

ARAV Monthly Herp Blerp

Issue 8, October 2013

Greetings from the ARAV Technician Liaison

Hello my Reptilian and Amphibian shugs,

Instead of my usual banter about important dealings, I will turn this section over to Dr. Adolf Maas for an obituary for our dear friend Dr. Kevin Wright who passed away shortly after the conference in September this year.

Your Herp Blerpin' Tech,

Erica Mede, CVT

On September 26, 2013, we lost a good friend.

Dr. Kevin Wright passed away after a short illness, and this is dedicated to him, in a style he would approve.

One could go on about Kevin's accomplishments, his incredible intellect, the hundreds (yes, hundreds) of articles he published over the last 20 or so years both in the veterinary and popular press, even the magnificent text he co-authored on amphibian medicine. We could discuss his many awards, his accreditation, the lectures that he presented to the rapt attention of the audiences, and even (especially?) all the animals that he treated and cared for. But this is not news, not what really made him "Kevin" to all of us.

What we all knew as penultimately Kevin was the irreverence mixed with wit and brilliance that made him the charismatic, eclectic, enigmatic dynamo that gave him "first-name" recognizance in our world, one that could be equated in the same class with "Madonna", "Bozo" and "Flipper". He was, he would like us to say, a conjoined "pair of pathetic Peripatetics".

We miss you, Kevin. We miss the inappropriate greetings, the hog-piles and even the licking. The fact that he could invent a story that would fit the moment and make us all laugh, following it up with a rhyme that could make a plumber blush. He was the poster child for the unique ability to create a situation that required an attorney to use a dictionary and make any PR (or HR) person wish they had chosen a different career.

And with all that, he was a true friend, to man and beast alike (often concurrently). He was always able to listen, to lament as well as share joy, to all that wanted. He shared his brilliance and insight with anyone willing to ask for help. Nothing more he ever wanted than to help, to provide comfort, and seek solid answers. He never sought fame, but respect is forever due him for all that he has done as a researcher, a doctor, and most of all, a person.

Kevin, we will always love and remember you.

Looking Under the Hood: The Importance of Necropsy

In this past year I lost my bearded dragon Cordelia. She was only a few months old with good breeding and husbandry. The illness was peculiar and did not follow typical patterns of common ailments of the species. We ran all the diagnostics at my practice: bloodwork, radiographs, electrophoresis... nothing came back with any suggestion of why this young dragon was struggling. Within a month of clinical symptoms I had to make the decision that her quality of life was unacceptable - she was euthanized at the practice and necropsied. Much to my dismay, there was no gross evidence of cause of her illness.

It was at the urging of my veterinarian that we sent tissue samples from Cordelia out for histopathology. Personally I was mentally and financially exhausted from trying to sustain her for as long as I did - with no other dragons in my home there was little reason for me to pursuit identifying the illness any further. But with enough coaxing I agreed, and tissue samples were sent. Not too long afterwards, histopathology confirmed that Cordelia was found to be one of a handful of dragons who were found to be hosting a novel coccidian. Before I knew it she was part of a presentation on this new parasite at the most recent ARAV/AEMV veterinary conference.

It struck me as I sat through the presentation on her diagnosis that her death meant something. Her necropsy, her tissue samples - they served a purpose beyond reassuring me. Her passing lead to the education of the entire veterinary community and served as an alert to a possible threat to the reptile trade. And *none of this* would have occurred has I chosen to not send tissue samples out for analysis. I keep this lesson with me now when I speak to owners at the practice after their companion has passed. Before I was hesitant to speak to them of the post-mortem diagnostics we offered, afraid of striking nerves that were already apparently raw. Now I can talk freely and honestly with them about their options. Now I can look them in the eye and tell them that I understand that they are tired, that they want nothing more than to move on, but that by allowing us to continue to pursuit answers through diagnostics they can help us to further the veterinary community's knowledge. That the benefits of pursuit these diagnostics is beyond them.

The veterinary field is an ever-growing one, and we must always remember to pursuit knowledge whenever the opportunity arises. Don't be afraid to explain this to your clients - you will be surprised how positively they respond.

Lauren Keller

Griffin Exotics Veterinary Clinic - Kannapolis, NC

Tips, Tricks, and Toys

Using an ultrasound on your patient to locate the heart? I read about this in an old exotics magazine and it works well. Avoid pesky ultrasound gel mishaps by placing ultrasound gel in glove with the probe! Much easier to clean up after.

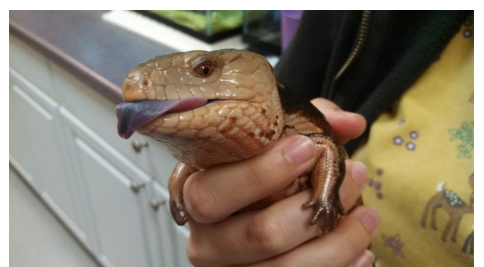
- Lisa J.

Have a helpful tip? A fun trick? Or a review on a new machine? Submit them to us!

Student Chapters Corner

Great news!

Dr. Colin McDermott told us that the student chapter website it being renovated. In even better news, the listing of intern and externships will be updated soon as well!



Stay tuned.

Upcoming Events and Deadlines

Save the Date:

Durrell Course: Managing Infectious Disease in Conservation will be equipping veterinarians and conservation managers with skills to address challenging disease issues in conservation programs. **October 28—November 2, 2013.**

2nd Annual Reptile and Amphibian Law Symposium and Workshop will be held **November 8-10, 2013.**

ARAV, AAVAC, and the Unusual Pet and Avian Veterinarians Group of the Australian Veterinary Association Combined Conference will be held **April 22-24, 2014** in Cairns, Australia.

Questions, comments, or just wish to submit something to the newsletter?

E-Mail Erica at: e.medecvt@gmail.com