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PRESIDENT'S MESSAGE

SVBT started in the fall of 2001 with just a few members and lots of hope for the future. Six years later, the words of the SVBT President Ginny Price still ring true: “We want to change ideas and methods. Education and action will be our watchwords.”

In 2007, I can say we ARE changing ideas and methods. Nearly 1000 people have been, or are present members of the SVBT. These technicians, students, veterinarians, and others interested in the field of veterinary behavior are educating themselves through our newsletter, website, listserv discussions and continuing education meetings. We know many of them have taken action to make a difference in the way animals are treated in veterinary practices, as well as local communities. Several of our members have been empowered to write articles and lecture on the state and national level. The SVBT with the help of Hill's Pet Nutrition has published a book entitled “Building the Veterinary Behavior Team: The Basics”. Purchase it on the website in August.

Many members have asked me if we will offer another continuing education meeting like we did in St. Louis in Sept. 2006. The simple answer is yes, we are planning to do so. However, at this time there are no dates or locations set. This will be one of the many topics to advance SVBT discussed this month at our annual meeting at the AVMA meeting.

When you renew this month you will see our new, improved SVBT Forum. We will no longer be using the Yahoo Listserv but will be searching for a way to archive those discussions for our current members to search. Behind the scenes we have made major modifications to the website this year, these changes were launched the first week of July. We had simply outgrown our ability to manually track membership and we have implemented a new system which will speed up the membership activation process. You

will also receive your confirmation of membership, plus username and password for the website and the SVBT Forum via email this year! We look forward to continuing to make improvements and additions to the newsletter, website and forum each year to meet current and future SVBT goals! If you want to be a part of the action watch the forum for announcements and requests for help!

As this year comes to an end, I want to give a very special thanks to Julie Urban, BA, RVT our current Treasurer. She has used her extensive experience in finance to not only manage our funds, but provided invaluable tax advice on advertising, sales, and donations. Advice that will keep the SVBT in good standing with the IRS!

It saddens me to say good bye to Ginny Price BS, RVT and Cassandra Vong, BS, LVT. Members of the foundation of SVBT since its inception, Ginny and Cassandra have always been ready to step up to the plate, provide thoughtful advice and bring overall balance to the board. I'm sure they won't escape this year without a few email messages from the new SVBT board! Cassandra said it so well last year: “Now is the time to renew for another year packed with information, education, CE discounts and scholarships, and the opportunity to meet a whole lot of nice people on-line or in person!”

It never ceases to amaze me when someone says, “I don't need continuing education, or to ask others for help.” I continue to learn new things about this field that amaze me through our listserv discussions, new behavior books and at every CE meeting. If I stop learning, I have stopped being a part of the solution and become part of the problem. I challenge you to become part of the solution!

Regards,
Tara Lang, BS, RVT

PRODUCT REVIEW

The Tug-A-Jug by Premier Pet Products

By Amanda Eick-Miller, RVT and Sally Clumber

Recently, Premier was kind enough to donate some products to the school where I work and they included three Tug-A-Jug toys with their shipment. Having not had the experience of using one of these interactive toys, I took one home to try out with my own dog. The Tug-A-Jug is designed to be an interactive toy – meaning that the animal can play with the toy without needing a human to toss it, roll it or make it “active.” Since my dog has become an expert in Kong unstuffing and Twist & Treat rolling, not to mention Treat & Train machine eating, I figured she would be a good subject.

The toy has been constructed out of a durable heavy duty hard plastic that many sports bottles are made of. This plastic was chosen to make the bottle indestructible and impervious to chewing. The mouth of the bottle has a softer rubber coating with small knobs that stick up slightly and protect it from heavy chewing or crushing. A short rope toy has one knotted end in the bottle and the other outside the bottle for grabbing, dragging, swinging and other dog activities. When the rope toy is pulled the knot gets stuck in the mouth of the bottle which inhibits treats from passing

out of the mouth of the bottle once it is loaded. The end of the bottle twists off and allows for easy filling with treats/food.

On filling the toy I discovered that it was a lot easier to use smaller pieces of food (Science Diet Senior small bites or Eukanuba Low Residue) than normal size kibbles. The larger kibbles would not pass through the opening left between the rope toy and the mouth of the bottle while the smaller ones and flatter pieces fell through easily. Initially it took Sally an hour to figure out how to get the food to fall out of the mouth of the bottle and I did have to shake it a couple times to get her interested. Rather than pick the jug up by the rope and carry it she prefers to roll the bottle with her nose or paw at it and send it flying across the room into the wall. She has not managed to damage the bottle or the rope thus far.

Overall, the Tug-A-Jug is a great new addition to the Premier line of interactive toys. It's easy to wash, fill and use once the dog figures out which method works best. The clarity of the plastic bottle and size allows for easy filling with measured volumes for pets that need to watch their waistlines. The slow dispersal rate of food from the



mouth of the bottle may be a potential frustration for some dogs but can be altered by changing the side of the kibble used. The density of the plastic bottle would be concerning for a dog that may pick up and shake the bottle side to side by the rope toy or throw/toss the toy. Possible damage to furniture, walls or people who got hit by the toy may be substantial (glass end tables, lamps). I would suggest outdoor play or supervised indoor play with this toy. Even with my dog's large jaws I have not seen her try to pick up the bottle by anything other than the mouth or rope toy. The plastic bottle's shape, size and smoothness seem to deter this.

Thank you Premier for continuously looking for more ways to keep my dog busy!

Rating: 4 Paws out of 5.



Managing and Resolving Thunder Phobias

Daniel Estep, Ph.D. and Suzanne Hetts, Ph.D.

www.AnimalBehaviorAssociates.com

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A common behavior problem many dog owners encounter in the spring and summer is the dog who panics during thunderstorms. It is hard to imagine how terrified these poor dogs are when in their efforts to escape the storm, they sometimes end up injuring themselves. We've seen dogs who have cut their mouths, feet and legs by attempting to break through crates, doors or windows. One dog actually jumped out a second story window by breaking through the screen.



Dogs who are afraid of thunderstorms don't behave rationally, but are instead motivated by fear. They seem to be attempting to either escape the storm or to just get somewhere other than where they are.

In the process, they can do hundreds, and sometimes thousands of dollars of damage to an owner's house, belongings or property during a single storm. To prevent further damage, unfor-

tunately many owners resort to further confinement of the dog in either a crate, basement or some other area of the house. This rarely does anything to calm the dog's fear; in fact the additional confinement often heightens the dog's panic. Self-injury and a worsening of the fear can often be the result.

As much as owners might wish for it, there is no 'magic bullet' when it comes to resolving thunderstorm phobias. A desensitization and counter condition-

Phobias, continued on pg. 6

Edited version first published in the Rocky Mountain News, Denver, CO. For more information please contact the authors at www.AnimalBehaviorAssociates.com or by phone: 303-932-9095

Normalizing Passive Cruelty: The Excuses and Justifications of Animal Hoarders

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This article published with permission from the Gary Patronek, DVM of the Hoarding of Animals Research Consortium. For more information on hoarding and this organization please go to: www.tufts.edu/vet/cfa/hoarding

Due to the article length it will be published in two parts. This issue contains the abstract, methods and part of the results. The Fall issue of the *Behavior Perspective* will contain the 2nd half of the results and discussion. If you can't wait until fall to read the rest the article is available in it's entirety including references at the above website.

Abstract

Press reports frequently characterize animal hoarders as bad, mad, or sad people. This descriptive study identifies the accounts hoarders use to neutralize these negative portrayals. A total of 163 articles representing 118 hoarding cases between 2000 to 2003 were content-analyzed. Findings indicate that hoarders employ a variety of justifications and excuses to explain and normalize their treatment of animals. Justifications include denying wrongdoing, being a Good Samaritan, and professing to be victims of the system, while excuses include attributing their poor performance to external events, appealing to defeasibility, scapegoating, and self-handicapping. The results point to the value of these accounts to hoarders as well as to authorities and experts who deal with and manage this behavior.

An alarming number of animal hoarding cases emerge every year in the United States. In fact, between 700 and 2,000 cases are reported annually, with 60 percent being repeat offenders (Patronek 1999).

As a result, many companion animals are kept in inappropriate, inadequate, and over-crowded conditions that cause starvation, disease, behavioral problems, or death (Campbell and Robinson 2000). People who collect large numbers of animals only to neglect them present serious challenges for owners, for the

animals involved, and for the community (Worth and Beck 1981). The complex nature of hoarding cases makes them difficult to investigate and to resolve. They cross many jurisdictions including police, animal control, public health, building inspection, and social services; however, in order to protect people's civil rights, most laws restrict agencies from intervening unless others are being harmed. For each social control institution that weighs in on how to manage these cases, the public is given a different perspective on how to understand hoarders and their behavior. When the press reports the opinions of these various "experts," three negative images of hoarders are communicated to the public (Arluke et al. 2002). One adverse image is that hoarders are criminals. Experts often characterize hoarding as a form of passive cruelty that can be more disturbing than isolated incidents of violent aggression.

Often, the former affects many animals kept for months or even years under conditions of horrendous deprivation and suffering (Lockwood and Cassidy 1988). They fail to provide them with minimum standards of care and are oblivious to their animals' suffering. As a consequence, these animals are victims of severe emaciation, they often have serious health and behavioral problems, or they even die. In this vein, one article (Colin 2002), entitled "Loving Animals to Death," describes animal hoarders as "keeping a light foot in the serial killer camp: Like serial killers they are pathetic but obsessively thorough and are motivated by a perversion of something that could maybe almost make sense." Further on, the article contains an interview with a California resident. He stated "I think that [hoarders] believe they are loving those animals...but animal cruelty is just as bad as cruelty to children" (Colin 2002, pp. 2-3). If not seen as criminals, then

The complex nature of hoarding cases makes them difficult to investigate and to resolve.

hoarders are portrayed as psychologically disturbed. Experts have suggested several psychiatric explanations, including the claim that hoarders suffer from delusions (HARC 2000), dementia (Patronek 1999), addiction (Lockwood 1994), attachment disorder, control problems (Lockwood 1994), or obsessive compulsiveness (Rasmussen and Eisen 1992; Lockwood 1994; Frost et al. 1995; Ball, Baer and Otto 1996; Winsberg, Cassic and Koran 1999; Strubbe 2000). Press reports also include the opinions of people untrained in psychology or social work who are quick to label animal hoarders as "crazy" or "far out of reality" (Arluke et al. 2002). A rabbit, rat and exotic bird hoarder living in Detroit was depicted by a humane official in this manner. He noted: "There is something mentally unstable about this particular person. I guess that responds to the reason why she is going out collecting

all of these animals." If not seen as bad or mad, hoarders are pictured as extremely pathetic or sad. Experts describe them as living in filthy conditions with a large number of animals—from dozens to over a hundred—both alive

and dead. These animals—most commonly cats and dogs—are frequently ill and malnourished to the point of starvation. The floors may be covered with feces and urine, and the air so thick that it may be difficult to breathe inside (Patronek 2001). Such households are often heavily cluttered with garbage, with unsanitary living and food preparation areas. These conditions may inhibit normal movement about the home and pose a threat to the hoarder's health and safety. In some cases, the residences are condemned as unfit for human habitation (HARC 2002). Additionally, involved animals suffer from serious health and behavioral problems that can require euthanasia (Patronek 1999). Although hoarders can break the

Hoarders, from pg. 3

law, suffer from genuine mental illnesses, or live in sub-standard conditions, these individualistic, psychological views ignore the fact that hoarders function within subcultures where they learn how to counter derogatory labels and create more affirming self conceptions. To avoid negative attributions of others as well as self-recriminations, they will present themselves in a favorable light by constructing “accounts” or “techniques of neutralization” to explain or normalize the behavior in question (Mills 1940; Scott and Lyman 1968; Snyder 1985; Sykes and Matza 2002). These constructions lessen the stigma of hoarding by either claiming that the behavior is reasonable or by denying responsibility for these “bad” acts. In other words, they either justify or excuse their acts. According to Scott and Lyman (1968), justifications accept responsibility for the act in question, but deny the pejorative quality associated with it. Alternatively, excuses admit that the act in question is wrong but deny full responsibility.

Snyder, Higgins and Stucky (1983) note that accounts lessen the negative implications of an actor’s performance, thereby maintaining a positive image of oneself and for others. Because justifications and excuses are a way of coping with such negative labels, they need to be taken seriously. There also is a practical reason to study these accounts, beyond capturing the hoarders’ own voice in and of itself. While it is impossible to know whether hoarders “truly believe” their accounts, they are frequently used with peers and strangers to construct a respectable self image. Detailed knowledge of how hoarders explain their behavior can help those who deal with them in a legal or mental health capacity to better anticipate and respond to their defenses. To intervene and remedy hoarding situations, animal welfare groups, veterinarians, animal control, public health and mental health agencies, child welfare and adult protective services, and housing authorities would do well to know how hoarders think about and defend their actions, instead of dismissing their talk as idle or defensive, if not an indication of delusion or mental disorder. Only then can these authorities engage in more effective dialogue with hoarders and their supporters than is now usually the case.

Methods

To examine how hoarders manage their adverse labeling, we studied accounts they and their supporters used in the news. These reports were obtained from the Tufts University Center for Animals and Public Policy’s media files. These files contain national newspaper articles gathered by the Hoarding of Animals Research Consortium (HARC) for over four years. Most articles were found by searching animal listservs, while humane officers throughout the country supplied others. Since animal hoarding press reports are infrequent, only a convenience sample could be selected. Despite this sampling method, there are reasons to believe that the sample studied is a good representation of newspaper reports of hoarding in general. Of course, some people do not consider these reports to be a valid source of data for research. Criticism usually points to journalists who allegedly distort the content of stories or select only certain events to report. However, studies of the accuracy of the news present a different picture. For example, Danzger (1982) and Earl et al. (2004) report that the news is fairly accurate with regard to describing and selecting events. Indeed, news stories are an ideal source to examine how people present themselves, since they are addressing a large, public audience. A total of 163 articles from 2000 to 2003 were gathered. These articles were selected from a larger pool of 438 in Tufts’ media files. Reports were selected only if they presented an

account given by the hoarder or third parties to justify or explain their behavior. As some articles contained more than one case and some cases were addressed in more than one newspaper article, a total of 118 were analyzed. The articles were coded and assigned a case number, considering each hoarder as a single case. The coding sheets included the case number, hoarder’s name, newspaper, headline, and most importantly, the accounts given by the hoarders and/or by third parties. After being coded, cases were initially sorted into different categories of accounts. Depending on the hoarders and/or third parties’ accounts, the cases were assigned to one of these two broad categories. Justifications included cases where responsibility is admitted but the wrongfulness of the behavior is denied. Hoarders in these cases often engage in a “it’s not so bad” type of explanation. Excuses included cases where the wrongfulness of the behavior is admitted but responsibility is denied. Hoarders in these cases often engage in a “yes, but...” type of explanation. After sorting cases into the above broad categories, we conducted a more thorough classification. Different types of accounts were distinguished within each of the original categories.

Results

In the face of pejorative portrayals in the press, hoarders construct a more positive image of themselves. As seen in Table 1, they create a variety of justifications and excuses to normalize their behavior.

Hoarders, continued on pg. 5

Table 1. Typology of justifications and excuses.
Types and subtypes of justifications and excuses for animal hoarding n (%)

Justifications 51 (44.0)*	Total Denial 17 (33.3)†
Simple Denial 1 (5.9)‡	Denial + further explanation 10 (58.8)‡
Profound love for animals 6 (35.3)‡	Good samaritan 19 (37.3)†
Animal rescuers 13 (68.4)‡	Saving animals from death 6 (31.6)‡
Victims of the System 15 (29.4)†	Excuses 65 (56.0)*
Difficulty of the task 16 (24.6)†	Defeasibility 6 (9.2)†
Scapegoating 10 (15.4)†	Lack of intentionality 4 (6.2)†
Self-handicapping 9 (13.8)†	Appealing to accidents 20 (30.8)

*percent of all cases; †percent of category; ‡percent of type

Hoarders, from pg. 4

Justifications

Justifications are socially approved vocabularies that neutralize an act or its consequences when one or both are called into question (Snyder 1985). They do this by having the individual accept responsibility for the act in question, but deny it is bad or claim that it is not “that bad” (Snyder, Higgins and Stucky 1983). Our analysis revealed that many hoarders reframed their performance in this way by using different types of justifications. Hoarders justified themselves in 51 of the 116 cases we analyzed. As seen in Table 1, there were three types of justifications, including total denial, Good Samaritan, and victims of the system. We found 17 cases of denial (33.3%), including simple denial (one case), denial with further explanation (ten cases) and claiming to love their animals as children (six cases). The Good Samaritan type had a total of 19 cases (37.3%), including hoarders who believed to be animal rescuers (13 cases) and those who claimed to have saved them from death (six cases). The victim of the system type had 15 cases (29.4%).

Denial

Denial is the simplest type of justification. By completely rejecting any incrimination, subjects deny that their actions are immoral, strange, or untoward. As reported in the news, hoarders use this technique in a variety of ways. At times hoarders deny all accusations without further explanation, while at other times they contend that animals are well cared for, that they have profound love for them as though they were own children, or that their animals are happy and love them back. Simple denial without elaboration by hoarders was rare. For instance, in a case in which 50 dogs were found in horrendous conditions, an intervening shelter worker said about the owner, “She believes that these dogs are in great shape, and we’ve got 12 medical people upstairs working on each and every one for two hours because they’re in horrible shape.”¹ In another case, when 50 neglected animals were found in a filthy home, an animal control official stated that the owner truly believed she had done nothing wrong. It was more common to find complete denial followed by a short explanation to support their point. In this manner, a man denied that it was filthy to live with 27 dogs and 47 cats in a loft

covered in animal waste. He claimed it was cleaned “every day, sometimes twice a day.” When challenged by the reporter who asserted he could smell the filth, he answered “Well, do you know what dogs and cats do? They mark their territory.” In this case, the hoarder not only denies doing anything wrong, but also provides more explanation to support his statement. Other hoarders described the benefits enjoyed by their animals. In a case where 38 dogs were found living in a single room, the owner of the animals said, “They got a room of their own. We got two windows in there, they get air and sunshine. They won’t come outside because they are scared.” Furthermore, the animal control officer intervening in the case described the owner as “...a very sweet woman,” and stated: “I have no doubt she absolutely loved her dogs. This is the most difficult kind of case.” In another case, where 37 starving dogs were found living in a home filled with disease, the owner stated that they all were well cared for. “This is heaven for them,” he said. “They’re playing ball... love it...and they don’t have mange and they love it here. Did you see that dog there wag its tail?” he said, pointing at a dog. “That dog wants to play ball. It’s the elephant man thing. Looks are deceiving. That’s not what you judge suffering by.” In both cases, hoarders supported their denial by providing details of the excellent care given to their animals. By asserting that the animals were happy and healthy, hoarders painted a picture of their animals’ love for them. This assertion suggests that hoarders consider their animals’ love as evidence that they received appropriate care. Many hoarders claimed to love their animals as their children and stated that “they all had names,” as evidence of proper care towards them. Thus, to justify their behavior, hoarders identify animals as

family members and profess to love them. For instance, one hoarder claimed: “My dogs are my children, to be quite honest. They are the things that give me the most joy.” The hoarder was described by his roommate and business partner, saying: “He is very conscientious in his day to day care for animals. He is in love with the dogs. He knows every name, he knows their birth dates.” The humane society intervening in the case claimed that the 44 dogs discovered in the house lived in horrendous conditions. In another case, where 100 animals, including a 11 cats, rats, guinea pigs, a baboon, a potbellied pig, an iguana, a tarantula, and a skunk were seized from a filthy home, a neighbor of the hoarder described the woman by saying: “She truly loved her animals. She has names for each and every one of them.” In some cases, denial is more implicit but still evident. For instance, in a Florida case where 57 hairless terriers were found living in a filthy home, the article claimed he “doesn’t understand why all the protestors want to take his dogs away.” The hoarder said, “Why these people are here to take my dogs I have no idea. I was caught in a hoax. They said I was going to euthanize all the dogs.” By stating that he has no clue why his dogs are being taken from him, the hoarder implicitly denies wrongdoing.

Good Samaritan

The Good Samaritan strategy embeds a bad act in another context. Snyder (1985) calls this process “exonerative moral reasoning.” By considering an ill deed as a necessary part of a larger virtuous act, the wrongfulness of the performance is diluted by the honorable purpose. Many hoarders employ this type of justification. In other words, they lessen the negativity of their performance by grounding the act in something noble. By claiming to be animal

Hoarders, continued on pg. 6

Speaking to a group or technicians or at a CE meeting?

We have brochures available for members to distribute at local meetings and larger regional meetings as well. If you’re going and are willing to take some please contact a board member to “stock up” and help promote the SVBT!



Phobias, from pg. 2

ing program is usually required in order to change the dog's fearful reaction to at least being able to tolerate the storm without panicking.

Unfortunately, such procedures are significantly disrupted if the dog experiences a fearful episode during treatment. This means that the behavior modification program is best implemented during the 'off-season' – fall and winter – when storms usually do not occur.

Many repetitions of the desensitization sessions are required in order to change the dog's behavior. As many as 10 to 15 brief sessions everyday for several months may be necessary. Owners are likely to need the assistance of a qualified behavior consultant to help them implement an effective program.

In the meantime, owners of a thunderphobic dog can consult with their veterinarian for anti-anxiety medication to attempt to calm the dog on a short-term basis. A number of anti-anxiety drugs have been used to treat thunderphobias that do not result in sedative effects.

Drugs that just slightly or moderately sedate the dog without decreasing anxiety can actually make the dog worse, because he now feels even more out of control. It may not be safe to leave heavily sedated dogs home alone and unsupervised. Owners can also consider boarding or day-care for the dog on days storms are expected. 🐾

For SVBT members working to educate the public on animal behavior please take time to visit the Animal Behavior Associates website as the above article is an example of many available for re-publication. Just another excellent resource available online – do you know of others? Send your ideas, comments and resource information to your newsletter editor Sheri Church at: vettech03@juno.com

NEW MEMBERS

We are in the process of putting the final touches on the updated database and will have a complete list of new members as of next issue. The new database will help to better organize member information and allow you to receive materials in a more timely manner. We thank you for your patience and support throughout this change!

Hoarders, from pg. 5

rescuers, shelters, or saviors, they frame what others might see as gross neglect as a kind-hearted, benevolent act to care for animals that no one else will help or save. For instance, in a Pennsylvania case in which 18 emaciated dogs were seized from a home, the hoarder explained to authorities that she was starting her own humane society. Similarly, a hoarder of more than 24 dogs told reporters that she rescues the dogs and gives them shots. She explained: "They were so skinny when I got them out of the Warwick pound, that the three kennels that I had them boarded with, said they [the dogs] were totally emaciated. They put weight back on and have their shots and they're eating." In another case, when 39 cats were discovered living in horrible conditions, the hoarder said she was trying to establish a no-kill shelter. She claimed: "I am not a hoarder, people said I was a hoarder because I refused to associate with shelters that euthanize." Finally, a hoarder of 12 pit bulls told reporters he took the animals after the original owners did not want them. He claimed that he saved them and tried to find homes for them. This type of account attempts to elevate the act by claiming some altruistic motive. By employing this tactic, hoarders claim their behavior is reasonable or, in some cases, even morally admirable. Although some

hoarders do not claim to be rescuers or no-kill shelters, they claim to be doing a good thing for the animals, thereby refuting the charge of animal neglect by defining their behavior as a virtue. Within this category, saving animals from death seems to be a recurrent theme used by hoarders to justify their behavior. The frequency of this type of claim suggests that hoarders consider potential death to be a strong argument in favor of keeping animals in horrid conditions. For instance, a man who was found living with 60 dogs and two cats claimed that nine dogs were his, while the remainder belonged to people who had asked him to care for them. "It was a goodwill gesture. I want those animals to live. I'd rather be put to sleep myself," he said, choking into tears. Another hoarder of 31 cats said he refused to take the felines to a shelter because he did not want to see them euthanized. "I love animals and I don't feel any animal should be put to death," he said, citing religious reasons. The owner of 64 pit bulls and a Rottweiler claimed: "That was my family. I took care of dogs people were trying to kill." These claims reveal that hoarders consider death to be an unthinkable option, believing that any other possibility, no matter how horrific, is better for the animals.

To be continued next issue or go online : www.tufts.edu/vet/cfa/hoarding 🐾

Congratulations SVBT Board of Directors for 2007-2008!

- ***President:** Kristen White
- ***President-Elect:** Amanda Eick-Miller
- Treasurer:** Julie Urban
- ***Recording Secretary:** Shannon Trouba
- ***Corresponding Secretary:** Melissa Spooner
- ***Member at Large:** Monique Feyrecilde
- ***Member at Large:** Lori Tyler-Oschner

* Took office July 14, 2007

Thank you to all who participated – we look forward to having you involved in many committees and activities!

If you are interested in participating on a committee, as a state or international representative please contact one of your new board members and let us know what you are interested in! The more help we have the more we can do.

UGA Scholarship: University of Georgia CE Seminar Scholarship

Dr. Crowell-Davis from the University of GA is again offering a wonderful opportunity to members of the SVBT. This fall, a three day seminar entitled *Prevention and Treatment of Behavior Problems in Small Animals* will be held **October 20-21, 2007** at the University of Georgia's main campus in Athens, Georgia. All of us can reserve a place by registering for the course – details on registration will be made available at www.SVBT.org as they are made available to us. In addition, Dr. Sharon Crowell-Davis, DVM PhD, DACVB, has partnered with the SVBT in offering one of our members a scholarship to attend this course.

The scholarship will cover the cost of registration and there is also a \$300 stipend towards travel, housing, and meal expenses. In order to determine who will get to take advantage of this incredible opportunity, we are holding an essay contest.

If you are a current professional member of SVBT, submit an application downloaded from www.SVBT.org, answer the following essay in 500 words or less, and submit in electronic form and hard copy to the SVBT scholarship committee. Also include one letter of reference from the private practice or facility where you are employed.

Get started NOW! All entries must be postmarked by **Aug. 20, 2007**. A winner will be chosen by August 27, 2007. No late or incomplete entries will be considered.

Hard copies, references, and electronic formats need to be mailed to:
Pam Mahlie, RVT
50667 Haven Hill
Granger, IN 46530

Essays and applications may also be emailed to:
pjmrvt@comcast.net

We must have the “snail mailed” information by the postmarked date or it will not be considered. In the past, we have received essays that could not be shared between committee members thru the format they were in, so that is why we need to have both formats.

We encourage everyone to attend this CE event even if you decide not to participate in the scholarship contest. Our members that have attended in past years have raved about what they have learned and how much better equipped they were to handle different situations in the behavior field.

Please answer this question for your essay:
“What are some ways a credentialed technician can make a difference in preventing behavior problems in pets?”

Editor's Bark

Amanda/ Sheri

I would like to take the time to introduce someone new to the team - Sheri Church. As of the next issue of the *Behavior Perspective*, Sheri will be taking over as editor. I am very excited to have her on board as she brings much needed new energy and ideas. My expectations for Sheri are very high based upon my work with her for the next issue and it will be great to have her on board!

In the meantime I will be lurking in the hallways of email helping to guide Sheri forward on this new adventure and setting off on some of my own. I have enjoyed the last few years ... has it been 3 or 4 already....of doing the newsletter. It's been a lot of fun and I've met some amazing people because of it. In the interests of the organization I am a firm believer in change. It can be a bit rocky but the benefits far exceed the rough travel.

Don't worry – I'll still be around trying to coerce those of you who know who you are into running for office or helping on committees. I know where you live – yes, I do - I have a database with all of your addresses in it :-)

Ciao!

Amanda Eick-Miller, RVT

Fall DOGS & CATS Course

Please check the Purdue website for the most up to date information!



FREE BOOK!

The Loved Dog: The Playful, Nonaggressive Way to Teach Your Dog Good Behavior

By Tamar Gellar with Andrea Cagan

I am looking for someone to read and review this book for the next newsletter! If you are interested, please send me an email to vettech03@juno.com with your name, SVBT member number, and address by September 15. Names will be placed in a hat and I will notify the lucky person by email!



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**What's Inside This Month's
 "The Behavior Perspective"**

President's Message 1
 Product Review.....2
 Managing & Resolving Thunder Phobias 2
 Normalizing Passive Cruelty - The Excuses
 and Justifications of Animal Hoarders 3
 Membership Application..... insert
 Congratulations SVBT Board of Directors 6
 New Members 6
 Editor's Bark 7
 UGA Scholarship 7
 Fall DOGS & CATS Course 7
 Free Book!..... 7

Use the form
 on the
 insert to
 renew your
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 to SVBT!!



**The Annual Business meeting
 and SVBT reception was
 recently held during the
 AVMA convention in
 Washington D.C. Thank you
 to all who attended and for
 those that didn't we'll see
 you next year!**

