

Reflecting on My 2013-2014 MVMA Year as President

by Dr. Jan V. Ginsky, MVMA Immediate Past President

Now that the MVMA Annual Summer Conference (which will be highlighted in our next issue) and my year as president is over, I've been able to think back on the 2013-2014 year. It was an interesting year with quite a few challenges.

At the beginning of our year, we started with our new Executive Director (Lauren Michalski), and management company (Key Association Management). They've had their work cut out for them trying to transition the database from an old system from our previous management company. It's still a work in progress, but it's getting close. And of course, they're learning our association and everything that's involved with all of our conferences. With all those challenges, we are very pleased that we've come out ahead financially. And as they enter their second year, I expect things to continue to change for the better.

The other challenge was that our President-Elect, who was also the chair for the Nominating and PR Committees, left to pursue an out-of-state opportunity shortly into the year. This left me with a few things extra on my plate. Fortunately, our Vice-President, Dr. Justin Sobota was willing to step up and take on some of the extra responsibilities. He also agreed to move into the President role early, allowing me to move on to other roles. One of those roles is that I will be the new chair of the PR Committee.

The year had its fun too. I was able to go to Blacksburg to the Virginia-Maryland Regional College of Veterinary Medicine and participate in a few of their events. The first was their White Coat Ceremony to welcome the incoming first year class. At their Mentor program, the MVMA hosted a reception for the Maryland students, allowing the Maryland veterinarians and students to mingle and get to know each other. But my favorite part was having the opportunity to administer the Veterinarian's Oath at the graduation ceremony, and to be able to congratulate them as doctors.

Now we get to look forward to the 4th Annual Potomac Regional Veterinary Conference, being held in Baltimore on November 7-9, 2014. It should be an exciting event. The committee has developed a wonderful CE program (in Small Animal, Equine, and Public and Corporate Health), and has added a one day Practice Management program and Technician programs.

It was an interesting, and rewarding year.

2014 Legislative Update

by James B. Reed, DVM and William Erskine, JD

The Maryland Legislature was active in proposing bills that continued to address community concerns with "dangerous dogs." Since the Solesky decision in the fall of 2012, there has been much debate and attempted compromise to alleviate discrimination against a single breed or breed-type. The existing civil action going into the 2014 legislative sessions favored the belief that all pit bulls are inherently dangerous, which has had a large impact on animal shelters and rescue groups.

Last year's session ended in a near compromise. This year started with an emergency bill introduced by the Senate (SB 247) and is nearly identical to last year's bill (SB 160) proposing that evidence that any dog, regardless of type, causes personal injury or death establishes a rebuttable presumption the owner knew or should have known that the dog had vicious or dangerous propensities. The House also

introduced the same bill in hopes of a speedy agreement (HB 73). The near success of this bill last year was a strong indicator that this bill would have the strongest support.

Alternative bills with lesser liabilities for dog owners had originated from the House (HB 80 and HB 563) with no matching Senate bills, but both received "Unfavorable Report by Judicial Proceedings."

The MVMA did not formally support any one bill on this issue, but encouraged efforts to eliminate discrimination of any single breed. House Bill 160 and Senate Bill 247 passed their respective sessions and were approved by the Governor in April, 2014.

Related bills were introduced by the House. One bill (HB 422) sought to prohibit a county from enacting a local law and a municipality from adopting an ordinance prohibiting ownership of, or harboring, a dog with a specific heritage or breed. A second bill (HB 371) would have required the owner of a dangerous dog to obtain registration from local animal control within 10 days of committing a dangerous act. A third related bill (HB 523) sought to increase the fine relating to the possession of a dangerous dog from \$2,500 to \$5,000, with potential imprisonment not to exceed three years. These bills all failed to pass the House.

The insurance companies have also been targeted by legislation in this area. A recently introduced bill from the Senate (SB 286) sought to prohibit insurance companies from refusing to underwrite a risk or denying/cancelling coverage solely because an applicant owns or keeps a specific breed of dog. The bill, however, would allow additional cost to be imposed in certain criminal cases. This bill received an "Unfavorable Report by Judicial Proceedings and was withdrawn.

The MVMA also considered new areas of legislative activity that directly relate to the practice of veterinary medicine and reviewed two bills with the Board of Examiners which already restricts the practice of veterinary medicine without a license. The house introduced a bill (HB 665) that prohibits a person, other than a licensed veterinarian using anesthesia, from performing specific procedures on dogs and establishing penalties for violation of this act. These procedures would include the cropping of ears and docking of tails by unauthorized individuals. This bill was vetoed because it was deemed duplicative to SB 659 which passed and was approved by the Governor. A second bill in this area (HB 667) prohibited the surgical debarking of a dog or cat yet authorizes a licensed veterinarian to surgically debark under specified circumstances. This bill also passed and was approved by the Governor.

A summary of the 2014 Legislative Session is as follows:

1. HB 80 – Civil Actions – Liability for Personal Injury or Death Caused by Dog

Failed.

The intent of this bill was to establish the liability an owner of a dog running at large.

2. HB 73/SB247 – Civil Actions – Personal Injury or Death Cause by Dog – Rebuttable Presumption

Passed and was Approved by the Governor.

This bill established that evidence presented in a case against a dog owner that their dog caused the injury or death creates a rebuttable presumption that the owner knew or should have known that their dog had a vicious or dangerous propensity.

3. HB 371 – Criminal Law – Dangerous Dogs – Registration and Penalties

Failed.

The intent of this bill was to require an owner of a dangerous dog to register the dog with local animal control within 10 days after committing an act which renders it a dangerous dog.

4. HB 422/SB991 – Dogs – Discrimination Based on Breed, Type, or Heritage – Prohibited

Failed.

The intent of this legislation was to prohibit a dog from being determined to be potentially dangerous based solely on its breed, type, or heritage. It would have prohibited a county from enacting a local law prohibiting a person from owning, keeping or harboring a specific breed of dog.

5. HB 523 – Criminal Law – Dangerous Dogs – Penalties

Failed.

The intent of this bill was to increase the fine for certain offenses relating to the possession of a dangerous dog from \$2,500 to \$5,000 and establishing a term of imprisonment.

6. HB 563 – Civil Actions – Personal Injury or Death Caused by Dog

Failed.

This bill provided that in a civil action for damages for personal injury or death caused by a dog, the common law that applied on January 1, 2012 would be retained canceling the Court of Appeals holding.

7. HB 665/SB659 – Crimes Relating to Animals – Surgery on Dogs – Penalties

Governor vetoed HB 665 because it was duplicative but Approved SB659.

SB659 prohibits a person, other than a licensed veterinarian to use anesthesia when appropriate to perform procedures on a dog and establishes penalties for violations. (Procedures include crop or cut off the ear of a dog; dock or cut off the tail of a dog; cut off the dewclaw of a dog; or surgically birth a dog.) At one time the bill included language that would allow a registered veterinary technician employed by and under the supervision of a licensed veterinary to be included in the exception to this prohibition but that language was stricken prior to enrollment.

8. HB 667/SB660 – Crimes Relating to Animals – Unauthorized Surgical Devocalization of Cat or Dog – Penalties

Approved by the Governor.

This bill prohibits a person from surgically devocalizing a dog or cat, but it authorizes a licensed veterinarian to surgically devocalize a dog or cat under specific circumstances. The specific circumstances listed are only if anesthesia is administered to the animal during the procedure; and the veterinarian provides the owner or keeper of the animal a written certification that: 1. The procedure was medically necessary to treat or relieve a physical illness, disease or an injury, or to correct a congenital abnormality that is causing or will cause the animal medical harm or pain. The legislation provides penalties for violation.

9. HB 1347/SB 862 – Animal Welfare – Research Facilities – Dogs and Cats

Failed.

This bill was intended to require specified medical and research facilities that use dogs and cats for research purposes to be licensed by the State Board of Veterinary Medical Examiner, set a license fee, prohibited the facilities from using specific dogs and cats, and prohibited specified facilities from performing specified devocalization surgeries.

FROM THE AVMA LEGISLATIVE ACTION CENTER

Oppose the Fairness to Pet Owners Act of 2014

Tell Congress to oppose mandatory prescription writing! On February 10, Rep. Jim Matheson (D-UT-4th) reintroduced the so-called "Fairness to Pet Owners Act" (H.R. 4023). Like its predecessor in the previous Congress, H.R. 1406, the legislation would require a veterinarian to provide a client with a written prescription for domesticated household animals, whether or not requested by the client. [MORE](#)

FROM THE AVMA ALERTS

House Passes the Veterinary Medicine Mobility Act

by Dr. Clark Fobian, AVMA President

We're almost there!!

We are pleased to announce that the U.S. House passed the [Veterinary Medicine Mobility Act](#)! This important bill will make it legal for veterinarians to transport and use controlled substances beyond their primary places of registration and across state lines to treat their animal patients. As you may recall, the [Senate passed its version of the bill back in January](#), so yesterday's action by the House brings the bill one step closer to the president's desk." [MORE](#)

FROM THE MARYLAND ONE HEALTH BULLETIN

Zoonotic and Other Animal Diseases of Concern in Maryland

The Maryland Departments of Agriculture, Health and Mental Hygiene and Natural Resources issued an update on diseases of concern in Maryland. [Click here to download the publication.](#)

Western Maryland VMA to Host Summer Picnic

The Western Maryland Veterinary Medical Association will host a summer picnic at the Catoctin Creek Park and Nature Center in Middletown, MD. They have reserved one of the shelters and will be having a Pig Roast catered by Margaret Baker. This is a fairly new

park in a beautiful setting and offers quite a variety of activities---trails, geocaching, play area, and nature displays.

The WMVMA has also arranged for a presentation by one of the park's naturalists at 2:45 p.m. featuring some of their critters. Veterinary students at VMRCVM are invited this year, so you may see some new faces. Members are asked to bring either a side dish or dessert to share, but all other food and drink will be provided (as usual).

Please RSVP either by mail , email, or phone. Here are the specifics:

Location: Catoctin Creek Park and Nature Center

2929 Sumantown Road

Middletown, MD 21769

Date & Time: Sunday, August 10, 1 p.m. - 4 p.m.

Lunch served at approx 1 :30 p.m.

Naturalist Presentation 2:45 p.m.

[Click here for details.](#)

UPCOMING CE

Baltimore to Host 2014 Potomac Regional Veterinary Conference

The Hyatt Regency Inner Harbor in Baltimore, MD will host the 2014 Potomac Regional Veterinary Conference November 7-9. This conference is a collaborative effort of the Virginia, Maryland, West Virginia, and District of Columbia Veterinary Medical Associations and features top quality CE and networking opportunities.

[Click here for details.](#)

FROM THE NATIONAL AQUARIUM NEWSROOM

National Aquarium Launches Behind-the-Scenes Veterinary Immersion Tour

Ever wondered how the National Aquarium cares for more than 17,000 animals or what it's like to be an animal caretaker? Guests now have the opportunity to put on a surgical cap and mask, and dive into a behind-the-scenes veterinarian immersion tour led by one of the Aquarium's staff veterinarians. [MORE](#)

DogFest, Catsino and Other Dog & Cat Fun

There are so many ways you can help support Baltimore Humane Society's no-kill shelter with barely any effort. Just by publicizing the following events you'll be spreading the word – a very valuable service! And your patients will be happy you're letting them know about some really fun events that help the community's homeless pets. [MORE](#)

MVMA NEWS

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Don't Forget to List Your Externship with MVMA

MVMA is compiling a list of externship opportunities to support our relationship and communication with the students at VMRCVM. If you are a member and want to list your externship, [click here](#).

Welcome New Members

MVMA welcomes the following members who have joined since our last newsletter was published.

Brittany Carr, DVM	Gregory Whitener, DVM
Erica O'Donnell, DVM	Gloria Santamaria, DVM
Shanthi D. Ramachandran, VMD	Rachel Friedman, DVM
Monica C. Maa, DVM	Electronic Billing and Customer Service
Kacie E. Schmitt, DVM	Audrey Barker, VMD
Melanie Klein, DVM	Stephanie J. Meilleur, DVM
Melissa Jones, VMD	Angela Black, DVM
Dr. Veronica Meer	Marissa K. Kakoyiannis, DVM
Ellen S. Harrison, DVM	Kathryn Hamilton, DVM
Leslie S. Prescott, DVM	Julie Bennington, DVM
Korrin Lucas, DVM	Ashley Sander, RVT
Tracey A. Graham, DVM	Jennifer L. Jones, DVM
Cheryl Stiehl, DVM	Jennifer L. Barnard, DVM
Rick A. Ramirez, DVM	Angela Bakanas, DVM
Holly D. Polf, DVM	Rebecca L. Ewing, DVM
Madeline Boles, DVM	Connie H. Rhinesmith, DVM
Michael DeTora, DVM, DACVS	Rachel Reed, DVM
Jonathan Stack, DVM	Brendon Moulder, DVM
Jessica McGallicher, DVM	Kristine L. Krotec, VMD
Jennifer A. Jenkins, DVM	Jill A. McLaughlin, DVM
Jessie Harper, DVM	Tracy Thompson, DVM
Katherine Dabirsiaghi	Jessica Kocher, DVM
Connie M. Gibbs, DVM	Sara Pilkerton, DVM
Kelly Bailey, RVT	Cynthia Bashore, DVM
Michael Webber	Mary Lynn Selzer, DVM
Brian Messick	Sherritta Ridgely, DVM
Ryan Letke	Rachel Cezar, DVM
Marcella Desantis	

MVMA Classifieds

MVMA's most recent job listings and listings for practices and equipment for sale. [Click here read them.](#)