

AAV NEWSLETTER

AN OFFICIAL PUBLICATION OF THE ASSOCIATION OF AVIAN VETERINARIANS

ELECTRONIC VERSION —JUNE 2010

President's Message

Facebook, Twitter, MySpace, LinkedIn—so many social networking sites, so little time. Social networking is everywhere now, and everyone seems to be doing it. If you're not doing it, you're probably wondering: What's the big deal? Why are millions of people spending hours of each day on these sites? They're networking—making friends, publicizing businesses, establishing connections, and they offer great marketing opportunities for veterinarians.

They are a free means of advertising your veterinary practice and marketing it to new "fans"—a way to spread the word about your services and skills to the public. You'll be amazed at the number of "fans" who want to hear about birds and other exotic animals.

They're a way to connect globally with professionals and individuals who can provide information and insights.

They're a way to learn more about the thoughts and feelings of people with whom you work because of the informal nature of the online dialogue.

Through online surveys and reviews you can reach out to clients and prospective clients to learn about information and services they need or want.

They're a way to "test the waters" with new ideas for your business without spending money. You can learn what fans and friends "like" and "dislike" without shelling out a dime.

And you can do all this from the comfort of your own home, wearing your pajamas, for the low, low price of nothing but some of your time. So, if you're not social networking yet, get with the program and start now. Even for us "older" vets, social networking can be fun and productive. You'll see—with just a tweet or two you'll open up a whole new world.



AAV President, Laurie Hess, DM, Dipl ABVP, Avian

Check the AAV website for the E-Newsletter in January, March April, June July, September, October, December.

February, May, August, and November will see your familiar paper copy.

Go to: www.aav.org

Select PUBLICATIONS, then select NEWSLETTERS, Then select the current month.

You do not need login codes to access the Newsletter, but if you do not have your personal codes, contact the Publications to obtain them.



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Volunteers Needed for AVMA Committees

Dear Colleague,

A variety of volunteer positions remain open on AVMA committees, and the AVMA Executive Board is seeking nominations for volunteers interested in serving on these groups. The application deadline for all of these openings is June 15.

Nominations are open for the following committees:

- Animal Welfare Committee
- Aquatic Veterinary Medicine Committee
- Clinical Practitioners Advisory Committee
- Committee on Disaster and Emergency Issues
- Food Safety Advisory Committee
- Governance Performance Review Committee
- Legislative Advisory Committee
- Member Services Committee
- State Advocacy Committee
- Veterinary Leadership Conference Planning Committee

A list of all open committee positions is available on the AVMA website, along with the committee nomination form, at:

http://www.avma.org/about_avma/governance/volunteering/committees/comm_trust_vacancies.asp.

The AVMA Executive Board will fill these vacancies during its July 28

AAV Clinical Forum Submissions

The Clinical Forum invites submissions related to clinical practice, case reports, and items of interest to practitioners. Submissions should be in Word format. E-mail as an attachment to:

AAVPublications@aav.org.

meeting, and the appointments will take effect at the beginning of the new AVMA association year, on Aug. 3, 2010.

Instructions for submitting applications are included on the application form, at http://www.avma.org/about_avma/governance/volunteering/committees/comm_nom_form.rtf.

If you have any questions, please feel free to e-mail OfficeEVP@avma.org or call 800-248-2862, ext. 6605.

IMPORTANT NOTE:

Because the professional classification codes in an individual's AVMA member record are used to determine eligibility to serve on an AVMA entity, it is important that your AVMA member information be current. Please visit the AVMA website to check the accuracy of your professional activity information, and make any needed adjustments, at:

http://www.avma.org/membshp/member_records/default.asp.

5th Annual Association of Avian Veterinarians Combined Conference & Expo with the Association of Exotic Mammal Veterinarians

San Diego Marriott Hotel & Marina
San Diego, California July 31-August 5,
2010 www.conferenceoffice.com/aav

•Sessions in Disease Syndromes, Wildlife, Behavior Surgery, and much more!

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•Join us at the student reception and meet other students.

Save the Date! July 31-August 5, 2010

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Heavyweight cards and gold foil-lined envelopes help express your sympathy for a client's loss of a pet. You fill in the pet's name and the date and send it to your client. Each card states that a donation in the pet's name was made to avian research.

Pack of 6, \$30 including postage. Print out the faxable order form from the AAV website or fax your order and MC/VISA number to 817-599-0088..

Pythons in Florida Stalked by Hunters and Tourists Alike

FLORIDA CITY, Fla. — Thousands of Burmese pythons, the offspring of former pets, have invaded the Everglades, eating birds, bunnies, even alligators. It has gotten so bad that Congress is considering an outright ban on buying or selling nine kinds of giant snakes.

But an odd thing has happened here in the swamp: the pythons have become celebrities. The snakes are fast becoming an element of Florida lore, attracting “oohs” and “ahhs” from tourists, along with groans from biologists and even python hunters like Bob Freer.

“It’s a little frustrating and very strange,” said Mr. Freer, who figures that his 40 captured pythons — most of which he has euthanized — make him the state’s top private hunter. “They’re asking about pythons that don’t even belong here, instead of alligators.”

Trouble is, the newfound fascination obscures what biologists and Mr. Freer describe as a serious problem. In their view, python proliferation — still significant despite a cold winter that might have killed half the population — is simply the sexiest example of widespread disrespect for pets and the wilderness.

“People need to view exotic species invasions as pollution — biopollution,” said David E. Hallac, chief of biological resources for Everglades and Dry Tortugas National Parks. “In some cases, this form of biopollution can be even more difficult to remedy than chemical pollution, mainly because in most cases, we have no way of cleaning up exotic species from our natural environments.”

Nowhere is the problem more visible than in the open expanse of southwestern Dade County, where tract housing gives way to sawgrass and airboat engines. Mr. Freer, a grandfather who cuts the sleeves off his T-shirts, has lived here for a decade, giving animal presentations to tourists and running a wildlife refuge that doubles as his home.

He grew up in rural New York on a

dairy farm with a pet alligator, and he used to live north of Miami with another gator (named Lazy) until his neighbors complained. Now Mr. Freer and his third wife are free to mix with whatever animals they like, and there are plenty.

Near the back of their five-acre property, for instance, sits Rocky, a tiger once owned by a stripper. Buc, an arthritic grizzly bear, lies in a cage next door near the hyenas, Chewy the camel, birds the color of daiquiris, and a Kenyan lemur whose previous owner pulled out its teeth, so that all its food must now be mashed.

In nearly every case, pet owners gave the animals up or had them taken away by county officials. Pythons, Mr. Freer said, have been part of the mix since the mid-1980s.

“It was very exciting then to think about these giant snakes and being able to find them here in Florida,” he said. “I never really thought there would come a time when you would actually go out and hunt pythons.”

State officials say they had no choice — especially after last July, when an eight-foot python sneaked out of its cage north of Orlando and strangled a 2-year-old. It led to a six-week hunting season to reduce the python population.

“We really wanted the help, and still need it, to get rid of these things,” said Tony Young, a spokesman for the Florida Fish and Wildlife Conservation Commission.

With all the attention, the snakes became bigger stars. Reporters have interviewed officials at Everglades National Park around 300 times. Mr. Freer, meanwhile, has turned up on Animal Planet and the History Channel’s “Monster Quest,” after an episode about the Hillbilly Beast of backwoods Kentucky.

He said that he initially understood the alarm. Pythons are what biologists call “apex predators” that eat nearly everything, including endangered species. And there were financial benefits, too: a group of Canadian snake enthusiasts paid him to help find pythons.

But on a hunting trip in the Southern Glades, a 30,000-acre tract that abuts Everglades National Park, Mr. Freer struggled to shake a sense of

melancholy.

The area has become a dumping ground littered with both human ruin — a shuttered fish farm, a closed juvenile detention camp and a former rocket test site — and abandoned animals. In addition to the pythons, Mr. Freer said he had come across cobras and black mambas, emus and ostriches. Since the recession started, he said, he has seen more horses that owners can apparently no longer afford to feed.

The python craze, he said, only illustrated a problem far larger than most people recognize. Mr. Hallac, at Everglades National Park, agreed.

“We have well over a dozen exotic fish that have invaded the park and may pose a threat to our native aquatic organisms,” Mr. Hallac said. “But being that they’re underwater, and not particularly scary to humans, their stories are rarely told.”

At Everglades Alligator Farm, an adventure park where Mr. Freer manages the animals and puts on shows for visitors, python presentations are still a hit. Rangers at the national park are regularly asked about how to avoid or see the famous pythons.

Mr. Freer said he now looked forward to a day when pythons were scrubbed from his routine. “People will be asking me about alligators again,” he said, “And that’ll make me happier.”

Special Products for the AAV Member

AAV prints two forms to assist you in your practice— a pad of 250 two-sided sheets of **Avian History** forms, and a two-copy carbonless form pad with 100 sets of our **Certificate of Veterinary Exam**. Also, you may purchase a set of six **In-Memoriam** cards to send to clients who have lost a pet, the card indicates that a donation has been made to avian research in the pet’s memory.

Publication Order Forms are available on the AAV Website and in the *AAV Clinical Forum*. Fax your order to 817-599-0088.

Social Media Changing the Face of Business Marketing.

NEW YORK—Michele Portnof updates her status every day on Facebook, enticing clients and marketing herself to the 115 people who “like” her page. A broker in New York City, Portnof says social media is a must.

“I definitely think social media is the way of the future,” she said. “Twenty- to thirty-year-olds; social media is the way they communicate.”

Which is a perfect fit for Portnof who says she is a specialist for first-time renters and new graduates.

Her Facebook page sat dormant for a year before she started utilizing it; it was after she attended training on social media that she decided it was too important to ignore.

“For the past month or so, I have updated it every day, with photos, listings, and articles people might find interesting,” she said.

Facebook, Twitter, LinkedIn, blogs; these names are a mystery to some, but to more and more brokers and small business owners, they are the tools that are helping them succeed.

The New Trend

Social media marketing sounds daunting to a lot of people, but a basic plan will help most small businesses, says social media guru John Fladung. An independent marketing and advertising consultant since the mid-1980’s, Fladung has seen many trends.

“MySpace was the beginning of the whole revolution,” he said. The idea was not about throwing ads in front of people, but actually “being” the ad by virtue of how you presented yourself and your products.

Social media marketing is about building a community around your business, Fladung said. “The goal is to offer them compelling and engaging information—because you want them to come back,” he said.

Why Use Social Media?

There are two major reasons to use social marketing, Fladung says. One is to establish yourself as an expert in an area related to your business, and through that drive traffic to your site; the end result being sales and referrals for you.

The second is to raise your Internet ranking by driving more people to your site—making you more visible in searches. “Really it’s all about SEO,” he said. SEO, or Search Engine Optimization, is using keywords to become more noticeable to the Internet crawlers, in turn, pushing you higher on a search ranking.

For example, the more people that visit your Facebook page, the higher ranking that page will get, as well as directing more traffic to your main site.

A 2010 social media marketing white paper, “How Marketers Are Using Social Media to Grow Their Businesses” by Michael A. Stelzner, concurs.

“The number-one benefit of social media marketing is gaining the all-important eyeball,” the report says.

Of the 1898 participants surveyed, almost half were consultants or one-person businesses.

Eighty-five percent of all marketers indicated that their social media efforts have generated exposure for their businesses, the report said. Improving site traffic was the second major benefit, followed by building new partnerships.

More than half of marketers indicated a rise in search engine rankings as a benefit of social media marketing.

“As search engine rankings improve, so will business exposure, lead generation efforts and a reduction in overall marketing expenses,” the report stated.

More than half of marketers found social media generated qualified leads.

Broker Portnof is testament to that. “I had someone contact me yesterday about a place and they were referred to me from a friend on my Facebook page,” she said. “I am hoping I will get much more of that.”

The Big Four

The “big four” social media marketing tools for brokers and small businesses are Facebook, Twitter, LinkedIn, and blogs, Fladung said.

Facebook

If Facebook were a country, it would be the third most populated in the world; the site has hit 400 million active users (people who have used it in the last 30 days).

One has the ability to create a

community on Facebook by offering multiple forms of content—not just blogging, but photos and videos as well, Fladung said. You can create your own pages, your own designs, with hyperlinking to your own products and services.

But Facebook is not enough on its own. “You can have all the bells and whistles on the Facebook business page you want,” Fladung said, “but without content to establish yourself as the expert and engage your audience, it’s never going to be more than bells and whistles.”

Blogging

A simple blog doesn’t mean you have to write all the content yourself. You can aggregate content and link it back to the source.

“Blogging is the backbone of any good social media plan,” Fladung said. Blogging helps you establish yourself as an expert and provide information to your community.

Twitter

Twitter is basically micro-blogging, and as the site says, it’s a communication platform that “shrinks the emotional distance between your company and your customers.”

Each “tweet” gives you 140 characters to play with; enough for about 100 characters and a link, suggests Fladung.

The Twitter site has a Business 101 guide for learners that includes a how-to on getting started and best practices.

“As a business, you can use it to quickly share information with people interested in your company, gather real-time market intelligence and feedback, and build relationships with customers, partners and other people who care about your company,” Twitter’s website says.

LinkedIn

LinkedIn is the business networking side of the equation—people can review your resume.

“It has grown, gotten better, but it’s still a community,” Fladung said. “The good thing about LinkedIn is that you can have your base of connections and you can get to their connections too.”

Linking together all the social media tools you use is an efficient way

to cross-update everything, he said.

“Social media networking is like a big Internet cocktail party.”

How Much Time Does it Really Take?

The white paper report found that the majority of marketers (56 percent) are using social media for 6 hours or more each week, and nearly one in three invest 11 or more hours weekly.

Portnof said she is on there several hours a day, but not all at the same time.

Fladung said it depends on how big they want to be. “One hour a day is a fair amount of time; it’s decent,” he said.



2010 WINDOW DECAL

Announce your current membership in AAV with a self-clinging decal in teal and white.

Copy an order form from the AAV website (www.aav.org) and fax it to: 817-599-0088

\$5 for 1, \$10 for 3, plus \$1 S&H

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Please include the Central Office in your address book so emails will not be diverted to your spam file.

Annual Membership Meeting

The annual AAV membership meeting is scheduled for 12:45 pm - 1:05 pm, Monday, August 2, 2010, at the Marriott, San Diego, USA. Members are invited to attend and participate in all business that may be brought before the membership. Agenda: Annual AAV membership meeting, Laurie Hess, DVM, President, presiding.

I. Call to order

II. Introduction of board and staff

III. Report of Executive Board

IV. New Business

a. Announcement of newly elected officers

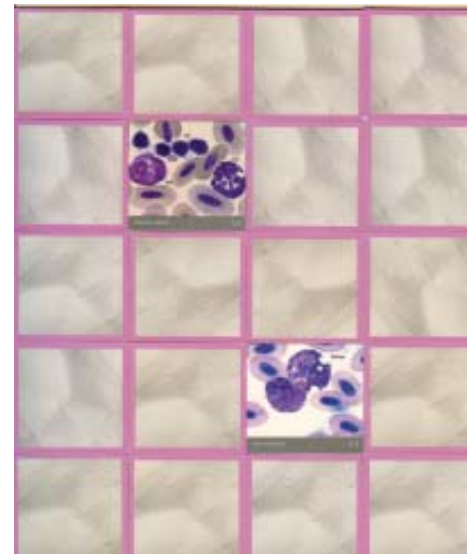
b. Other

V. Adjourn

MEMORY GAME

Developed by the European AAV, this game not only enhances your memory but also hones your skills in identifying hematology and histology slides. There are 32 images (64 cards). The goal of the game is to win all of the cards. Turn over two cards on each turn. When a player can match two from memory the player takes those two. Complete descriptions of the slides are included along with species represented and instructions on how to play.

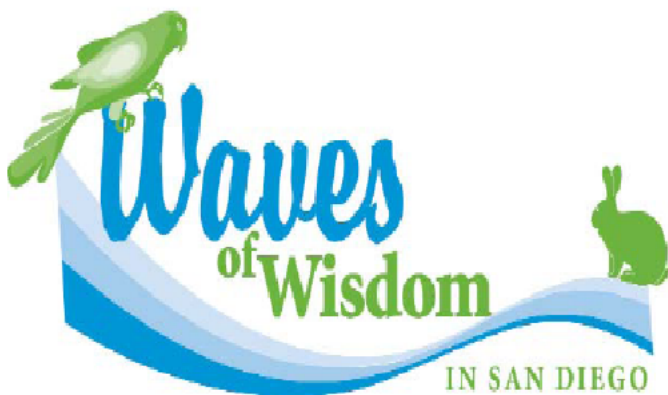
A great pastime at breaks, or for tests of identification skills. Proceeds from sales of the game support the EAAV Helga Gerlach Fund. \$49 PLUS SHIPPING - MC/VISA accepted. Order from the AAV Publications Office: aavpublications@aav.org





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JUNE 2010



Conference Corner
31st Annual Association of
Avian Veterinarians Conference & Expo
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Registration details may be found on the conference website: www.ConferenceOffice.com/aav