

The Referring VETERINARIAN

VETERINARY MEDICAL TEACHING HOSPITAL ❖ COLLEGE OF VETERINARY MEDICINE ❖ CORNELL

FROM THE DIRECTOR



This past fall has been a busy time in the VMTH. Our caseload was excellent from July through October, but has slowed down somewhat, as is usual, during the winter months. As always, we are very grateful to you, our referring veterinarians, for sustaining our caseload which is so vitally important to the training of future generations of veterinarians.

With this issue we welcome an expanded readership to the Referring Veterinarian newsletter. From its inception this newsletter has been sent to veterinarians who have referred cases to us recently. Our aim is simply to keep our referring veterinarians informed of news, developments and interesting work here at the VMTH, and to highlight specific areas of study in which referrals play a key role. For the next few issues, we are expanding our mailing list to include all private practitioners in western Massachusetts, southern Vermont and New Hampshire, New Jersey, Connecticut, New York, and northern Pennsylvania. We invite those of you who would like to continue to receive this publication thereafter to let us know. (It's a complimentary professional subscription.) To those new recipients who have not referred cases to Cornell in the recent past, we encourage you to try us or try us anew.

As many of you may already know, we are in the process of completing a major building program. We have already occupied our Companion Animal Hospital which

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MEETING CHALLENGES IN EQUINE RESPIRATORY DISEASE

In her first year of private equine practice, Dr. Dorothy Ainsworth was struck by the preponderance of cases that involved respiratory problems. She made this field of respiratory pathophysiology the focus of her studies in her post-graduate work at the University of Wisconsin while working on her Master's Degree from 1983-85 and her Ph.D. from 1986-90. In her current position as Assistant Professor of Large Animal Medicine at the VMTH, Dr. Ainsworth continues her interest in equine respiratory diseases through clinical case referrals of horses suffering from such problems.

"I am particularly interested in assessing the effect of neonatal respiratory disease on future equine athletic performance and am currently investigating the impact of *Rhodococcus equi* pneumonia in foals on subsequent racing ability," she said. To obtain adequate numbers of cases in which thorough clinical evaluations have been done (laboratory work, radiographs, transtracheal aspirates), a multi-center study is currently being undertaken that involves six major veterinary teaching hospitals in the Northeast and Midwest. Dr. Ainsworth is the director of the study and chief collator of the data.

Adult horses with evidence of lower respiratory tract disease can also present a diagnostic and prognostic dilemma to the equine clinician. To what degree pulmonary inflammation contributes to a drop in exercise performance is presently uncer-



Dr. Dorothy Ainsworth with Cleopatra at the treadmill.

Photo by Charlie Harrington, University Photo

tain. "With the facilities at the Equine Performance Testing Clinic, we hope to better assess these referral cases," said Ainsworth. A particularly interesting new diagnostic tool on the horizon—5 years in development—will be the use of lower respiratory tract mechanics measurements in exercising horses. Dr. Norm Ducharme, a surgeon at the VMTH, is working on ways to accurately measure airflow in and out of a horse's lungs using a number of different flow-metering devices.

"Airflow measurement is an extremely difficult test because many of these devices may alter the way a horse breathes, for example, by causing a horse to unlink its breathing frequency from its stride frequency," said Dr. Ainsworth. "Once these

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Dr. John E. Saidla (center) with D.V.M. students Rachel Smith and Sara Robinson.

Photo: Biomedical Communications

SMALL ANIMAL DENTISTRY

“Dental pain is as excruciating for animals as it is for humans,” said Dr. John Saidla, chief of Dental Services at the Companion Animal Hospital of Cornell University’s Veterinary Medical Teaching Hospital. Dr. Saidla has seen dentistry “come into its own” as a veterinary specialty since he came to Cornell in 1988 and started the clinical dentistry program. It is primarily concerned with small animal dentistry for cats and dogs. The veterinary technician for the Dental Service is Ms. Heidi Newton.

Dentistry for small animals covers many ills, from fractures requiring extractions, which are primarily seen in dogs, to cervical line lesions in cats where enamel and teeth have been eroded. General diseases of the mouth, broken teeth that require root canal therapy and dental prophylaxis like preventive cleanings are also in Dr. Saidla’s domain. Because of tooth shape, spacing, and diet, cavities are not generally a problem in dogs or cats. When they do occur, old style silver fillings have now been replaced by new composite resins and restorative glass ionomers which can be polished so repairs are nearly seamless.

Dr. Saidla is quick to differentiate between dentistry that is performed for companion animals and that performed for show animals. “There is a whole ethics issue in animals who are being used for show and breeding,” he said. “We are careful not to

cover up genetic defects and teach our students to do the same.”

Dental clinics, part of the Community Practice Service of the Companion Animal Hospital, are held on Tuesday and Thursday mornings. Roughly one-third of the cases come in as referrals. The most common clinical sign is “depressed behavior” in animals who are not eating with their usual vigor or appetite. The majority of clients reside within two or three hours driving time from Ithaca and come to the dental clinic by appointment as outpatients. Three or four cases are seen each day and each visit begins with a routine physical exam. To facilitate the dental exam, patients are frequently anesthetized. Dr. Saidla attends primarily as a supervisor. “Veterinary students do most of the work,” he noted. “And we need more cases for the students. Roughly 80% of each class have taken the dental courses here and they all need as much practical experience as possible because dental problems are so common.”

“Our major goal with the referral service is to provide teaching material for the students—and not just in dentistry,” noted Dr. Saidla. “We want students to be thoroughly comfortable with all aspects of the veterinary profession so it is particularly important to provide them with as much practical experience as possible.”

provides us with the best facilities for small animal care existing anywhere in the world. We will shortly be occupying our new Equine and Farm Animal Hospitals which will give us similar facilities for these species. Our new Dean, Dr. Franklin M. Loew, has reaffirmed our commitment to providing the best possible service to referring veterinarians and the clients and patients they send to us. We would welcome your referrals and your comments on our service.

As all New York veterinarians and many others are well aware, the Governor of New York has continued his commitment to reducing the State budget and this will no doubt result in yet another reduction in our budget for this coming year. We are still unclear as to the actual extent of the reduction we will suffer, but current indications are that it will be similar to what we endured last year. Dean Loew has assured the VMTH that, barring catastrophic fiscal problems, our house officer program will be protected. We are committing ourselves to continuing and improving our level of service in the VMTH despite fiscal constraints.

As our State support dwindles, we must rely ever more heavily on our business operations as well as on donations to maintain and expand the excellence of our clinical and training programs. In addition to providing vital training material, your referrals also help us to achieve our financial goals.

Again, if you have any questions that I can answer or assist you with, don't hesitate to contact me. I can be reached by phone at (607) 253-3030 during work hours or (607) 257-2522 on nights or weekends. Our fax number is (607) 253-3056 and my e-mail address is fak1@cornell.edu. I look forward to hearing from you through any of these modes of communication. Should you be in the Ithaca area, I would be most happy if you would stop in, say “hello,” and take a look at our new facilities.

—Fran Kallfelz

VMTH FUND-RAISING: MEMORIAL GIFTS, NEW "FRIENDS" GROUP ANNOUNCED

Many readers of the *Referring Veterinarian*, particularly practitioners in New York State, are well aware of the reductions in the State University budget that have occurred over the past several years. The trickle-down effect of these budget reductions has been a significant shrinking of State support for the College and the Veterinary Medical Teaching Hospital. The actual costs of our operation have, of course, increased. Thus we must rely ever more heavily on fund-raising efforts to maintain the excellence of our clinical and training programs. We would like to make you aware of an existing mechanism for making donations to the College, including the VMTH, as well as to inform you of a new fund-raising initiative on the part of the VMTH.

THE EXISTING PROGRAM is a "Memorial Giving Program" in which veterinarians can make donations to the College in memory of deceased patients owned by their clients. When veterinarians make such gifts, a suitable acknowledgment letter is sent to the owner. The Office of Public Affairs, College of Veterinary Medicine, Cornell University, Ithaca, NY, 14853-6401, telephone (607) 253-3744, has appropriate forms for use by veterinarians wishing to participate in the Memorial Giving Program.

In addition to being a very meaningful gesture on the part of the veterinarian, this program also is helpful in assuring the continuation of current clients and even practice expansion. Our experience has been that clients are deeply grateful and touched by this gesture on the part of their veterinarian. As a result they are very likely to remain as a client of that veterinarian in the future. Further, these clients will often mention their experience to friends and neighbors who are then more likely to use the services of a veterinarian who has participated in this program. We urge you to contact Mr. Tim Redden, Director of Development, at the above address or phone number for the appropriate materials to begin participation in

this program, which is available to both small animal and equine practitioners.

The proceeds from these memorial giving programs are allowing us to purchase much needed equipment to assist in the care of animals in our Veterinary Medical Teaching Hospital. All such items are suitably identified as having been purchased as a result of this program. At the moment three items are on order. Proceeds from the Equine Memorial Giving Program are being used to purchase a new state-of-the-art nuclear medical imaging system for use in evaluating occult lameness in horses. Proceeds from this fund are also being used to design and fabricate a table that will

"Another goal of the program will be to institute a fund to assist in the care of horses."



allow us to perform CT images of horses, particularly the head and extremities, with our new CT unit. Funds derived mainly from our Canine and Feline Memorial Giving Program are being used to purchase an electromyographic unit which will be very helpful in the diagnosis of muscular disorders in these species.

We invite you to consider the use of these programs to memorialize deceased patients owned by your clients. As with other fund-raising efforts of the College, your donations can be designated for use by the Veterinary Medical Teaching Hospital.

THE SECOND FUND RAISING INITIATIVE is a development campaign aimed at clients of the Veterinary Medical Teaching Hospital. Our hospital roster includes some 18,000 clients and this constitutes a currently untapped resource for possible financial support. In a program similar to those used at other colleges of veterinary medicine, as well as human teaching hospitals,

we are planning to institute a "Friends of the VMTH" program for our clients. Separate programs will be designed for clients of the Companion Animal Hospital and the Equine Hospital.

Campaigns will be initiated to obtain funding for a specific list of hospital needs. One will be our "Indigent Funds" which are used to provide financial support for the care of animals owned by clients with limited financial resources. Two funds are already in existence, one for canine and the other for feline patients. However, the balance in each of these funds is small and thus we are very limited in the amount of support we can provide. While we have had many requests for assistance with equine patients, we have not been successful to date in generating funding for this species. Another goal of the program, therefore, will be to institute such a fund to assist in the care of horses. Other items will include pieces of equipment needed for us to maintain our "state-of-the-art" position in veterinary care. For example, several pieces of equipment are needed for the adequate equipping of the intensive care units in both the Companion Animal Hospital and the Equine Hospital.

Once identified as "Friends of the VMTH," clients will be contacted once or twice yearly to request continuing support for the work of the hospital. We will develop a suitable means for recognizing clients participating in the program at various levels by use of plaques, a giving tree, or other mechanisms. We will also generate a newsletter which will be provided to "Friends of the VMTH." Its purpose will be to keep them informed of various programs at the VMTH and will highlight how their support has assisted us in our various missions.

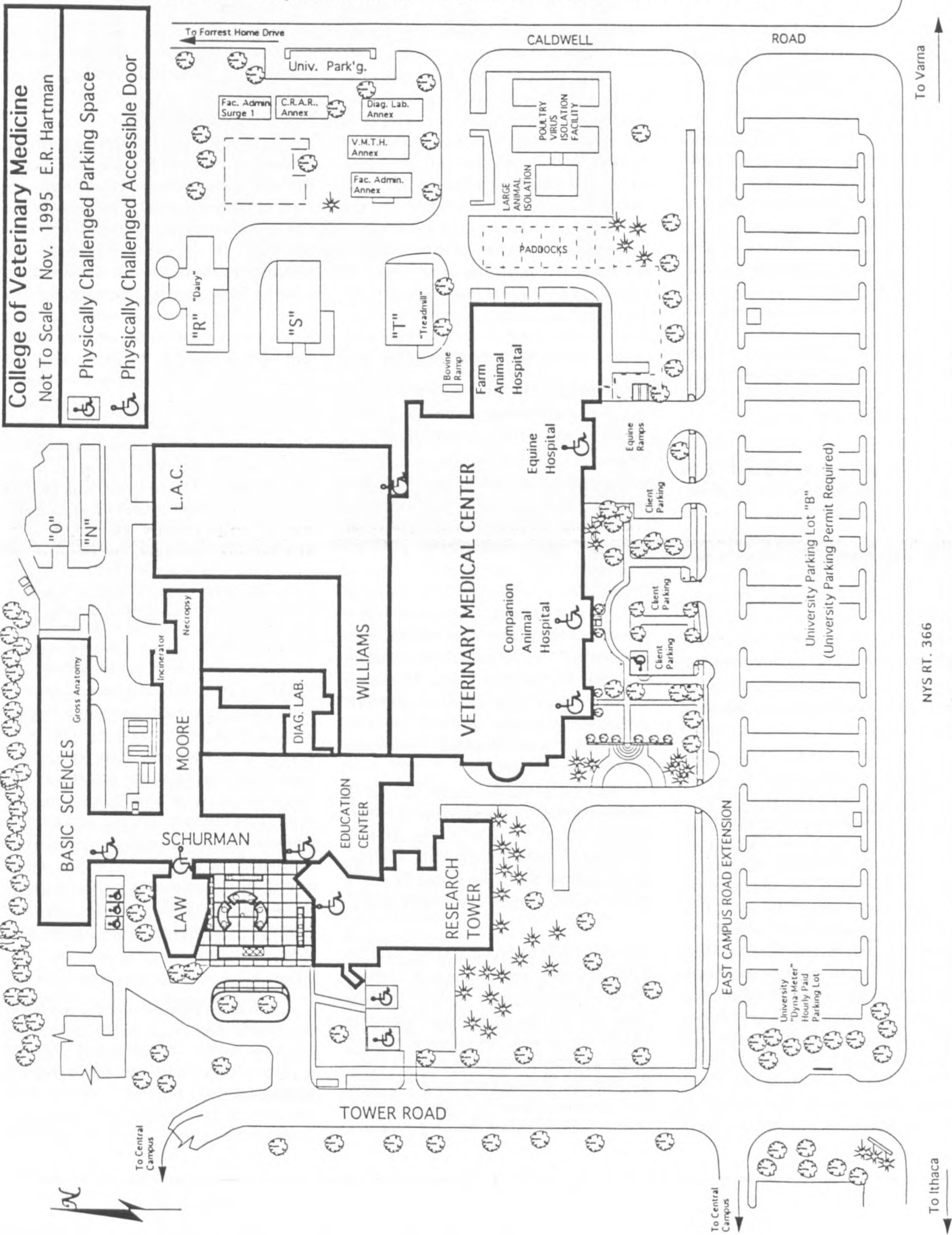
We invite your questions or comments on either of these programs. Direct them by telephone to (607) 253-3030, by facsimile to (607) 253-3056, or by e-mail to fak1@cornell.edu.

PLEASE SAVE THIS MAP

VETERINARY MEDICAL TEACHING HOSPITAL AT CORNELL • ITHACA, NY

DIRECTIONS: The Companion Animal Hospital is accessed from N.Y.S. Route 366, also known as Dryden Road. Clients arriving from the west can turn left onto Tower Road, then right on East Campus Road Extension and left into the Client parking lot directly south of the entrance to the Companion Animal Hospital. Clients arriving from the east can turn right from Rt. 366 onto Caldwell Road then left onto East Campus Road Extension and right into the Companion Animal Hospital client parking area.

PHONES: Companion Animal, (607) 253-3060; Large Animal, (607) 253-3100.



EQUINE RESPIRATORY

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tests are completely validated, we will be able to thoroughly examine clinical cases and see whether their respiratory mechanics and gas exchange parameters differ from normal animals." Measurements of lung distensibility and airway resistance, coupled with thoracic radiographs and bronchoalveolar lavages should aid clinicians in determining the best therapeutic approach to lower airway inflammation.

Dr. Ainsworth also has a strong clinical interest in neonatal intensive care, which she sees as particularly appropriate for the new Equine and Farm Animal Hospitals, and the new state-of-the-art neonatal Intensive Care Unit. Neonates requiring intensive care that are referred to the new ICU at the VMTH come under the care of Dr. Ainsworth, large animal medicine residents, veterinary students, and Ms. Jean Young, the chief veterinary technician in the ICU.

"We can provide the 24 hour care these young animals often need," said Dr. Ainsworth. "By providing around-the-clock care, students can watch the young animal's condition improve in response to our interventions. It also gives students from urban backgrounds good early exposure to large animal care."

In Ainsworth's view, the collaboration between the VMTH and its referring veterinarians can focus a great deal of expertise on tougher cases. She noted that Cornell is one of the few veterinary colleges where senior faculty members are actually out on the clinic floor seeing cases, teaching students and overseeing the teams providing care. Referring practitioners may communicate at first with residents on a case, but any of the faculty on clinic duty are also available to them.

Dr. Ainsworth is emphatic about the importance of referrals to the training of new veterinarians, to improvements in patient care and even breakthroughs in treatments. "We've had numerous cases referred to us that were once considered incurable where, given enough time, we've been able to continue to re-evaluate the case, eventually treat it successfully, and make the techniques available to other veterinarians by publishing the findings."

VMTH NEWS

There never seems to be a "status quo" here at the VMTH. The scene is constantly in flux and we would like to keep you, our referring practitioners, informed as much as possible with respect to the changes that may have an effect on your relationship with us.

STAFFING CHANGES

A number of personnel actions have occurred or are soon to occur in the VMTH. **Dr. Tom Kern** in our Ophthalmology Service, who has been on sabbatical leave since July 1, 1995, will return to active duty in the VMTH as of February 1. **Dr. Ron Riis** has done a marvelous job of covering the Ophthalmology Service during the seven month absence of Dr. Kern and we are all most grateful for his efforts. Also in the Small Animal Clinic, **Dr. Steve Barr** of our Internal Medicine Service has recently been promoted to associate professor with tenure. Steve will be taking a sabbatical leave during the academic year 1996-97.

In the Large Animal Clinic, **Dr. Norm Ducharme** who has been on sabbatical leave since September 1, 1995 will return to duty in Large Animal Surgery on Monday, March 4, 1996. At the time Norm returns to service, **Dr. Rick Hackett** will begin a six month sabbatical leave. During this academic year we are fortunate to have the services of **Dr. Nicolai Jansson**, a visiting professor from the Veterinary College in Copenhagen, Denmark, to assist Large Animal Surgery filling in for first Norm Ducharme and then Rick Hackett during their sabbatical leaves.

Searches are currently underway for an additional radiologist as well as a new faculty member in the Ambulatory Clinic. We will keep you informed as these searches reach their conclusion.

Any of you who have occasion to call the Office of the Director will be greeted by our new administrative assistant, **Ms. Mary-Catherine French**. Mary-Catherine has had previous experience working in the medical field and most recently had been employed by the Office of the Associate Dean for Research. Mary-Catherine joined the VMTH in September and is a welcome addition to our family.

THE MOVE

We occupied our new small animal facilities, dubbed "The Companion Animal Hospital," in late September. The initial few weeks were somewhat rocky as we worked through the many wrinkles that need to be ironed out when trying to do business in such a large new facility. Staff are now getting accustomed to their new "digs" and the facilities are truly superb. Tours are being arranged during our Annual Conference in March so that visiting practitioners will have an opportunity to personally observe these new facilities. We had hoped to occupy our new large animal facilities, named the "Equine Hospital" and the "Farm Animal Hospital," by mid-November. However, a number of problems were identified which need to be corrected before we begin clinical operations in this part of the new complex. We are correcting these problems and hope to occupy this area by around April 1.

MAP ENCLOSED

To help you and your clients better access the new facilities we have enclosed in this issue a map which depicts our College complex and the route to the Companion Animal Hospital. We encourage you to make copies of this diagram and provide it to clients that you have referred to us.

PUBLICATIONS

In the fall issue of the *Referring Veterinarian*, we listed new books authored by several faculty members of the VMTH. We have yet another new arrival. **Dr. Alan Nixon's** book, *Equine Fracture Repair*, has recently been published by W. B. Saunders Company and is now available.

IMPORTANT PHONE NUMBERS

Especially for our new readers, here are the main phone numbers for our services:

COMPANION ANIMAL HOSPITAL:

Clients: (607)253-3060
Referring veterinarians: (607)253-3003

LARGE ANIMAL HOSPITAL:

(607)253-3100

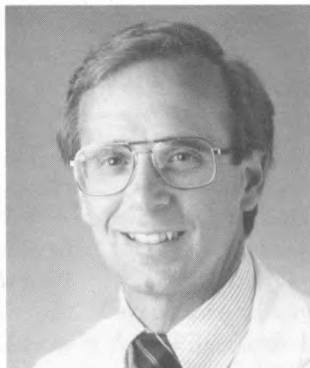
STAFF PROFILES

Editor's note: In the last issue a section from Dr. Harvey's profile was inadvertently omitted. The correct information appears below.

Dr. Jay Harvey is an Associate Professor of Surgery and Head of the Small Animal Clinic.

A 1971 graduate of Kansas State University, Dr. Harvey completed an internship at the Animal Medical Center in New York City, a surgical residency at the University of California at Davis, and a year in a private specialty practice in Pennsylvania. In 1975, he returned to the Animal Medical Center as a staff surgeon and surgical oncologist. He joined the faculty at Cornell in 1979. Dr. Harvey is a diplomate of the American College of Veterinary Surgeons.

Dr. Harvey's clinical interests include soft tissue surgery and oncology.



Dr. Richard P. Hackett is Associate Professor of Surgery and Acting Head of the Large Animal Clinic.

Dr. Hackett received his DVM from Ohio State University in 1973, with an internship and residency at Colorado State University, earning a Master's there in 1976. He joined the faculty at Cornell University in 1976, and received board certification from the American College of Veterinary Surgeons in 1980.

His clinical interests focus on equine general surgery, with specialties in upper respiratory, gastrointestinal and urogenital disorders, and wound management. His research interests include equine sports medicine, particularly upper airway disorders.

Currently Dr. Hackett is nearing the end of a two year project working with a group to upgrade the computerized record-keeping at the VMTH, to make it significantly more useful for patient care and teaching.



THE 88TH ANNUAL CONFERENCE FOR VETERINARIANS

The 88th Annual Conference for Veterinarians will be held March 22-24, 1996, at the College of Veterinary Medicine at Cornell University, Ithaca, New York. This year's conference provides excellent continuing education opportunities in companion animal, equine and farm animal medicine and will feature our new Dean, Dr. Franklin M. Loew, '65. Tours of our new Veterinary Medical Center and the Companion Animal Hospital will be available.

Specific information and registration materials can be obtained by contacting Ms. Linda Alfreds, Office of Continuing Education, at (607) 253-3200.



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