni and members of the College family, and the preservation of the College's unique traditions.

Visit our website at [www.vet.cornell.edu/alumni](http://www.vet.cornell.edu/alumni) for a listing of our board members and our meeting dates. Each fall, we welcome nominations to the board.

To reach the Office of Alumni Affairs, Development, and Communications, call 607 253-3745 or email us at [vetfriends@cornell.edu](mailto:vetfriends@cornell.edu) – subject line “Alumni Association.”

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## Kirk Practitioner-in-Residence

Applications are now being accepted for the Robert W. Kirk DVM '46 Practitioner-in-Residence position with the Cornell University Hospital for Animals. Created in 2007, the opportunity was established to fund private-practice veterinarians who wish to visit Cornell University Hospital for Animals for three to five days per week, for periods ranging from two weeks to three months. Directions to apply are below.



The practitioner-in-residence program is open to small animal veterinarians who will spend at least 50 percent of their time with students in the Hospital's primary care Community Practice Service. The practitioner-in-residence will function as a consultant to the students and will participate in CPS rounds and programs. The practitioner may also rotate through other outpatient specialties as an observer for the remaining 50 percent of the program, as approved by the hosting service(s).

Participating practitioners will be invited to practice at Cornell University Hospital for Animals, attend service rounds with students and house officers, and attend the weekly Senior Seminar. The practitioner also will present a seminar on a topic related to private practice management, which will be open to all students.

"The goals of the Practitioner-in-Residence program are two-fold," said Dr. Bill Miller, medical director of the companion animal hospital and program coordinator. "Through the Kirk Practitioner-in-Residence program, we enhance student and faculty understanding of the world of private practice and enable practitioners to learn the latest medical techniques, technologies, and information."

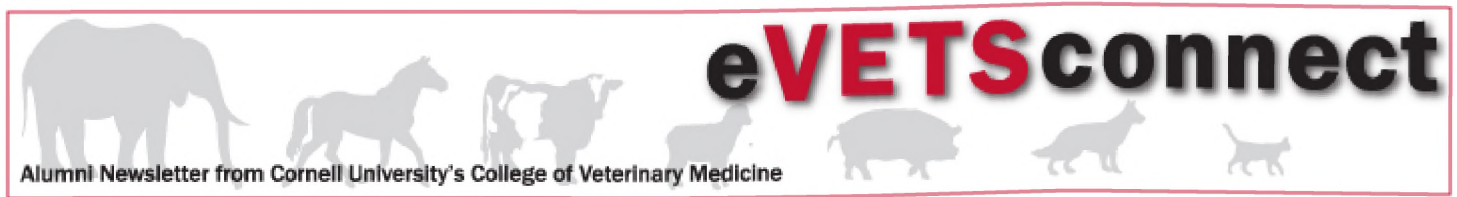
Practitioners receive a small weekly stipend to help defray living expenses while in Ithaca. In addition, housing and parking are provided. CE credit can be provided for the experience. Participation is entirely voluntary. Participating veterinarians must have a current license (any state) and must provide proof of active rabies vaccination.

The program was created with a gift from the late Ernest Smith DVM '66 and his wife, Abby, of Tequesta, Fla., who named the fund in honor of Robert L. Kirk DVM '46, professor emeritus of the College of Veterinary Medicine at Cornell University and one of Dr. Smith's teachers.

**To apply:** To be considered for the program, veterinarians may send a letter of application to the address below. The letter should describe what they hope to gain from the program, the length of time and dates they wish to be in residence, and the service(s) they wish to rotate through. Also include a one-page outline of the seminar they propose to offer. Candidates are welcome to describe other educational experiences they may wish to provide for our students. Send the application electronically to William H. Miller, VMD, program coordinator, to [vet-hosp@cornell.edu](mailto:vet-hosp@cornell.edu) or by mail to:

Robert W. Kirk Practitioner-in-Residence Application Committee  
c/o William H. Miller VMD, Program Coordinator  
Cornell University Hospital for Animals  
CVM Box 20  
Ithaca NY 14853-6401





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# Hands-on learning

To many newly graduated DVMs, the first surgery performed on their own can be daunting. Cornell's veterinary program has a long history of providing students with highly supervised opportunities to practice their skills, gain speed, and improve their techniques while they are still students. One opportunity, for example, has roots in a nearly decade-old partnership with Lollipop Farm, the Humane Society of Greater Rochester. Students from Cornell's College of Veterinary Medicine are able to participate in an externship at the shelter, building upon their knowledge of shelter medicine and giving them the opportunity to hone their surgical skills—before they graduate.



When Dr. Janet Scarlett, professor of epidemiology and director of Maddie's® Shelter Medicine Program, approached Lollipop Farm to serve as a field training site for the College's shelter medicine program, Dr. Andrew Newmark, Lollipop Farm's chief veterinarian, seized the opportunity as a way to share a positive view of shelter medicine with the future generation of veterinarians. Since the onset of the program approximately nine years ago, nearly 60 students have completed an externship at Lollipop Farm.

“When I got out of vet school, I struggled with the surgeries” said Dr. Newmark. “I didn't feel as though I received enough hands-on training to prepare me for the ‘real-world.’ It may take an inexperienced student 45 minutes to 90 minutes to complete a cat spay, whereas a seasoned veterinarian can usually complete the procedure in 7-8 minutes. I want to provide students with the additional experience to help build their confidence and increase their surgical abilities.”

Dr. Newmark's goal for students dovetails well with the goals of the College. Enhancing primary care training for students at Cornell's College of Veterinary Medicine is a key element of the College's Strategic Plan. The two-week externship exposes students to spay/neuter surgeries, care of animals in shelters, and methods used to prevent animals from going to shelters. They also participate in the removal of tumors and bladder stones, amputations, and orthopedic work. With Lollipop Farm's in-house investigation team, students witness the exploration of animal cruelty cases firsthand, learning what to look for, what to do, and how to document suspected cruelty. Students watch Dr. Newmark conduct forensic necropsies, learning how they differ from typical necropsies.

Shelter medicine poses different challenges than those found in a private practice, according to Dr. Newmark, who said that many shelters don't have the money to run multiple tests on an animal. “Students must be very thorough during the physical exams,” Dr. Newmark explained, adding that one of his goals for the experience is to help students understand the importance of herd health. He stresses that herd health management is another important aspect of shelter medicine. “If one animal becomes sick, many others are immediately at risk,” said Dr. Newmark.

Veterinary students who have completed the externship have nothing but praise for the work that Dr. Newmark is doing at Lollipop Farm and for the additional training the experience provides. Kevin Nagel DVM '09 participated in an externship at Lollipop Farm in February in order to build upon what he had learned at Cornell and because he wanted more surgical experience.

“The externship at Lollypop was one of my favorite rotations,” said Dr. Nagel. “Dr. Newmark helped me become more confident as a surgeon and gave me a greater appreciation for shelter medicine. During my two weeks there, I was able to perform 42 surgeries on a variety of animals. I now feel comfortable performing most types of spay/neuter surgeries without supervision, which is a huge relief as I start my first job at a small animal private practice in California.”

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## Alumna earns award

When it's raining, Tara Estra DVM '03 keeps a stack of towels next to the front door of her veterinary clinic to wipe away the water before it soaks her patients to the skin. Her clinic has a specially designed bereavement room with a separate exit, for clients facing the most difficult situations. And after she treats an animal, whether it's a surgical procedure or a case of dermatitis, she follows up with a phone call to see how her patient is doing.



This dedication to working with and serving animals recently earned Dr. Estra the Dr. William O. Stillman Veterinary Award from the Mohawk and Hudson River Humane Society. Dr. Stillman led the first national anticruelty cause in America and was the president of the American Humane Association. He also implemented a humane education magazine for national advocacy and a training school for humane workers. Dr. Estra was presented with the award at the Humane Society's second annual gala, held on April 24, which also recognized her work with shelter animals. Two mornings a week, Dr. Estra spays and neuters shelter animals, as well as performing other surgeries or other veterinary care as needed.

"Earning the award was a very humbling experience for me," said Dr. Estra. "Dr. Stillman was an inspiration to so many people and an advocate for thousands of animals. He was a compassionate man, persuasive, and he was dedicated to serving the underdog. I plan to do my best to follow in his footsteps."

This path, though, is relatively new for Dr. Estra, who began her professional life as a television producer. After ten years of chasing celebrities and reporting the news, she knew it was time for a change and found her calling while visiting the College's annual open house in 1998.

"Cornell prepared me to do anything I want," said Dr. Estra, who says that she is not practicing the same medicine today as she was six years ago. "I had pivotal experiences; I still recall words of wisdom from the one and only Dr. Hornbuckle; and Cornell taught me how to learn what I need to know to handle the daily challenges and bizarre cases that come my way."

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### **From tip to tail**

Veterinarians at the Cornell University Hospital for Animals are looking for healthy Labrador retrievers whose owners would like them to undergo a free health screening. Eligible dogs must be at least 8 years of age, AKC-registered (or have a pedigree available), be available to spend the day at the Hospital, and have been certified as healthy by their veterinarian.

The physical screening will include a general physical examination, behavioral assessment, body measurements, complete blood count and chemistry panels, urinalysis, nutritional consultation, environmental factor screening for conditions that predispose to cancer, as well as orthopedic, oncological, ophthalmological, neurological, and cardiological examinations.



"Our black Labrador, Rod, is more than a pet," said Bev Millheim, whose Labrador was an early participant in the project. "He is a competitive field trial retriever as well as a family member. We'd be lost without him. We believe his DNA and the expertise of Cornell will help another pet stay healthy and also improve the future of the Labrador breed."

The results of the tests will be shared with the referring veterinarian and will be added to the Hospital's DNA Bank, which holds more than 4000 samples from animals with various conditions. The healthy DNA collected from these Labradors will provide a control group of "unaffected" dogs for gene discovery of multiple diseases of interest.

"The DNA obtained from the dogs in the screening program will be used in research that links health conditions to genetic abnormalities," said Dr. Marta Castelhana, research associate and the principal investigator for this project. "Because the animals' health status is documented so thoroughly during the screening, multiple researchers will be able to use the DNA collected for genetic studies that may be investigating anything from novel treatments to cures. The animals that participate in this program will be helping to improve the quality of life for future generations of Labradors."



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## To be all she can be

She's never shot a gun, and the idea of leading enlisted personnel in a potentially life-threatening situation is at the moment a bit intimidating. But Jess Dowling DVM '11 is the poster child for the Army's motto: be all that you can be. Her commitment to service and leadership has been a close companion throughout high school, her undergraduate years at Cornell, and her short tour in the workforce before beginning veterinary school. This commitment was most recently evident as she led the College of Veterinary Medicine to the successful conclusion of the first-ever Pedal for Pets, a fundraiser for the College's nonprofit hospital, and served on the Alumni Association's Executive Board as a student representative.



Commissioned as a Second Lieutenant in the US Army Medical Services Corps this month, Jess is the most recent recipient of the Army's Health Professions Scholarship, which, she says, will continue to let her serve others. The scholarship program pays tuition and provides a stipend for room, board, and school expenses. Currently a member of the US Army Reserves, upon graduation, Jess will go into active duty for two years and then complete an additional five years in the Reserves. At that point, she can decide to become a civilian or stay with the military.

"When someone has the opportunity and the capacity to help others, it just makes sense to do it," said Jess. "I've been fortunate in a lot of situations to be a small part of a greater goal designed to help others. Serving in the military will let me contribute in a similar way to the veterinary profession on a larger scale. In the Army, I'm part of a huge organization that influences veterinary and human health care, around the world. Who wouldn't want a slice of that?"

After completing the officer's basic training course, her first assignment after graduation will likely be state-side taking care of a wide variety of animals: military working dogs, ceremonial horses, working animals of the Department of Homeland Security organizations, animals supporting human-animal bond programs at military hospitals, the dolphins and sea lions of the Navy's Marine Mammal program and service members' pets. She will also be expected to ensure that the food procured for the installation and deployed service members is wholesome and secure.

Jess expects her second assignment will be overseas, probably as an integral part of short-term humanitarian and disaster relief deployments to developing countries. In this capacity, her predecessors have jumped out of airplanes with Special Forces, worked in submarines with the Navy, on ships with the Coast Guard, or conducted research.

"The opportunities for working in veterinary medicine with the military are endless," said Jess. "At the moment, I don't really know what area of the profession I'd like to do for the rest of my life, which is why this scholarship is such a great match. This will give me more time to explore my options, and I'll be developing a unique set of skills that will let me help people. Veterinarians are in short supply across the globe, and the Army is no different."

Jess is one of two current students at the College who hold this scholarship. Sean Stockwell DVM '11 earned the scholarship and was commissioned as a Second Lieutenant last year.





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## 2009 Syracuse Invitational Sporthorse Tournament to Benefit Cornell University Equine Hospital

For its seventh year, the Syracuse Invitational Sporthorse Tournament will be held at the Oncenter Complex in Syracuse, NY, from October 28-November 1, 2009. A not-for-profit organization, the Syracuse Invitational Sporthorse Tournament donates proceeds from ticket sales and a silent auction to the Cornell University Equine Hospital and Vera House.

Drawing crowds of more than 18,000 in 2008, this year's tournament will feature some of the highest ranked international riders, including Central New York's Bezie Madden, Olympic Gold Medalist. Featuring the grand prix \$100,000 FEI Budweiser World Cup Qualifier of Syracuse on Saturday night, the tournament also includes the Animal Planet Sporthorse Cup, TK99 Speed Derby, and National Horse Show ASPCA Maclay Championship, clinics, educational events, and vendors.



During the tournament, Cornell veterinarians will present educational demonstrations and lectures. In addition, there will be a silent auction that benefits the Cornell University Equine Hospital and Vera House.

Cornell's Equine Hospital places donations from the tournament into the Cornell University Equine Health Advancement Fund, which enables Cornell veterinarians to investigate ways to identify and treat illnesses in the equine athlete.

Show your support for Cornell by attending the Syracuse Invitational Sporthorse Tournament.

For further details, visit the Syracuse Invitational Sporthorse Tournament web site at <http://www.syracuseinvitational.com/>.

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## Shelter outreach service and college partner

Through an expanded collaboration with Ithaca's Shelter Outreach Services (SOS), Cornell University's College of Veterinary Medicine will assist in providing high quality, high volume spay/neuter services to animals in need in the region. The Finger Lakes SPCA of Central New York also partners with Shelter Outreach Services (SOS) to provide this much needed service.

Through this collaboration, Cornell veterinary students, along with a faculty veterinarian and a licensed veterinary technician will join SOS at the shelter to provide sterilization surgery. The initiative was launched on June 19, with the first spay/neuter clinic devoted solely to area barn cats that were brought to the shelter by their owners.

"The partnership is an excellent opportunity to broaden the College's relationship with the Shelter Outreach Services and other animal welfare organizations in an effort to provide students with more opportunities for quality surgical experiences that benefit patients whose access to medical care is limited," said Dr. Lorin Warnick, associate dean for veterinary curriculum. "The students will gain highly supervised hands-on surgical experience as well as experience in shelter medicine, skills that will serve them – and society – well."

Seen here, Dr. Paul Maza, a lecturer at the College of Veterinary Medicine at Cornell University, along with Natalie Spaulding, LVT, instructs fourth-year veterinary student Marina Tejada, who provided sterilization surgeries for five area barn cats under the supervision of Dr. Maza at the June 19 event.

"We are all very excited about this opportunity to help in addressing the problem of cat overpopulation and in educating future veterinarians," said Carol Russell, executive director of the FLSPCA of Central New York. "The barn cats will receive spay/neuter surgeries through this arrangement that will ultimately help the students, the animals, and local farmers."

There are a number of start-up costs associated with this program. If you are interested in supporting this program or purchasing specific items, please contact Amy Robinson at 607.253.3742 or [amy.robinson@cornell.edu](mailto:amy.robinson@cornell.edu). Current needs include the following:

\$2,500 each	Two anesthetic machines
\$1,000	Pulse oximeter for monitoring during anesthesia
Any size	Gifts for equipment to support our students' technical skill-development
\$100	Provide transportation for an animal to a shelter



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## Shelter outreach service and college partner

Friday night suppers. Chef's hats. And, Bob Perry's spaghetti. Weekly dinners at the Alpha Psi fraternity house are fond memories for Dr. Ann Huntington '77. The frat house, she recalls, was a haven for good times, relaxing from the rigors of the demanding academic program, and connecting with friends. From the 1930s to the 1980s, Alpha Psi was a strong force at the College of Veterinary Medicine, meeting a very important need for generations of students who needed opportunities to connect with each other. With the rise of new student organizations, Dr. Huntington mused, today's students have found alternatives for connecting outside of



the classroom and exploring professional interests. As such, members of the Board of the Trustees for the Beta Chapter of Alpha Psi decided to look for a new way to serve Cornell's veterinary community.

In 200x, Dr. George Abbott '45 led members of Beta Chapter of Alpha Psi's board through the process of selling the fraternity house on Elm Wood Avenue in Ithaca's college town. The proceeds from the sale, \$450,000, Dr. Abbott said, have been earmarked to support a clinical fellowship, which provides significant research experience under the mentorship of a strong scientist for clinical specialists committed to pursuing an academic career.

"We want Alpha Psi to remain a contributing member of the College community," said Dr. Huntington, who was a member and one of the first women welcomed into the fraternity. "The clinical fellowship program will help produce the teachers of the future. Cornell has a reputation for educating the educators. This is critical in this century as so many graduates are choosing private practice rather than academia. Alpha Psi can take a leadership role in helping to turn the tide."

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# Class Notes Submissions

The next '**Scopes Magazine** will be published in January 2010. Please let us know what you'd like to share with your classmates in our Class Notes section by November 15, 2009, for inclusion in our January issue.

**Please include:**

Name (Maiden if appropriate)  
Class Year  
Address  
Email  
Phone  
Please tell my classmates that...

**Please send back to:**

Cornell University  
College of Veterinary Medicine  
Box 39  
Ithaca, NY 14853

or...

email us at [vetfriends@cornell.edu](mailto:vetfriends@cornell.edu)

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