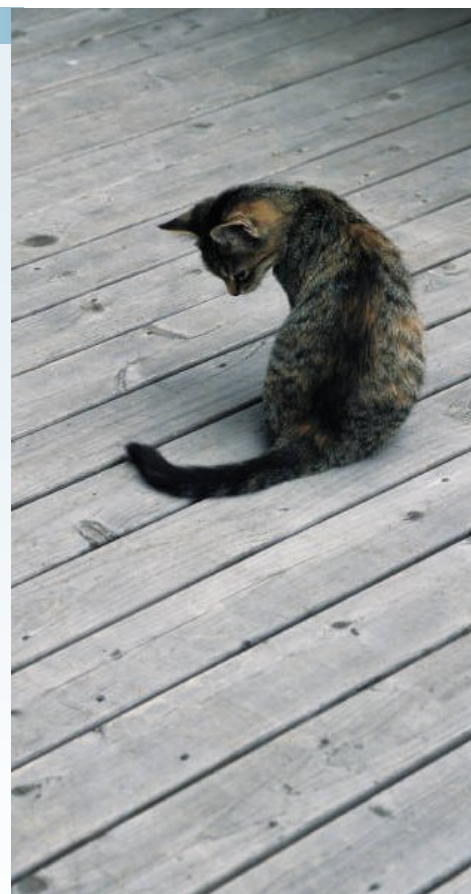


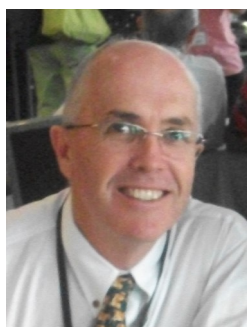


AUTUMN
2013



BIG News

PRESIDENT'S REPORT



As I am writing this, the Easter Bunny has just hopped over the horizon and disappeared for another year. I hope all AVBIG members were able to enjoy some leisurely time over the long weekend.

This year Easter also marked the end of March and our second ever Polite Pets Month (PPM). We were delighted to see it expand this year with over 330 practices signing up to be involved.

PPM kicked off in February with two webinars. Dr Terry Theakstone presented on cats eliminating outside of the litter tray while I talked about the basics of barking dogs. The idea of the early information sessions was to educate practice staff on the focus topics of the month so they could confidently give advice to their clients. AVBIG would like to thank Royal Canin for sponsoring the two webinars.

Another important aspect of PPM is the online resources available to participating clinics which were further enhanced from 2012 versions by the hard work of Dr Katina Ward and Dr Terry Theakstone. This included the addition of new information sheets, flow diagrams and questionnaires which proved invaluable for helping clinic staff answer those tricky behavioural questions. We aim to continue adding to this valuable resource over time so it becomes even more comprehensive and valuable to those practices interested in expanding their behavioural services and

Inside this issue

President's Report.....	1
AVA Conference	3
Dog Lovers Show	6
Student Prize 2013	7
Susan Friedman seminar.....	8
Science Week	9
Discussion Group.....	10
Debunking Dominance	11
Committee contacts.....	13



knowledge.

Ceva Animal health produced and distributed PPM practice packs which this year included a nifty counter display, shelf danglers and brochures on the two core topics of the month. We would like to thank them for their support and enthusiasm.

Many practices ran information nights for their clients on the focus topics and it was encouraging to see councils also becoming involved.

AVBIG will continue to work on building PPM with the hope that it will become a major event on the veterinary calendar. The sub-committee for PPM is already looking ahead to next year and considering new focus topics so we would love to hear any suggestions that our members have. Please send your feedback, suggested topics or any other recommendations for improvements that could be made to PPM to AVBIGPresident@gmail.com.


Thanks to some dedicated work by Katrina Ward and Diane van Rooy, AVBIG are proud to present another behaviour factsheet for pet owners. After our 'reward-based training' document received such positive feedback, we have now produced a two page brochure titled 'Debunking Dominance in Dogs'. You can read this document in this newsletter and it is also available online on the AVA's website.

On line registration for the AVBIG weekend seminar - Susan Friedman's 'Learning and Living with Animals' - is nearly ready and after many hiccups and false starts it should be fully operational in the next week or two. We are very excited to be bringing Dr Friedman over to Australia and you can read further details about this weekend in this newsletter.

I am also looking forward to the behaviour stream at the AVA annual conference in Cairns with Jon Bowen presenting on many fascinating topics such as the human dimension of obesity in cats and inter-dog aggression. Although she is not speaking in the behaviour stream, the opportunity to hear Temple Grandin talk is well worth making the trip up north for. More details on the lectures and events scheduled for the conference are included in this newsletter.

With all the things going on in the SIG all the members of the executive should be congratulated on what they have achieved and should be thanked for all their hard work. A number of the executive will be stepping down after serving AVBIG for a number of years. I thank them wholeheartedly for their efforts. The vacancies will provide opportunities for fresh faces and I would like all members to consider stepping up and contributing to making AVBIG bigger and better in the future. If you would like to know more about joining the committee, any of us would be happy to chat with you about what each position involves. You will find our email details on the last page of this newsletter.

Looking forward to seeing you next month up in Cairns. *Andrew O'Shea.*



AVA CONFERENCE WEEK: INTO THE FUTURE

Monday 27th—AVBIG Annual Meeting

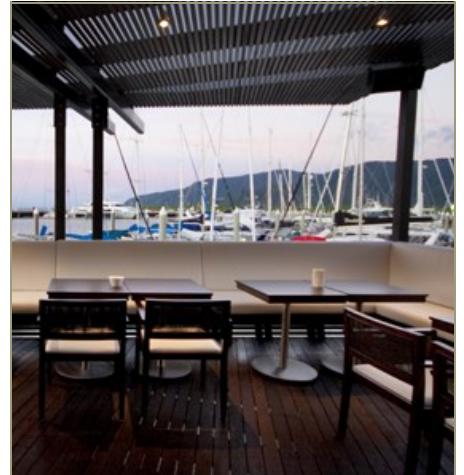
The AVBIG executive would like to encourage all members to attend and participate in the annual meeting. Whether it is having your say on the future of the SIG or putting your hand up for a position on the committee, we will be a stronger group for your input. Committee positions up for election include—Secretary, Minutes Secretary, Treasurer, Publicity Officer, Discussion Group Moderator and Executive without portfolio. If you are interested in joining the executive but would like more information about what is involved, please do not hesitate to contact us (see the last page of the newsletter for contact details).

The meeting will be held at the conclusion of lectures on the Monday.

Tuesday 28th—AVBIG Dinner

Always a sell out, do not miss out on your spot at the table for the annual AVBIG dinner. This year we are heading to The Salt House, a funky new venue in Cairns situated right on the waterfront.

What better way to finish off a great day of learning than relaxing in the company of fellow behaviour enthusiasts with great wine, food and conversation?



Friday 31st—Field Trip



Do you really want to fly all the way to Cairns and miss out on seeing a crocodile?

Of course not, so hang around on Friday and join us for our field trip to Hartley's Crocodile Adventures. As well as the opportunity to see these amazing creatures in the flesh, be prepared to learn about the challenges of farming these feisty animals.

A bus will pick up delegates from the convention centre at 9am and return by 3:15pm. Book at www.ava.com.au/conference

2013 AVA CONFERENCE

MONDAY 27th MAY		
8:00-8:50	Monitoring success in behavioural therapy	Jon Bowen
9:00-9:50	Neonatology—how this affects what you see in practice	Kersti Seksel
Morning Tea		
10:45-12:15	Plenary—Pluripotent stem cells in veterinary medicine—an update	Martin Pera
Lunch		
1:30-2:20	Obesity in cats—the human element	Jon Bowen
2:30-3:20	Anxiety in cats the root of behavioural and medical problems	Jon Bowen
Afternoon tea		
4:00-4:50	Putting behaviour modification into practice	Gabrielle Carter
5:00-5:50	Interdog aggression	Jon Bowen
TUESDAY 28th MAY		
8:00-8:50	What's new in the world of behavioural medicine	Gaille Perry
9:00-9:50	The relationship between behavioural problems and the human-dog bond	Jon Bowen
Morning Tea		
10:45-12:15	Plenary: Thinking like an animal	Temple Grandin
Lunch		
2:30-3:20	Factors affecting owner satisfaction with their dog	Jacqui Ley
Afternoon tea		
4:00-4:50	Measuring affective states to improve animal welfare	Caroline Lee
5:00-5:50	It's a dog's life—qualitative behavioural assessment of shelter dogs	Teresa Collins

WEDNESDAY 29th MAY		
8:00-8:50	Pre-anaesthetic use of anxiolytic medication	Kersti Seksel
9:00-9:50	Epilepsy and behaviour in dogs	Jon Bowen
Morning Tea		
10:30-11:20	Customer satisfaction in the veterinary clinic	Jon Bowen
11:30-12:20	Plenary: The future of the profession—staying healthy and happy	John Jacobson
Lunch		
1:30-2:20	Formulating the 'perfect' animal health product	Joe Pippia
2:30-3:20	Rational use of supplements, herbal and nutraceutical products in behaviour	Jon Bowen
Afternoon tea		
4:00-6:00	AVA AGM	
THURSDAY 30th MAY		
8:00-8:50	Behaviour thresholds vs welfare thresholds	Robert Stabler
9:00-9:50	Effects of sickness behaviour and pain on behaviour	Jon Bowen
Morning Tea		
11:30-12:20	Plenary: Ben Cunneen memorial lecture: Through the looking glass—the future of science in the Australian veterinary profession	James Gilkerson
Lunch		
2:00-2:50	Use of an online scale in the detection and diagnosis of noise fears and phobias	Jon Bowen
3:00-3:50	Dealing with dogs that are afraid of loud noises	Jon Bowen
Afternoon tea		
4:30-5:20	The minefield of declared dangerous and restricted breed dogs	Gaille Perry & Kersti Seksel



This show is a celebration of dogs and is shaping up to be a significant event on any dog owner's calendar.

Are you thinking of going? **Why not save the entry fee?** If you volunteer on the AVA/ AVBIG stand then that will allow free entry and you can remain on site for the rest of the day to have a look around!

AVBIG is looking for volunteers to help out on the AVA stand for the following times:-

Friday 3rd May: 9am-10am, 2pm-6pm

Saturday 4th May: 9am-6pm

Sunday 5th May: 9am-6pm

You will be able to chat to members of the public about the important role veterinarians and veterinary behaviourists can play in the health and well-being of pets. You will have an attractive and informative flyer to help spread the word to owners and provide a contact point for further information about behaviour concerns.

If we have many volunteers then the load will be light for all! Please email Debbie Calnon at AVBIGPastPresident@gmail.com with a guide to your availability.

This is a fantastic opportunity to promote our profession and behavioural medicine in particular. It will be great to see you there.

2013 Kersti Seksel Student Prize

Background

The Kersti Seksel Student Award was established in 2012 by AVBIG (Australian Veterinary Behaviour Interest Group). It is named in honour of Kersti Seksel in recognition of her contribution to veterinary behavioural medicine in Australia.

It is open to veterinary students of an Australian Veterinary School who demonstrate an interest in behavioural medicine in veterinary practice and a genuine desire to develop this interest upon graduation.

Criteria for 2013

- The Kersti Seksel Student Award is open to veterinary students (BVSc/BVMS/DVM) currently studying at an Australian university.
- Winners will be selected from the applications received by the due date.
- This award focuses on the applicant's desire and potential capability for a career including behaviour in veterinary practice.
- Applicants must be current AVBIG student members. Upon receipt of the applications, membership currency will be checked (as per AVA current member database). Applications from non AVBIG student members will not be eligible to be judged.
- The award is not convertible to other benefit.
- While previous winners of the award are ineligible for the 2013 prize, unsuccessful applicants from previous years are encouraged to apply.
- The judging panel's decision is final and no correspondence or other communication about their decision will be entered into.

If suitable applicants are not forthcoming for the current round of the award, AVBIG reserves the right to decide to withdraw all or part of the prize as they see fit.

Prize

The top three entrants will each receive a cash prize of \$250.

How to enter

Applications close on 1 September 2013. No late entries will be accepted.

Send this completed application form by email to avbigsecretary@gmail.com

Successful entrants will be notified by 1 December, 2013.



SUSAN FRIEDMAN SEMINAR

Living and Learning with Animals

AUGUST 31 & SEPTEMBER 1, 2013

Novotel, Brighton-le-Sands, Sydney

Susan Friedman is a psychology professor at Utah State University who has pioneered the application of Applied Behaviour Analysis to captive and companion animals. With its roots in human learning, Applied Behaviour Analysis offers a scientifically-sound teaching technology and ethical standard that can improve the lives of all learners.

The seminar's focus on learning and Applied Behaviour Analysis will enable participants to apply the techniques gained from this entertaining and enlightening presentation across a variety of species and disciplines to change an animal's behaviour effectively and humanely.

Topics include

- How behaviour works
- Understanding and misunderstanding behaviour
- The significance of science to behaviour consulting
- Respondent and operant learning
- Functional assessment
- The commitment to ethical practice
- The case of empowerment
- Procedures for changing respondent behaviour
- Procedures for changing operant behaviour

Designing behaviour change plans.

To reserve your seat at this exciting seminar or to get further information please email AVBIGConferences@gmail.com.



ANZCVS SCIENCE WEEK

The veterinary behaviour chapter has a full schedule in the three day Science Week conference.

11th-13th July 2013

QT Gold Coast, Surfers Paradise, QLD

The preliminary program and registrations are available at www.anzcv.org.au



STOP PRESS!

AVBIG are planning on holding a single day seminar in Surfers Paradise at the conclusion of Science Week. The presenter for the day will be Jaume Fatjo from Spain.

Venue and topics are still to be announced, but keep Sunday 14th July free.

More details to be released shortly.

Jaume Fatjo

Jaume was Born in Barcelona in 1969. He obtained a degree and PhD in veterinary medicine from the “Universitat Autònoma de Barcelona” and is a graduate of the European College of Behaviour Medicine (Companion Animals). He is working as a researcher at the Institute of Neuropsychiatry and addictions (Mar Parc de Salut - Department of Psychiatry and Forensic Medicine -UAB). His main interests are understanding more about relationships between people and animals as well as the comparative study of human psychiatric disorders and problems of animal behaviour.

AVBIG DISCUSSION GROUP

Are you a member of the AVBIG Discussion Group? If not, you have been missing out on some interesting comments and debate.

The AVBIG Discussion group is a moderated list, where ANY current AVBIG member can post a behaviour related question or item. The list is also a way for the AVBIG committee to inform members of up-coming events, seminars, and conferences that might be of interest to members.

There are two ways you can get on board the list if you are not already a discussion group member:

- 1) You can log onto Yahoo groups (if you are already a member or are on other chat groups through Yahoo! this is the easiest way) and then send a request to join the AVBIG group. Finding the group is easiest using the 'search for a group' function – type in AVBIG and the group should show. Click on 'Join this group'. This application will be forwarded to the list manager, who will then check you are a current member of AVBIG before accepting you.

- 2) Alternatively, you can send an email to Terry Theakstone:

AVBIGDiscussionGroupModerator@gmail.com

He will then send you an invitation via Yahoo! – follow the prompts in the email to join the list.





Produced by the
Australian Veterinary Behaviour Interest Group
a special interest group of the
Australian Veterinary Association



DEBUNKING DOMINANCE IN DOGS



Everyone has probably heard of a dog being described as dominant; the pushy dog who tries to run the household.

But what exactly is dominance and can there be a truly dominant dog? It's time to catch up with the latest and learn that using the **D word can be **Drastically Detrimental!****

What is dominance?

It is not accurate to describe a dog as having a dominant personality. The word should only ever be used to describe a single interaction between two individuals competing for a resource such as a piece of food or a toy. One dog will usually give up the contest and leave the resource for the other. In that situation, the individual who wins is dominant.

Different resources motivate different dogs at different times. This means the relationship can change – just like you might argue with your partner occasionally about what channel on TV to watch, but at other times be quite happy to let them watch their choice.

How did we get so mixed up?

From the 1940s to the 1980s, studies of captive wolf packs suggested they used aggression to establish a pecking order, a rank, with the dominant wolf called the alpha dog, or top dog. As dogs descended from wolves it was assumed that the social behaviour of dogs followed these rules. However, these studies were flawed. We now know that wolves in the wild rarely show aggression within their family pack.

Your dog is not a wolf, nor is it a human

Our domestic dogs and wolves evolved from a common ancestor more than 15,000 years ago and do retain some similarities. However, dogs have also developed some major behavioural and physical differences to become the valued friends they are today; they play throughout their lives, are usually friendly to unfamiliar dogs and other species and can read human body language. They even look to us to solve their problems. Through sharing our homes and lives, we have learnt to communicate remarkably well considering we speak different languages and have a completely different sensory perception of the world. It is in their interests that we communicate with dogs in a way that gives them the best possible chance of understanding us.

So, why is my dog behaving this way?

If your dog is growling, baring its teeth or snapping at you or others, it is not because they're trying to dominate you. Often anxiety and insecurity are the primary contributors to aggressive behaviour. Dogs with medical conditions or those in pain are also more likely to be irritable or react defensively.

A lot of unwanted behaviour is actually normal behaviour for dogs, they may just not have been taught what we expect from them or want them to do.

In certain situations involving conflict, a dog may show controlling behaviour. For example, your dog may growl if another animal approaches their food bowl, or if multiple dogs are trying to squeeze through a doorway together.

If your dog growls at you while its on the couch and has you all tip-toeing around, it may be that they are feeling anxious that you're going to force them off or punish them for being there.

Do I need to show them who's the boss?

Anyone with a 'pushy', 'rude' or 'demanding' dog has probably been told at some stage to 'show them who's boss' or to 'make them submit'. The advice usually involves physically punishing the dog by forcing it onto its side (the 'alpha roll'), or to hold eye contact whilst growling at the dog. These confrontational techniques are a bad idea. They are very risky and may result in escalation of aggression.

Punishment will not calm an agitated dog. Punishment will increase both fear and excitability, and a growl may then escalate into a bite. Punishing your dog for growling may also inadvertently teach it to suppress the warning growl and bite with no warning.

If your dog is anxious, punishment will make the anxiety worse. Punishment also fails to teach your dog how you want it to behave, and can ruin your dog's trust in you and other people.

What to do

- 1. Keep safe.** If your dog is showing aggression to you by growling, showing its teeth or snapping, do not confront it. Avoid or prevent the situation until you have consulted with someone qualified to advise you on safe strategies to help you and your dog.
- 2. Be proactive, not reactive.** All dogs need predictability in their life and need to be taught how you want them to behave. You need to establish clear rules and be consistent in rewarding desirable behaviour. The golden rule is to reward the behaviour you do want and ignore or redirect the behaviour you don't want. Remember, the only way to do this is to find the right way to communicate with your dog so it is happy to listen to you!
- 3. Get the right help.** The best place to start is to ask for advice from your veterinarian. Your vet can check for any contributing medical problems and if necessary will refer you to a veterinary behaviour specialist, qualified veterinary behaviourist or a qualified trainer. You can also contact the Australian Veterinary Behaviour Interest Group (AVBIG) at avbigsecretary@gmail.com for advice. We recommend seeking expert help to ensure you are getting the best advice for the happiest possible outcome for you and your pet.



AVBIG COMMITTEE

PRESIDENT — Andrew O'Shea

AVBIGPresident@gmail.com

PRESIDENT ELECT — Katrina Ward

AVBIGPresidentElect@gmail.com

MINUTES SECRETARY — Diane Van Rooy

AVBIGMinutesSecretary@gmail.com

PUBLICITY OFFICER — Kathy Macmillan

AVBIGPublicityOfficer@gmail.com

TREASURER — vacant

AVBIGTreasurer@gmail.com

COMMITTEE MEMBER — Brooke Sheehan

AVBIGExecutiveWithoutPortfolio@gmail.com

DISCUSSION GROUP MODERATOR — Terry Theakstone

AVBIGDiscussionGroupModerator@gmail.com

SECRETARY — Caroline Perrin

AVBIGSecretary@gmail.com

PAST PRESIDENT - Debbie Calnon

AVBIGPastPresident@gmail.com

