

**VBMA President's Message
General Meeting
Augusta Georgia at Annual AHVMA Meeting
Saturday October 17, 2015**

**From: Rob Silver, DVM, MS, CVA, President, VBMA
To All the "Herbies" of the VBMA
RE: My FIRST Letter to the VBMA Membership**

Folks:

It gives me great pleasure to address my favorite veterinarians, the HERBIES and the professional herbalists who are members of the VBMA. As I begin my first year as president of this vibrant organization, I want to thank the out-going president, Laurie Dohmen for her brilliant leadership of the VBMA for the past two years. I am looking forward to continuing her stewardship of this great group of people with the goals of bringing veterinary herbal medicine into the 21st Century.

As your fearless leader, for these next two years, and following my two year "reign of terror" (LOL) will then be brother Ihor's turn at inspired leadership for two years as the next president of the VBMA. My goal during my time leading the VBMA is to build our membership up and at the same time increase the participation of our members in every aspect of the VBMA. In part, this will be done by engaging our members on action committees to help with the great stuff we're doing as an organization, and which will get our members fired up with excitement as they (you) find out that working for the VBMA is truly one of life's great experiences!

OK, let me get on with the general meeting minutes:

The annual general meeting was called to order by Dr. Laurie Dohmen, the out-going president of the VBMA. Laurie acknowledged Dr. Cindy Lankenau, the out-going Board of Directors member, for her work and dedication with a Certificate of Appreciation. Laurie then introduced Dr Ihor Basko, the incoming Board of Directors member to take Dr Lankenau's place on the Board. Dr. Dohmen then turned the meeting over to the newly installed president of the VBMA, Dr. Robert J. Silver.

25 VBMA members were in attendance at this General Meeting,, as were all of the Board members except for Beth Lambert who was not able to attend the conference.

Dr. Silver Updated the Membership on a number of ongoing VBMA programs. He reminded the members of the value of the List-serve, and encouraged them to continue to contribute to this valuable tool for member veterinarians.

Additionally, President Rob Silver encourages all members to reach out to friends and colleagues to tell them how great membership is in the VBMA with great

fellowship and a rocking list-serve, as well as very practical information in our Journal and on our website, in the form of the White Papers and Herbal Wiki. The best way for us to grow our membership is for our members to encourage their friends to join. Our VBMA membership costs are less expensive than any other group, and we are the only group dedicated strictly to botanical medicine.

He announced the next **Teleseminar program** to be December 9th, 2015 conducted by **Dr Steven Blake on the topic of Gemmotherapy**, which is the clinical use of homeopathic mother tinctures made from the growing buds of plants. This should be a very interesting seminar by one of the shining stars of our group. Dr. Steve Blake walks amongst us barefoot and silent, and speaks volumes with his flute.

The **next Eco-Tour** being planned will coincide with the joint AAVA-IVAS meeting in early June of next year in Tacoma, Washington. The Eco-tour, organized by Donna Kelleher, will be held at a **Rain forest resort**, where participants can camp or stay in cabins. The surrounding forests are lush with the mushrooms and plants of the Pacific Northwest, and we will be learning a lot about these amazing plants that grow in the rain forest. Check the VBMA website for more details.

We are looking into an international **Eco-tour in Peru** later in the summer, stay tuned for more information on the list serve and on the VBMA website.

Our latest **Summer/Fall Journal** is out and it is beautiful! If you haven't seen it, you can download it from the member's section of the VBMA website. Many thanks to our webmistress Amy for the professional work that she has done in creating the VBMA Journal.

Additionally, **Amy** is to be commended for her work in upgrading our **website** to make it more functional and easy to use. If you haven't checked out our website, now would be a good time to do that. www.VBMA.org We are looking for volunteers to help us with our **Facebook and Twitter** accounts. This could be a really fun job! Someone, please come forward and help us with this.

Student Outreach has been made into a committee that is spearheaded by Cindy Lankenau who continues to contribute meaningfully to our herbal association, even in the twilight of her Board Membership. Dr. Zach Scheurich has volunteered to help Cindy in her outreach efforts.

The **Research Committee**, chaired by Dr. Robert Silver has a new member in addition to our existing member, Dr Bernie Fischer. Dr. Roberto Cortinas has volunteered to help out on the research committee. Dr. Cortinas is a professor of parasitology at the University of Nebraska, Lincoln, and has recently gotten a sizeable research grant to study the anti-parasitic effects of essential oils.

The research committee will be working on posting notices regarding the availability of funds for research into the clinical benefits of herbs in a veterinary

medicine context, and will be working closely with the AHVMF reviewers in reviewing grant proposals.

Membership report indicated we have 230 active members in the VBMA. We are looking to expand our student membership base through the efforts of Dr. Lankenau's Student Outreach Committee. We have already made the membership fee gratis to students to encourage membership and participation. The hope is that students will bond with the VBMA as students and continue that relationship throughout their practice careers.

We did not receive any submissions for the **Student Scholarship award of \$500**, which is another goal of Dr. Lankenau's committee, to inspire enough students to get some additional scholarship essay submissions.

Financial Report shows a healthy balance of accounts with about \$65,000 of cash on hand.

The **International Herb Symposium (IHS)** was a great success this year, and we are looking forward to establishing VBMA speakers for the 2017 event.

Dr. Rona Sherebin will be our featured VBMA speaker at next year's AHVMA meeting for the VBMA track in Columbus, Ohio, September 2016. Dr. Sherebin also brought up some new business in that she was contacted by the World Vet Association regarding an on-line CE platform they have been developing. Dr. Sherebin will learn more about this and report back to the Board of Directors at the next telephone conference meeting.

Dr. Laurie Dohmen, now that she has more time after transitioning from President to Past-President, will be updating the questions for the **certification exam** to cover the more commonly seen and prescribed herbs. Laurie has recently taken the certification exam, in the process has identified some areas where she thinks she can improve the examination process. You go girl!

Both **Susan Wynn** and **Barbara Fougere** spoke about the importance of keeping our White Papers current and up to date. To this end we need to update the White Papers that are found on our website. These documents are very important in defining the ethical use of herbs as well as a number of other important issues with herbal prescribing. We are looking for a dedicated individual who would like to work on updating these documents. If you are interested in volunteering, please contact either Jasmine at office@VBMA.org or Rob Silver at rsilver@drsilverdvm.com.

Susan Wynn brought up the concept that the VBMA has grown to the size where we could be putting on **our own meeting separate from** and at different times than the **annual AHVMA** meeting where we have historically shared a meeting space. We could choose smaller venues, more rurally located, closer to better herb-walk

locales, and possibly pair this with a domestic eco-tour as well. Joyce Harman motioned that we create a survey to query the membership on their interest in such an event.

The time for the meeting was up, a motion was made to adjourn the meeting. It was seconded and the meeting was ended.

So, in closure, I want to repeat the fact that I am totally excited to be President of the VBMA, and to have the opportunity work with such a knowledgeable and impassioned membership—you. Let's all agree to work together to make the VBMA the best organization ever!

Passionately submitted,

Rob

Robert J. Silver, DVM, MS, CVA
President, VBMA