

NETWORK NEWS

Linking Members of North Shore Animal League, Inc., The Pet Savers Foundation, Inc. and The SPAY/USA Networks

COALITION OF SPAY/NEUTER SPECIALISTS FORMS

By Peggy Larson, D.V.M.

Approximately 40 veterinarians, clinic directors and other interested parties met at the Crowne Plaza Hotel in Miami on Saturday, October 12, 1996 for the charter meeting of the preventative reproductive surgery group. The meeting was a culmination of several years of answering similar questions from veterinarians and animal workers from Montana to Australia. We all were facing the same problems including starting a low cost spay/neuter clinic, overpopulation, unsympathetic colleagues, funding, anesthesia techniques, and a need to exchange ideas. So I decided we needed an organization with a newsletter to provide information about our chosen veterinary specialty. I called Esther Mechler who volunteered to organize and promote the meeting. She very capably set it up and the rest is history. I also contacted Marvin Mackie who is always willing to go anywhere to promote animal population control. I refer to him as the "guru" of spay/neuter because he has done about 300,000 surgeries.

Esther opened the meeting

by presenting the goals of the organization. Tentatively they are 1) to provide a central clearing-house for information and support, 2) to publish a newsletter to include job openings and people looking for employment as spay/neuter professionals, 3) to work with veterinary colleges to introduce students to the severe problem of pet overpopulation, 4) to provide externships where students can receive surgical experience and 5) to promote animal population control.

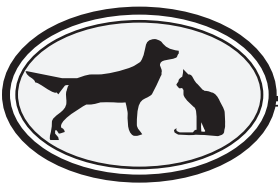
Marvin spoke about his clinics -- how they started and how to earn a living doing spay/neuter. He also suggested providing unit production benchmarks for new veterinarians starting mass spay/neuter surgery. They are 1) novice, 2) general practitioner, 3)

advanced and 4) expert. These criteria would be helpful in evaluating new veterinarians coming into a spay clinic.

On Sunday, Marvin spoke about his clinics and about how to start a low cost spay/neuter clinic. If you missed the meeting, both Marvin and I would be happy to answer any questions about spay/neuter.

I spoke about problems we encountered with our colleagues when we started our clinic. After five years of being polite but firm we now have seven clinics that refer patients to us. We also chose a stationary clinic rather than a mobile van because of the cold climate and inability to find suitable parking. For four years we have provided a M*A*S*H* (mobile animal spay hospital) unit where we spay once a month in the northeast part of Vermont, a very poor area. We pack our equipment in totes and set up at the community center.





COALITION OF SPAY/NEUTER CONTINUED

→ I also spoke briefly about potential legal problems such as 1) clear and concise surgical release forms, 2) good medical records complying with state practice act requirements, 3) maintaining surgical and anesthetic records, 4) DEA record requirements, 5) advising clients about zoonoses and intestinal roundworms and 6) the use of drugs not cleared for a specific species.

During dinner each person introduced themselves and told about their interest in spay/neuter. There was a wonderful discussion session which lasted into the evening. We all were so excited to find people of like-minded dedication to stopping pet overpopulation. The meeting was an incredible success.

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