After the recent devastation brought by Hurricane Katrina, sunny New Orleans was pleased to host the annual meeting of the American Academy of Ophthalmology (AAO) between November 10th-13th. This meeting, attended by more than twenty thousand medical professionals and vision scientists, represents an important scientific event. The conference offers participants lectures, courses, wet labs, scientific and research presentations, clinical updates, a vast exhibition hall featuring medical pharmaceuticals, equipment and literature and, last but not least, a host of social engagements.

Specific highlights this year included the introduction of newer implantable surgical shunts, used in the management of glaucoma, by both New World Medical & Optinol, presentation of results of the experimental use of an updated synthetic corneal implant (KPro), and lectures covering diverse topics, including diabetic retinopathy and ocular melanomas. Additionally, there were updates on the surgical management of challenging cataract cases and hands-on wet labs allowing participants to familiarize themselves with endophthalnic lasers which offer the potential to treat a variety of ophthalmic conditions.

Eye Care for Animals doctors Merideth, Esson and Calvarese attended the AAO meeting and returned with plans to apply the new ideas, techniques and products discovered at the conference to the world of veterinary ophthalmology. They also took the opportunity to sample some fine Cajun cuisine!
CVC West

The CVC West was held October 19-23 in San Diego, California. The conference was a great success, with more than 3,000 registrants and an excess of 1,300 veterinarians attending lectures and wet labs. Eye Care for Animals ophthalmologist Reuben Merideth lectured on nine didactic subjects, including ophthalmic examination techniques, glaucoma, pediatric and geriatric ocular conditions, and ocular manifestations of systemic disease. In addition, participants had the opportunity to attend laboratory sessions to improve their skills in indirect ophthalmoscopy, biomicroscopy, tonometry, and other “in-room” diagnostic techniques. A surgical wet lab covered basic repair of corneal lacerations, linear grid keratotomy procedures, along with techniques to reposition the gland of the third eyelid. Basic eyelid blepharoplasty procedures were also covered.

Eye Care for Animals will partner with the CVC East on April 18-21, 2008 in Baltimore. Doctors Lynch, Hyman, and Gerdling will present a variety of ophthalmic topics, along with several wet lab opportunities. If you need more information about the CVC East, please contact their web site: www.cvc.com, or Eye Care for Animals at their web site: www.eyecareforanimals.com.

American College of Veterinary Ophthalmology

The annual meeting of the American College of Veterinary Ophthalmology was held on the Big Island of Hawaii from October 23rd-27th this year. As always, this meeting facilitated the interactive sharing of clinical and research updates amongst veterinary ophthalmologists from all over the world. Eye Care for Animals resident doctors Fife, Sturgeon, Ashton, Norman and Thompson presented the results of their respective research projects and Eye Care for Animals doctors Esson, Lynch, Calvarese and Fife presented data describing an improved magnetic resonance imaging (MRI) technique for orbital & ocular soft tissues. Dr. Esson also discussed his other MRI-based research which may help further our understanding of the complicated mechanisms which underlie glaucoma.

Eye Care for Animals took the opportunity to introduce its new first-year residents and to congratulate those doctors who became ACVO diplomats this year at their annual dinner event.

This year, the ACVO sponsored a Specialty Day of Ophthalmology for General Practitioners at the annual meeting. Attendees were treated to lectures entitled “Unlocking the mystery of the fundus”, “Herpes is forever—diagnosing and treating cats with feline herpesvirus”, “Glaucoma: New approaches to an old disease”, “Medical and surgical management of corneal disease”, and many more. Additionally, meeting notes, a special luncheon and access to the ACVO exhibit hall were included in the registration fee. Non-ophthalmology veterinarians are welcome to attend the annual meetings of both the ACVO and the AAO each year. At the conclusion of this year’s scientific and social activities (which included night-diving with Manta Rays!), the meeting was brought to a close beneath a beautiful tropical sky with a traditional Hawaiian Luau!
WHAT’S NEW AT EYE CARE FOR ANIMALS?

Congratulations!

Dr. Mark Bobofchak (Akron, OH),
Dr. Sara Calvarese (Las Vegas, NV & Upland, CA) and
Dr. Douglas Esson (Palm Desert, Tustin & Upland, CA)
for attaining diplomate status in the American College of Veterinary Ophthalmologists.

Congratulations!

Dr. Andrew Greller (Springfield, VA) and
Dr. Heather Kaese (Overland Park, KS)
for completing their residency in comparative Ophthalmology.

Recent Openings & Relocations

Culver City, California welcomes Dr. Christin Fahrer, DACVO
Las Vegas, Nevada welcomes Dr. Matthew Fife
Leesburg, Virginia welcomes Dr. Gwendolyn Lynch, DACVO
Upland, California welcomes Dr. Sara Calvarese, DACVO
Annapolis/Towson, Maryland welcomes Dr. Jennifer Hyman, DACVO

We will be joining the Chesapeake Veterinary Referral Center in January 2008.

Annapolis, Maryland
808 Bestgate Road
Annapolis, MD 21401
Phone: 410-224-4470
Fax: 410-224-3115

Towson, Maryland
1209 Cromwell Bridge Road
Towson, MD 21286

These new locations allow us to continue providing your communities
with state of the art medicine and compassionate care.
Eye Care for Animals – Albuquerque Open House

Eye Care for Animals celebrated its Open House November 30th, at 8724 Alameda Park Drive NE #C in Albuquerque. The spacious lobby easily accommodates numerous clients and patients at one time.

Eye Care for Animals Sponsors Albuquerque CE

Eye Care for Animals Diplomate, Douglas Esson, DVM, DACVO, lectures on Glaucoma at Albuquerque’s first CE, of which ECFA was pleased to help with sponsorship.

Eye Care for Animals Diplomate, Gavin Kennard, DVM, DACVO, visits with staff before lecturing on Cataract Surgery.

Eye Care for Animals Doctors Upcoming Presentations

The following 2008 Ophthalmic CEs are scheduled by ECFA Diplomates:

Feb. 13  Gwendolyn Lynch, DVM, DACVO  Aug. 23-26  Nicole MacLaren, DVM, DACVO
The LifeCentre, 165 Fort Evans Rd,  Reuben Merideth, DVM, DACVO
Leesburg, VA  Steven Sisler, DVM, DACVO

Feb. 17-21  Paul Barrett, DVM, DACVO  Oct. 15-18  Paul Barrett, DVM, DACVO
Western Veterinary Conference  Reuben Merideth, DVM, DACVO
Las Vegas, NV  Steven Sisler, DVM, DACVO

Apr. 18-21  Paul Gerding, DVM, MS, DACVO  Oct. 31 - Nov. 3  Sara Calvarese, DVM, DACVO
Jennifer Hyman, VMD, DACVO  Douglas Esson, DVM, DACVO
Gwendolyn Lynch, DVM, DACVO  Randall Scagliotti, DVM, DACVO
CVC East  CVC West
Baltimore, MD  San Diego, CA
Progressive retinal atrophy (PRA) is a degenerative condition of the photoreceptor cells. This hereditary condition is characterized by the slow death of the photoreceptors (rods and cones) following their normal development. The disease begins clinically with signs of night-blindness that eventually progress to day-blindness. This is because the initial changes in the typical PRA are a loss of rod photoreceptor cells. There is a slower loss of cone photoreceptor cells, which corresponds to the seemingly delayed deterioration of the day vision. Fundic examination in early PRA will reveal a granular appearance affecting the peripheral tapetal fundus before generalized retinal thinning becomes apparent. In the later stages, there is tapetal hyper-reflectivity, superficial retinal blood vessel attenuation, eventual pigmentary changes in the non-tapetal fundus and atrophy of the optic nerve. These fundic changes are bilateral and similar between the two eyes. The age of onset and the rate of progression vary among the types of PRA and also within the individual forms of PRA. This is especially true for the rod-cone degeneration (prcd) form of PRA, the most common form of PRA in dogs. In all breeds studied to date, PRA is recessively inherited, except in the Siberian Husky and the Samoyed, which have X-linked PRA, and the Mastiff, which has dominantly inherited PRA.

Progressive retinal atrophy may be detected by electroretinogram (ERG) before it is apparent clinically. The electroretinogram can show functional abnormalities indicative of a progressive degeneration prior to the onset of clinical signs. The fundic abnormalities, as described previously, usually appear after the onset of clinical signs. Genetic testing has also become commercially available for many breeds affected with PRA. These tests can be done on very young dogs and there may no longer be a need for test matings and potentially ambiguous ERG testing for those dogs with suspected PRA.
MEMO TO MANAGERS

Workplace Communication – “How does news flow in your Company?”

Good communication practices in the workplace are vital to having a more engaged workforce, enhanced client service, and even better financial results. Recent studies suggest that a higher percentage of companies are more successful because top leaders spend more time communicating with their staff. In fact, top performing companies are ten times more likely to even invite employees to give feedback. How a company communicates with employees can also be directly linked to turnover and staff morale, as referenced in employee exit interviews and surveys. Ineffective communication in the workplace can sometimes hide certain performances and corporate climate issues.

So, how does news flow in your company? In fast-paced corporate America most companies regularly communicate via telephone voice mails, e-mails, and memos. Surveys indicate that e-mails and voice mails can have a detrimental affect on employees work, stating that 7 out of 10 feel “snowed under” because of receiving too many. Do you take the time to use other means of communication (i.e. face-to-face) when possible? Ways to enhance the flow of communications and message in the workplace can be accomplished through conducting regular daily or weekly staff meetings, telephone conference calls, video conferencing, and giving presentations and other continuing education (CE) sessions.

Assessing and understanding one’s own communication style and skills is also important. Do a self-assessment and develop your own list of competencies when it comes to communicating with others. Assess your listening skills along with your written and verbal communications skills. When it comes to communicating important information within the organization, are you using the right vehicle to communicate the news? Will you take the time to conduct face-to-face meetings with your team when appropriate, versus just sending out an e-mail or memo? Do you instill “active” listening techniques when communicating with others—are you a good listener?

If you are unsure of how employees might assess overall communications in the workplace, take the temperature in your organization. Survey your team and have them anonymously evaluate “corporate communications”. Measuring the corporate climate and getting feedback from employees as well as from clients is a good step in establishing benchmarks so the bar can be raised in moving forward to enhance overall communications. Enhancing communications is always a work in progress!