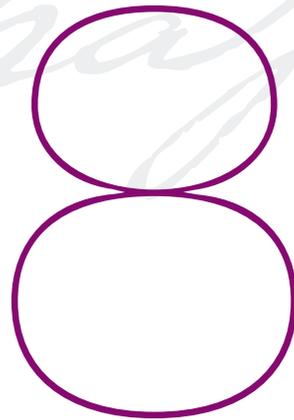

Lasting alliances



Susan C. Kahler

Partnerships, strategic alliances, and coalitions have enabled the American Veterinary Medical Association to enhance its offerings, strengthen its voice, fund valuable initiatives, and promote common goals. These liaisons have helped advance the profession's mission in areas ranging from legislative advocacy to pet wellness to veterinary continuing education. Collaborating entities have run the gamut from nonprofits to government agencies to corporations.

A few relationships have stirred controversy. In the mid-1990s, the profession became polarized over whether to continue teaming up on a common goal by endorsing the Doris Day Animal League's Spay Day USA, torn by concerns that the sponsor also advocated an end to the use of animals in production agriculture and research. Con-

trovery also arose in 2005 over the propriety of joining forces financially with Heifer International to provide recovery aid to impoverished families in South and Central Asia after a tsunami hit the region, although few would dispute the good AVMA did in raising \$1 million.

Most AVMA partnerships have been straightforward and fruitful. The four entities most closely linked to the AVMA in long-lived partnerships are the Auxiliary to the AVMA, American Veterinary Medical Foundation, AVMA Group Health & Life Insurance Trust, and AVMA PLIT. Their collaboration with the AVMA collectively spans 250 years.



Partners



Inaugural meeting of the Women's Auxiliary to the AVMA, August 1917, Kansas City, Mo.

AUXILIARY TO THE AVMA

The oldest of these four AVMA partners is the Auxiliary to the AVMA. In fact, the Auxiliary holds the distinction of being the first auxiliary to the healing arts established in the United States.

It was during World War I, before women had a vote, that the Women's Auxiliary to the American Veterinary Medical Association was formed at the Kansas City Veterinary College in Missouri. The date was Aug. 22, 1917.

Membership was open to wives, daughters, mothers, sisters, and widows of veterinarians. The 55 original members set annual dues at 50 cents and elected Mrs. W. Horace Hoskins of Philadelphia as their first president; 12 years later, she would be honored as the Auxiliary's "mother." Each state was to select a secretary to report to the national auxiliary.

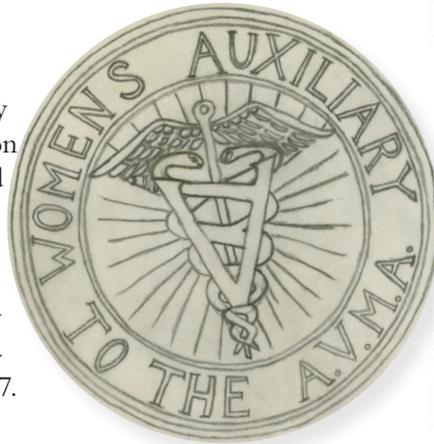
For women who just wanted to support their husbands' profession and have fun in the process, the Auxiliary met with some stiff opposition, as told in the Auxiliary's 75th anniversary history, from which many of these highlights through 1992 are excerpted.

Even before the organization was created, some veterinarians had taken their wives to AVMA meetings. The women got together for food, fun, and "the swapping of ideas on how to be a good wife to a veterinarian." But some men thought the presence of women hampered their social freedom, and it was a generally held opinion that women had no place in their husband's business.

At the 1918 AVMA Annual Convention in Philadelphia, opposition leaders stationed themselves at the Auxiliary's meeting-room door to block entry, but supporters prevailed. In 1923 in Montreal, challengers again tried to dissolve the Auxiliary but were foiled, and Canadian women were admitted for the first time.

AN EVOLVING MISSION

Having prevailed, the Auxiliary launched into its work of supporting the veterinary profession, adapting its objectives over the years to meet the changing needs.



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LASTING ALLIANCES

In 1918, the Auxiliary adopted a constitution and bylaws with the objective "... to give necessary financial assistance to the family of any veterinarian engaged in war work if his life has been forfeited in pursuance of such work, or if he has been temporarily or permanently disabled."

With the need for war relief over by the 1919 convention in New Orleans, the Auxiliary sought new ways to serve and amended its constitution to state that its object was "to give necessary financial assistance to the family of a veterinarian if he has been temporarily or permanently disabled."

The only such request ever made and filled was \$50 to a family for fuel in 1921.

In 1920, the Auxiliary appointed a committee to study the suggestion of providing financial aid, in the form of loans, to veterinary students. The loan committee consulted with college deans and AVMA members. The following year, after hearing the committee's report, the Auxiliary authorized a student loan fund and amended its objective to state: "The object of the Auxiliary shall include a loan fund to be used for the assistance of needy veterinary students." That year, a student at The Ohio State University received the first loan, of \$175.

Within four years, requests for student loans had increased beyond the Auxiliary's resources, so the AVMA placed \$2,000 from the Salmon Memorial Fund at the disposal of the Auxiliary, which, in turn, paid the AVMA 4 percent interest on the amount used.



Auxiliary officers, 1956-1957

\$175 first student loan, given to a student at The Ohio State University, 1920

Demand for loans reflected the events of the day. The Stock Market Crash of 1929 drove up demand, as did the Great Depression. In 1947, demand dropped, with many returning World War II veterans receiving educational grants under the GI Bill of Rights. By 1954, the AVMA had accredited 19 colleges, driving demand back up.

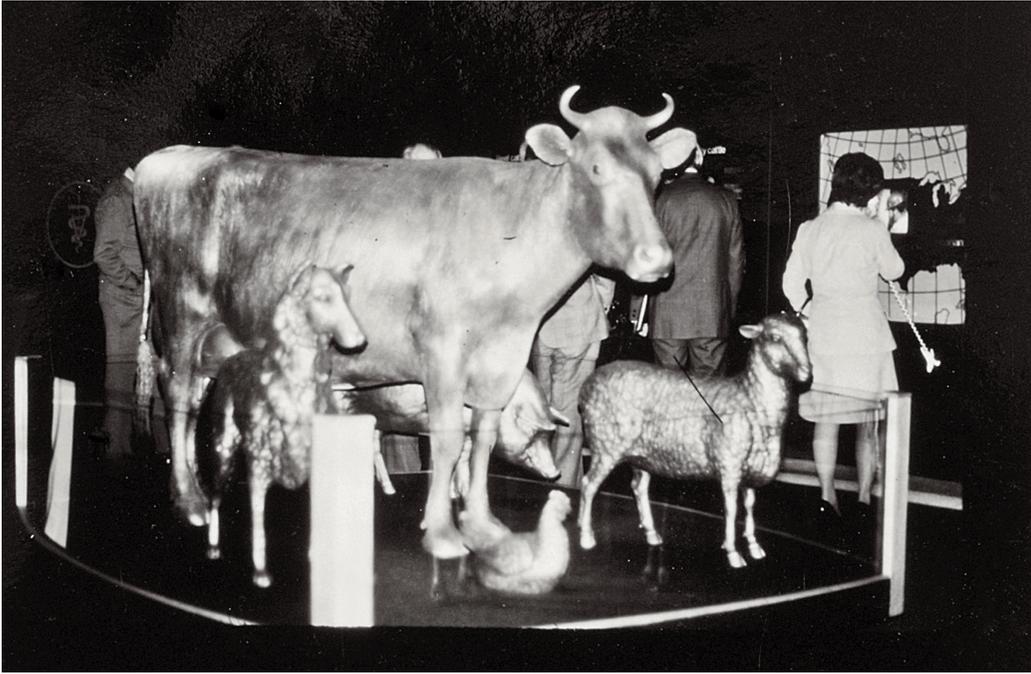
To generate resources for loans, the Auxiliary at various times borrowed from the AVMA, limited the number of loans it made to students, conducted a membership drive, and established a Memorial Fund for donors to honor friends and relatives.

In 1951, AVMA President Clarence P. Zepp Sr. appealed for the Auxiliary's help with fundraising for the AVMA Research Trust, which had been created five years earlier. During 1951, the Auxiliary made only one student loan, so it was looking for other ways to serve veterinarians. As a result, the Auxiliary became more active in public relations and research fundraising.

Within 10 years, the Auxiliary achieved its goal of conducting a campaign to raise \$75,000 for fellowships through the research fund.

Up to then, the Auxiliary had been involved in various public relations efforts. In 1945, it produced the booklet "What the Veterinary Profession Means to the Public." At the AVMA's request, in 1955 the Auxiliary set up a radio committee to sponsor a public relations program. AVMA members carried out radio, and, later, TV programs, arranged and coordinated by Auxiliary members. The new Auxiliary committee assisted constituent auxiliaries with these public relations activities. In 1975, the Auxiliary introduced its public relations guide "Is There a Veterinarian in the House?"

LASTING ALLIANCES



The AVMA veterinary exhibit at Chicago's Museum of Science and Industry benefited from Auxiliary support.

In 1978, the Auxiliary adopted the following pledge: "As members of the Auxiliary to the AVMA, we pledge ourselves to these goals: To assist in informing the public of the value of veterinary services. To assist selected veterinary students with loans and awards. To strengthen the bonds of friendship among those connected with the veterinary profession." The Auxiliary introduced a media kit two years later to help with public service announcements.

Besides public relations, the Auxiliary undertook many educational and fundraising projects. It began selling jewelry bearing the Auxiliary crest and released the handbook "Today's Topics for Veterinarians' Wives" in 1969. Incentive awards were presented to a graduating student and a fourth-year student's spouse at each veterinary college, and to state science fair winners. The Auxiliary sponsored various student auxiliary activities and created an honor roll for constituent auxiliaries that achieved certain benchmarks.

In 1973, the Auxiliary appointed a panel to compile a list of books that would enhance the profession, and two years later, the organization distributed its first "approved booklist" to librarians across the country.

The Auxiliary's popular Marketplace of States, an AVMA convention event featuring items offered by constituent auxiliaries, often netted thousands of dollars for the student loan fund and other educational projects. In 1976, the Auxiliary donated \$10,702 for the veterinary exhibit at the Museum of Science and Industry in Chicago, and in 1991 it contributed \$10,000 for partial funding of an AVMA Congressional Science Fellowship. The Auxiliary even compiled and sold cookbooks and raised money to purchase an automatic flagpole for the first headquarters building the AVMA owned in Schaumburg, Ill., in 1975.

SOCIAL CONVENTIONS

The Auxiliary has always teamed work with pleasure. Even in 1917, some patriotic veterinarians' wives served a luncheon before the organizational meeting, observing the wartime "wheatless Wednesdays" by serving a suitable Boston brown bread, a veal salad, and ice cream in cantaloupe halves. At the 1918 AVMA meeting in Philadelphia, a group of veterinarians took their wives on a side trip to Atlantic City to "jump the breakers." The women were dressed in ruffled caps, black stockings, and daring knee-length bathing suits.

Whether a moonlight cruise on the St. Lawrence or a glass-bottom boat ride along Catalina Island, an excursion to Mount Rainier or a clambake in New England, Auxiliary members found fun amid their work and encountered history along the way. In 1933, they visited the Chicago World's Fair, and in 1959, the Truman Library in Independence, Mo., where former President Harry S. Truman addressed them. Aviatrix Amelia Earhart spoke at an Auxiliary luncheon held for the wives of foreign visitors at the 1934 New York meeting.





The Hall of Science at the 1933-1934 World's Fair in Chicago included an AVMA exhibit. The Auxiliary visited the fair.

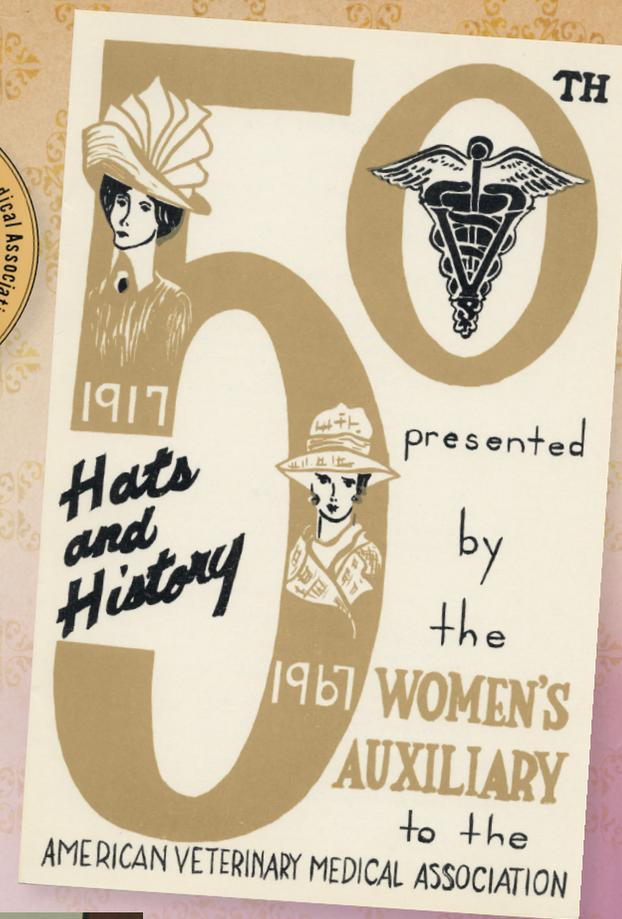
The Women's Auxiliary celebrated its golden anniversary in 1967 in Dallas' Baker Hotel. Auxiliary board members costumed in clothes fashionable in 1917 served as hostesses. Entertainment was a look at "Hats and history" from 1896-1967. Decorating the tables were dolls dressed by constituent auxiliaries in fashions of the preceding 50 years. Charter members Lillie Grossman and Margaret Lockhart cut the anniversary cake.

DOWN TO BUSINESS

The Auxiliary amended its constitution and bylaws in 1924 to provide for its Executive Board, and in 1930, a movement was begun to encourage formation of state auxiliaries, laying the foundation for the Auxiliary's House of Representatives, later called House of Delegates. By the 1947 meeting, there were 25 well-organized state auxiliaries. In 1939, the Women's Auxiliary to the American Veterinary Medical Association was incorporated in Illinois, where the AVMA office in Chicago was handling the student loan fund. The articles of incorporation were amended in 1977 to change the name to the Auxiliary to the American Veterinary Medical Association.

The 1946 meeting was the first where membership cards and dues receipts were issued, marking the first time that membership was considered independently from attendance at the national convention.

Each Junior AVMA organization at a veterinary school had an auxiliary by 1948, and five of these student auxiliaries had affiliated with the AVMA Auxiliary. 1949 was a year of sweeping changes, according to the Auxiliary's 75th anniversary history, as the organization set aside its old structure and adopted a new constitution. In 1950, a Foreign Relations Committee was created to be the liaison with the Women's International Veterinary Auxiliary.



Charter Auxiliary members Lillie Grossman (left) and Margaret Lockhart cut the golden anniversary cake.



LASTING ALLIANCES



At its 1959 meeting, the Auxiliary adopted a new constitution that closely paralleled the AVMA's. Each state or provincial auxiliary was allowed a delegation of one to seven members. That fall, the Auxiliary set up its office in the AVMA headquarters in Chicago, which led to a closer relationship and exchange of ideas. The Auxiliary HOD began conducting all the organization's business in 1964. Representation was based on one delegate for every 50 members in good standing.

The Auxiliary had an office supervisor until 1968, when the title became executive secretary. AVMA staff member Lavina Davenport served in that position from 1959-1974, when the Auxiliary office was moved to Manhattan, Kan., and Maxine Caley became executive secretary. In 1992, the Auxiliary moved into rent-free space at AVMA headquarters in Schaumburg, Ill., and Chris Kanalas served as executive secretary until 1999. Temporary directors were engaged until Jan Knewton became secretary-treasurer and took over administrative duties out of Iola, Kan., from 2004-2010.

The name of each Auxiliary president is listed on a plaque displayed at AVMA headquarters since it was presented to Executive Vice President Ron DeHaven at the 2011 AVMA convention in St. Louis.

CHALLENGING TIMES

The gender shift that eventually led to employed female veterinarians outnumbering males in 2009 was associated with a corresponding decline in Auxiliary members. In its first 40 years, the Auxiliary saw its membership increase from the original 55 charter members to 6,000. Membership peaked at more than 10,000 in 1971. But by 1990, the number had fallen to 6,460, and by 2000, it was 2,765. As of July 2012, the Auxiliary had 303 dues-paying members and 644 life members.

Ginger Morton, 2011-2012 Auxiliary president, takes a sanguine view. "There has been a strong trend of ladies joining the veterinary field, and this, too, opens doors for a new face for the Auxiliary through male spouses."

Ironically, a bright spot was the August 2012 installation of the first male president in Auxiliary history. Greg Mooney of Mount Gilead, Ohio, husband of Dr. Marty Mooney, a 1978 graduate of The Ohio State University, has been active in the AVMA and Ohio VMA auxiliaries for 34 years. He retired as a lieutenant colonel in 1997 after 20 years of active duty with the U.S. Air Force and with the Ohio Air National Guard.



The Auxiliary's primary focus is (from left) the Kritters Korner Gift Store, National Pet Week, and the Marketplace of States.



LASTING ALLIANCES

Mooney thinks a combination of factors has led to the membership decline, such as spouses having careers and outside interests that compete for their time, and the passage of privacy laws that make it difficult to obtain spousal names. Morton notes that retention declined when dues were raised, when Auxiliary dues reminders were removed from spouses' AVMA member dues invoices, and when two-income households became the norm. The member decline and waiver of dues for life members have impacted Auxiliary revenue.

Another challenge was moving Auxiliary headquarters in 2010 from Kansas to AVMA headquarters in Illinois, the state of the Auxiliary's incorporation. Since then, AVMA and Auxiliary staff have overseen the administrative work. To bring the organization into full compliance with Illinois nonprofit law, delegates in 2012 voted to rescind the constitution, to allow new bylaws to be put in place.

In 2011, the Auxiliary House of Delegates authorized the organization's Executive Board to convert the student loan fund to an endowed scholarship fund distributed by the American Veterinary Medical Foundation. The memorandum of understanding remained in negotiation between the two organizations as of October 2012. Once it is finalized, the Auxiliary must obtain approval from the Illinois attorney general. The Auxiliary will continue to help raise scholarship funds and send a representative to the scholarship board.

The Auxiliary's primary focus remains National Pet Week, the Kritters Korner Gift Store, and the Marketplace of States, along with live and silent auctions as fundraisers. Auxiliary members also visit AVMA student chapters at the veterinary schools.

With the decline in Auxiliary membership, some have called for the organization to dissolve. A resolution outlining a plan for voluntary dissolution was submitted to the Auxiliary HOD in 2011. In August 2012, however, delegates passed a resolution from the Auxiliary board postponing indefinitely the resolution for voluntary dissolution.

Mooney said, "We want to see the Auxiliary continue. There are some questions by a few people who wonder if we can, but I don't think it ought to be based solely on economics.

"We think the purposes for which the Auxiliary was founded are good, and we hope to still find ways to do them."

Whatever the future holds, the Auxiliary has been a loyal AVMA partner, serving the profession and the public for 95 years.



“We think the purposes for which the Auxiliary was founded are good, and we hope to still find ways to do them.”

– Greg Mooney, 2012-2013 president,
Auxiliary to the AVMA