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Pennsylvania Veterinary Medical Historical Society

Notes From Mongolia

by Amanda Fine, V'97

I am based in Ulaanbaatar, Mongolia's capital. Ulaanbaatar is a bustling city of close to 1 million people (more than 1/3 of the country's population). Many people in the city still wear traditional Mongolian dress and it is not uncommon to see a horse cart in a line of traffic or cows grazing in the City Square. For the most part, however, Ulaanbaatar is a modern city with movie theaters, universities, banks, hotels and even a pizza place that delivers!

My work with the Veterinary Research Institute has taken me out of the city on a number of occasions. Traveling just 40 km beyond Ulaanbaatar's city limits takes you to another world. Talking and sharing a meal with Mongolian livestock herders in their traditional felt tents called gers, it is not hard to imagine what life on the Mongolian steppe was like in the days of Ghengis Khan. With the exception of a

Russian motorcycle, a few family photographs taken in the "big city", a battery-powered radio and a poster of Michael Jackson or Sylvester Stalone (American culture has invaded even the remotest lands) there is usually little evidence of the 20th century in a Mongolian ger. People are friendly and extremely hospitable. There is no need to knock when visiting a Mongolian family in their ger. You simply push open the door, take a seat on the floor (foreigners and honored guests are usually handed a stool) and before you have time to fully introduce yourself you are being served salted milk tea with fried bread and dried cheese curd—traditional Mongolian cuisine. A meal of mutton usually follows.

Needless to say, the last few months have been an adventure and I am looking forward to the months to come despite the fact that the average temperature during most of those months will be somewhere between — 20 and -30 degrees Celsius. I plan to "escape" sometime in February or March to visit some of my fellow Luce

Scholars that have been assigned to more tropical placements. Since plans to join my family in the Middle East for the holidays fell through, I will be in Ulaanbaatar for Christmas and the New Year. The predominant religion in Mongolia is Tibetan Buddhism, so December 25th will come and go with very little ceremony, however Mongolians seem to have embraced the western New Year with much enthusiasm. The city is decorated in lights and brightly colored tinsel and plastic Santas are on sale everywhere. Most social gatherings are a buzz with people planning New Year's Eve celebrations and debating where the "hot spots" will be in Ulaanbaatar this year.

Dr. Fine was selected as a Luce Scholar (a program sponsored by the Henry Luce Foundation designed to give young American professionals experience working in Asia) in the spring of 1998 and started her assignment at the Mongolian Veterinary Research Institute in early September. 🐾

Food Animal Fellows

For ten weeks during the 1998 summer break eight veterinary students accompanied local veterinarians on farm calls and attended seminars at New Bolton Center. "We established the program in 1995 to give students the opportunity to experience veterinary practice for food animals," said Dr. David Galligan, chief, Section of Animal Health Economics and Nutrition. "Each year a greater proportion of students entering veterinary school has not been exposed to food animal practice. We have had 29 students go through the program and at this stage it is too early to tell if we have seen an increase in the number of students entering food animal practice as a career choice. Even if student food animal fellows do not select "food animal practice" they will be better informed about animal production systems when dealing with the public." Funds for the fellowships were received from the Commonwealth and internal sources. In 1999 the program will be supported by funding from The New York Farmers.

Pennsylvania Veterinary Medical Historical Society

The Society is attempting to collect, preserve and display artifacts and archival materials relating to the history of veterinary medicine. This summer we had a display at the Landis Valley Farm Museum featuring a replica of an old time one room veterinary clinic.

The Society also had a display table of information and artifacts at the School's Open House at New Bolton Center in September and at the Pennsylvania Veterinary Medical Association meeting in October. The display consisted of informative literature, a number of old equine instruments and various sized Stader splints. The Stader external fixation splints were developed for different sized dogs and were also adapted by Dr. Stader for use on humans. The public had the opportunity to investigate the manipulation necessary to reduce a fracture of a canine humerus and a plastic human humerus. These various splints became available through the generous contribution and support of Dr. Richard Stader, a human orthopedic surgeon and the youngest son of Dr. Otto Stader. Dr. Otto Stader graduated from the University of Pennsyl-

vania, School of Veterinary Medicine in 1917. After much frustration in attempting to stabilize some animal fractures, Dr. Stader developed and patented the Stader splint in 1941. He then modified these splints to be used in human medicine. They were used extensively by the Navy for casualties during World War II. Dr. Otto Stader's oldest son, Robert, graduated from Penn in V'90.

We now have the Robert Shomer book collection on shelves in the Jean Austin du Pont Library at New Bolton Center. We are in the process of getting all the books catalogued into a computer program and making this collection available to the public. When this is completed we will be able to accept additional archival material for preservation in a future museum.

These are a few of the projects that we are in the process of completing. Our organization is growing but we can always use the input and help from any interested individuals. Anyone interested in becoming a member or assisting in any way please contact Dr. Max J. Herman at 610-630-6437.