President's Message
Dr. Timothy Lee

We have changed! Several things about this organization are new. First, we are now the Human Animal Bond Association. The change in name reflects the change in membership of the association and its board. We have long recognized that not just veterinarians and veterinary students are involved with the Human Animal Bond. The veterinary technicians, support staff in practices and professionals working the area of the Bond are all invited to join the association.

The change in membership will also be reflected in the makeup of the board of directors. While the board will be predominately composed of veterinarians, it will have a position for a veterinary student, a registered veterinary technician and an associated professional. Inclusiveness seems to be a common thought these days and we realize we are no different. The reason for the existence of much of the veterinary profession is the Bond and practices are not dependent on just veterinarians. The entire team is important and should recognize the part the Human Animal Bond plays in our daily work.

The next new thing is the logo of the organization. It states the name of the organization and its acronym HABA. It also shows that the organization is veterinary based with the presence of the veterinary caduceus. Several logos were considered but this again lets us be inclusive. The Bond is not just about dogs and cats and exotics and horses, etc. It is about the humans that care for them. Our recent educational tracts have reflected that the humans caring for and about animals are part of our concern.

Speaking of educational tracts, we are moving forward. We will have a tract for the first time at the WVC (Western Veterinary Conference) in Las Vegas. One can now see and hear the Human Animal Bond Association message at the VMX (formerly the NAVC), at the AVMA annual conference and the WVC. These are the three largest conferences in the country. Some of the most well-known speakers on this subject appear each year and we are grateful for their participation.

Yet another new part of the organization is an expanded availability of the student scholarship we offer each year. Two years ago we started presenting a $2000 scholarship to one veterinary student who had exhibited outstanding leadership in the field of the Human Animal Bond in their school’s activities. with an (cont. on page 2)
President’s Message (cont.)
Dr. Timothy Lee

It was only available to students in schools associated Human Animal Bond club. This year the scholarship will be available to any student of an accredited veterinary school that has been active in the area of the Bond. Notice of availability of the scholarship will be sent to each school shortly and applications are due by December 31st. The monies from the scholarship will be awarded to the student and sent directly to the school for their student expenses.

It is recognized that veterinary students are extremely busy and have only so much time to be active in a student club and that there are large numbers of clubs from which to choose. Something that reflects that reality and yet promotes the Bond is in the works and will be announced later. Thanks for your interest in the Human Animal Bond and in this association. We need your participation in the understanding of the Bond and we hope to see you at one of our presentations this coming year.

Check out our new logo!

Hospice and Palliative Care for Companion Animals

Principles and Practice

Amir Shanan, Tamara Shearer, Jessica Pierce, Editors
HABA in the News

STUDIES SHOW THAT WOMEN WHO OWN HORSES LIVE 15 YEARS LONGER THAN THOSE WHO DON’T.

Recent studies done in Western NC, Northern Virginia and northern Florida involving various groups of “horsey” and non “horsey” women are showing some startling results. The double blind study followed women in different age groups over a forty year time frame to capture this objective data. The study grouped women into two groups of horse (for at least five years) & non-horse owners and then further into ten year age spans. The most significant spike in longevity came at the 65-75 age span which showed highest disparity at 20 longer lives for horse women. Researchers point to the facts of higher forms of exercise, outdoor exposure and socialization of the horse women as likely contributing to the longevity but the women agree that their horses often contribute to their sense of well-being and as a group, these women also tended to be less symptomatic in high blood pressure, diabetes and general heart conditions. Read more

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THIS SCHOOL THERAPY DOG GOT A PHOTO IN THE YEARBOOK. HE IS PERFECT.

Bird is a therapy dog for a school for children with autism and special needs in Ohio. Read More

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THERAPY DOG BRINGS COMFORT TO COMMUNITY.

When Cu the Therapy dog was first adopted, he was malnourished, matted and heartworm positive. He was born with impaired back legs and raised in a house with three other dogs.

Now, he spends his days on the second floor of Holthusen Hall with owner and Counseling Center director Dr. Mike Zebrowski. The healthy, fluffy, white dog holds the title “legend,” as dubbed by visitors Read More..
The International Association for Animal Hospice and Palliative Care announces debut of Animal Hospice and Palliative Care Certification Program

CHICAGO, IL - June 12, 2017

The International Association for Animal Hospice and Palliative Care is excited to announce that registration is now open through August 15, 2017 for the second class of their Animal Hospice and Palliative Care Certification Program! The postgraduate training program is a 100-hour RACE approved continuing education program that provides advanced study in hospice and palliative care for licensed veterinarians and veterinary technicians.

The program includes 75-hours of distance learning in hospice and palliative care, and an additional 25-hours of learning during the annual IAAHPC Conference that includes an 8-hour workshop specific to end-of-life communication led by Dr. Jane Shaw of Colorado State University, and a 4-hour advanced euthanasia techniques lab led by Dr. Kathleen Cooney. Students who successfully complete the certification program are recognized as a Certified Hospice and Palliative Care Veterinarian (CHPV) or Certified Hospice and Palliative Care Technician (CHPT).

"There is a gap – treacherous yet barely recognized – between how we care for companion animals during their lifetime, and how we care for them during the end phase of their lives," said Dr. Amir Shanan, IAAHPC founder and honorary advisor. This gap has a tremendous cost in human suffering and grief, which is also barely recognized. Our program is aimed at giving veterinary professionals the tools for closing this gap."

“Our first class was a fantastic success with nearly 80 students enrolled” said Dr. Shea Cox, DVM, the IAAHPC President-elect who co-directs the program with Dr. Shanan. “The program is rigorous, and is designed to prepare veterinarians and registered veterinary nurses/technicians to practice AHPC at the highest standards. We are extremely proud of our students.”

Students of the certification program’s first class have recently completed their required course work and will take their qualifying exam in October of 2017. Enrollment in the program is limited to veterinarians and licensed/registered veterinary nurses/technicians who hold current IAAHPC membership.

For additional information about the Animal Hospice and Palliative Care Certification Program, visit the International Association for Animal Hospice and Palliative Care (IAAHPC)’s [website here](http://www.iaahpc.org).

About the International Association for Animal Hospice and Palliative Care

The International Association for Animal Hospice and Palliative Care is dedicated to promoting knowledge of, and developing guidelines for, comfort-oriented care to companion animals as they approach the end of life. The IAAHPC promotes the hospice philosophy of care by utilizing a team of professionals to help facilitate the care of terminally ill animals and to support the animals’ families as they are making decisions before, around, and after the patient’s death. The IAAHPC emphasizes the terminally ill animal’s quality of life and recognizes that hospice/palliative care provides the animal’s family precious quality time with the animal, and helps the family cope with the approaching death of their beloved companion.

[www.iaahpc.org](http://www.iaahpc.org)

Follow us on Facebook
Have you ever felt like you are about to die? I mean that literally, like you’ve been held up at gun point.

I’ve suggested for years that too many of our pets are feeling at the vet office like they are being held up at gun point – that they are about to be killed.

No wonder the flight or fight response may kick in for many. Other animals just freeze – and sometimes owners and even veterinary staff don’t even recognize how terrified they really are. They may even be paralyzed with fear (learned helplessness).

It’s often pretty obvious, like when a cat is screaming bloody murder or the dog is so frightened that the trembling pup urinates in the exam room.

When pets are clearly upset, so are clients, and then so are veterinary nurses, and how can the veterinarian not be? Stress is contagious. And like a snowball rolling downhill, it grows.

All this isn’t in the best interest of anyone.

So a few years back when my friend Dr. Marty Becker told me about this idea to remove the fear from vet visits, called Fear Free; I was all about it.

I knew the data.

Nearly a third (28 percent) of dog owners say going to the veterinarian is stressful, and 38 percent suggest their dog feels stressed out. Over a third (38 percent) of cat owners call vet visits stressful, and 58 percent suggest their cat gets stressed at the vet office.

A significant percent of pet owners stopped going to the veterinarian all together – for various reasons, from costs to not understanding the importance of checkups, but a big one is the expectation of mental discomfort; it’s a stressful experience.

No veterinary professional I have ever met has made the significant investment of dollars and time for schooling all to make pets feel terrified. Of course, veterinarians and veterinary nurses want to help, not hurt.

There are lots of animals – millions of them – who actually enjoy the veterinary visit. And I suggest they get a better exam than a fractious cat or an aggressive dog as a result. Slowly data is beginning to show this and more data will be published soon. I propose that the animals who tolerate, or even enjoy, a vet visit will live a longer life. This is why the Fear Free concept of diminishing fear, anxiety and stress before and after veterinary visits is so important.

Just over 80 percent of cats see a veterinarian in their first year – while that sounds impressive, that means millions of cats don’t receive medical care that first year. Far more problematic, the majority of cats don’t see a veterinarian after that unless they become so ill a visit is obviously called for, often to an emergency clinic.

In fact, we know – as in human medicine – prevention is best. However, even the best veterinarians can’t diagnose clients they never see.

Fear Free promotes considerate approach and gentle control techniques used in calming environments. Utilization of Fear Free methods and protocols leads to reduction or removal of anxiety triggers, which creates an experience that is rewarding and safer for all involved, including pets, their owners, and veterinary health care teams.

In the end – can it work? Can pets’ emotional barometer move from frightened to fun?

Absolutely, though it first requires an awareness of the problem, and then a commitment to do something about it. This is a concept which the Humane Animal Bond Association fully supports.

Fear Free veterinary professionals support emotional health as well as physical health. Pets who are accepting of veterinary visits – or better, who love these visits – are simply more likely to see you.
If I had fallen into a well, just as Lassie was there for Timmy, I am certain Ricky would have been there for me.

Ricky wasn’t a Collie as Lassie is. In fact, Ricky wasn’t even a dog – he was a cat. And every day I still miss him. Ricky not only stole my heart, he stole the show. I may never again have a bond with a pet like the one I had with Ricky.

Ricky was a very handsome dude, a stark white Devon Rex cat. When writing a story about pedigreed cats, I visited breeder Leslie Spiller’s home and met a cat like I had never seen before. This was Ricky’s mom, and instantly she greeted me at the door, and showed me around her apartment, I told Leslie just how impressed I was. She said, “Well, she’s pregnant.” And my wife, Robin, and I decided, “why not?”

Devon Rex cats tend to be sticky – sticking to their favorite people, and many are content to hang out with any person. Ricky was that way from the start, and we did all we could to further socialize him.

One day my wife, Robin, came home from an animal assisted therapy session with our Miniature Australian Shepherd, Lucy. She said, “Teach Lucy a new trick.” Lucy knew how to do all these little parlor tricks, even singing a song to kids at the Rehabilitation Institute of Chicago. So, I thought, maybe I could teach her to play a little kid’s piano.

I closed the door of our “training room,” and began the process of clicker training Lucy. With each click, she received a special treat. I began to shape to the behavior, the closer her paw came to the keyboard, I would click and treat. And gradually it was working. After all, you can train a composer overnight. Or maybe you can.

It turned out, I didn’t close the door all the way, and into the “training room” ambled Ricky the cat. He simply looked at me, looked at the dog, and proceeded to play the piano. No clicker. No treat – though I quickly began to reinforce, in the end, he trained me to train him.

I thought, “What am I fooling around with this dog for?” and gently excused Lucy the dog, and continued working with my feline musical prodigy.

I had long wanted to demonstrate that one can socialize cats, or at least the right cats. Ricky, loved running errands with me, visiting the local bank or dry cleaner. And he loved showing off how much he knew, from jumping through a Hoola hoop to sitting and then offering his paw to give a “high five.” He could jump over dogs on a “down/stay,” and, of course, play the piano.

Ricky began appearing at recitals at places like local pet stores. Imagine the professional concentration it took to perform there, and I don’t mean ignoring the amazed onlookers including members of the canine persuasion. I mean the hamsters and gerbils were sometimes just a few feet away.

Unfortunately, this all happened before YouTube, so there were no viral videos. But there was TV, and lots of it, including National Geographic, Animal Planet, Fox News, PBS to Japanese TV to local news shows – it seemed a piano playing cat was news.

To me, though, while I was glad to bust myths about cats – Ricky was my best friend.

Ask anyone who goes out with a dog to participate as a team in a dog sport or as my wife did doing animal assisted therapy about the human
animal bond that exists. I believe the bond intensifies, certainly the ability to communicate with one another is enhanced. If that is true for dogs (and there are even studies to document this phenomenon), why wouldn’t it be true for cats too?

As I trained Ricky behaviors, like jumping through a Hoola Hoop, I no longer required a clicker – just my finger to point, and show him what I wanted him to do. He somehow knew. It’s as if our minds were connected.

Ricky happened to be due for a physical, as I believe in twice a year exams. He was about a year old at the time and seemed totally healthy. In fact, in the waiting room he was wreaking havoc with the dogs. I showed him how to open those dog cookie jars. When you open the cookie jar, it makes a barking sound. In about two seconds, he figured it out. From the top of the reception counter, he was soon tossing cookies toward his canine subjects in the waiting area.

As per my veterinarian’s request, Ricky performed a few of his hit improvisational jazz tunes to the staff, and some clients who happened to be there – all crowded into a little exam room.

After the applause (a standing ovation – there were not seats in the room), Dr. Donna Solomon began the exam by listening to Ricky’s heart. Her face told the story. She heard a murmur, and a fairly significant one.

She explained that a murmur may be benign, but I certainly needed to find out. Unfortunately, veterinary cardiologist Dr. Michael Luethey’s ultrasound uncovered that Ricky had feline hypertrophic cardiomyopathy (HCM), an abnormal thickening of the heart. And worse, while medication may slow the disease progress some – nothing more could be done. Some cats diagnosed with HCM do live out a normal life. However, many cats with HCM die suddenly (HCM is the most common cause of sudden death in cats). Some cats with HCM have far more prolonged deaths, typically after suffering several stroke-like events (thromboembolisms).

Happily, Ricky never read the prognosis, and likely felt well until his final months, but we don’t really know for sure since cats are so adept at hiding illness. Ricky continued to perform on occasion, but I wouldn’t travel with Ricky. I even turned down a bit with David Letterman’s ‘Stupid Pet Tricks’ segment.

Ricky was only four and half when he suddenly succumbed to HCM in 2002. He hadn’t been feeling well for a few weeks, but we didn’t really know for sure since cats are so adept at hiding illness. Ricky continued to perform on occasion, but I wouldn’t travel with Ricky. I even turned down a bit with David Letterman’s ‘Stupid Pet Tricks’ segment.

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Ricky was only four and half when he suddenly succumbed to HCM in 2002. He hadn’t been feeling well for a few weeks, but we didn’t really expect it – he just collapsed. I still remember that point in time as if it was yesterday.

I was then determined to make a difference. HCM might be the most common cause of death of cats from about three years to 10 years. How could such a common disease have no effective treatment?

I partnered with the Winn Feline Foundation – non-profit funder of cat health studies – and created the Ricky Fund to raise money for HCM research. Today, we’ve raised well over $100,000.

The good news is that with those dollars a genetic test was created by Dr. Kathryn Meurs to determine if a gene defect for HCM occurs in Maine Coon and Ragdoll cats. Breeders implementing the simple and inexpensive cheek swab test in their breeding programs have saved lives. But the test is not perfect. Also, what about other breeds in which HCM occurs? Besides, HCM is hardly only a problem of pedigreed cats.

While, I’m proud that the money raised for the Ricky Fund has made a difference. Still, my heart breaks because there’s so much to do. Just in the time you’re reading this story – some cat somewhere has succumbed to HCM.

I’ve certainly connected with all of the other pets in my life, but I’ve never had a connection like a did with Ricky.
Join the HABA online at aahabv.org

- OR - fill out the form and mail in:

Name _________________________________________________________

Home Address __________________________________________________

Business Phone _________________________________________________

Email _________________________________________________________

Specialty Board Certification _______________________________________

Alma Mater __________________________  Year Graduated ____________

AVMA Member __ Yes  __ No    Other Associations _____________________

Internet Address ________________________________________________

*All AAH-ABV members will be listed in the directory unless the member specifies otherwise.

Dues (check one):
__ Member Veterinarian ($50)
__ Associate Member Non-Veterinarian ($50)
__ Student Applicant (Free)

Students, please have a faculty member sign below to certify that you are a member of the class of ___________ at _______________________________.

Faculty Signature ________________________________________________

Date __________________________________________________________

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