

Nation's First Animal Bloodmobile



The nation's first animal bloodmobile was put into service on November 7, 1991 at VHUP. The dedication ceremony was attended by donors, friends, faculty, staff, students and a number of canine blood donors.

The acquisition of the specially designed and equipped vehicle was made possible through generous contributions from the Bernice Barbour Foundation, Mr. and Mrs. John H. Remer, Jr., Mrs. Louie White, Devon Dog Show Association, Chester Valley Kennel Club, Dodgen Industries, Inc., Mr. and Mrs. Peter Nero, Penn Ridge Kennel Club, Penn Treaty Kennel Club, Mr. Dan Buckley, Dr. Dan Bleicher, Neshaminy Valley Dog Club (in memory of Elizabeth Irwin), Ms. Nancy Martino, Southern New Jersey German Shepherd Dog Club, Delaware Valley German Shepherd Dog Club (in memory of Betty Jane Irwin), Berks County Dog Training Club, Inc., West Chester Obedience Club, Inc., Lower Bucks County Dog Training Club, Inc., Elizabeth Hayes, Bernese Mountain Dog Club of Watchung, Inc., Mrs. Saul Freedman (in memory of Martha S. Hayes).

Since November the vehicle and Donna Oakley, blood bank director, have "gone on the road" at least twice a week to collect blood from dogs at blood drives organized by individuals and dog clubs. The vehicle makes blood donation more convenient for dogs and their owners, said Donna Oakley, VHUP head nurse and blood bank director.

"The idea of people and their pets helping other people and their pets is what makes Penn's blood donor program so special," Oakley said. "The bloodmobile makes it easier for animals to participate, and increases the supply of blood that is so critical to saving animals' lives."

The blood donor program is an important part of Penn's veterinary transfusion medicine program, according to Dr. Urs Giger, associate professor of medicine and head of the program. "Transfusion medicine, a relatively new field in veterinary medicine, focuses on the safe and effective administration of blood and its components," he said. "During the past 10 years, the number of transfusions has been increasing dramatically because of the advanced medical and surgical care available at VHUP."

The custom-made vehicle is equipped with a hydraulic-lift examining table with a built-in scale, blood testing and collecting equipment, and a bloodbank refrigerator for proper storage of the collected units of blood.

VHUP's blood donor program began in 1987 to meet the needs of the hospital's patients; more than 600 dogs are currently enrolled. Once an animal donates blood, it becomes a member of Penn's blood bank. The idea for the bloodmobile grew because many people wanted to participate in the program, but found it difficult to get to the hospital with their pets, Oakley said.

The hospital performs approximately five transfusions a day, a procedure that has increased the survival rate of critically ill animals. Of the nearly 600 animals that needed blood or blood products last year, about two-thirds survived and were discharged.

"It is vital to remember that very few of those animals would have survived if it hadn't been for the blood or blood products," Giger said.

Canine donors must be one year old, weigh at least 50 pounds, be current on all vaccinations, and not on any medication other than heartworm preventative. A complete blood count and heartworm test are performed prior to donation. An eligible dog can safely donate one pint of blood every six weeks.

"During the procedure, which takes about five minutes, the dogs are relaxed and resting," Oakley said. Afterwards, donors are offered a tasty snack and fresh water, and the owners are given the dog's official blood donor card. The collected blood is tested for infectious agents, the bloodtype is determined, and the blood is separated into different blood components which will be used in transfusions.

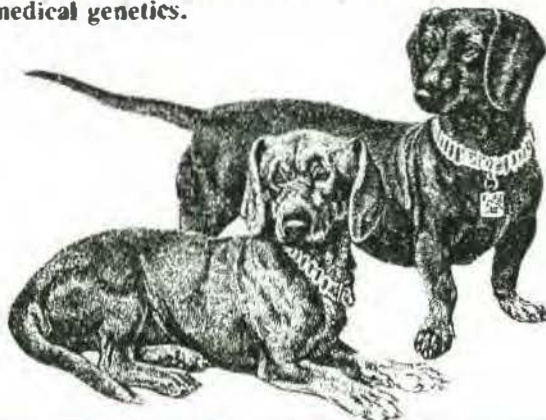
"The bloodmobile not only increases our supply of blood, but also helps us to have on hand blood with different bloodtypes," Giger said.



Dean Andrews presents a commemorative certificate to Mrs. Eve Lloyd Thompson, secretary and treasurer of the Bernice Barbour Foundation, Inc.



Shown here with Dean Andrews are some of the donors who made the bloodmobile possible: Dan Buckley, Abington Police Department, Dean Andrews holding the plaque listing the donors, Mrs. Eve Lloyd Thompson, secretary and treasurer of the Bernice Barbour Foundation, Inc., Ms. Melanie Pease, Southern New Jersey German Shepherd Dog Club, and her dog Tiffany, a frequent donor, Mrs. Lillian Ostermiller, Bernese Mountain Dog Club of Watchung, Donna Oakley, blood bank director, and Dr. Urs Giger, associate professor of medicine and medical genetics.



The Penn Azabu Veterinary School Link

Penn's Veterinary School is known for its "open doors" for veterinarians from other parts of the world. Current residents and interns hail from Australia, Canada, Great Britain, Kenya, the Netherlands, South Africa and Switzerland. Faculty from schools in Europe, Israel and Australia come for brief and long stays to view American veterinary medicine, and Penn faculty cross the oceans to lecture at schools all over the world.

It is not surprising that Penn and the Veterinary School at Azabu University near Tokyo, Japan, have created ties that involve visits by Japanese veterinary students to Penn and trips to Japan by our staff. The latest to travel to Azabu University was Kathleen Dunn, VHUP's social worker.

Ms. Dunn visited the veterinary school at Azabu University in November at the invitation of that institution to lecture on her work here at VHUP. Social work is a relatively unknown profession in Japan and Ms. Dunn's presentations on the relationship of pets and people and the impact a seriously ill or dying pet can have on the owner's life were received with great interest. Ms. Dunn spoke at the veterinary school, made a presentation to the local veterinary association, and met informally with students, interns and residents as well as faculty.

Penn's relationship with the Azabu University veterinary school dates back to the mid-eighties when Dr. Bovee had traveled to Japan to lecture at a Japanese Animal Hospital Association meeting. He met with Azabu faculty and the first student visit was arranged in 1987. In November 1990 a formal Memorandum on Academic Cooperation between the University of Pennsylvania School of Veterinary Medicine and the School of Veterinary Medicine of Azabu University was signed. Both schools agreed to promote cooperation in the areas of research and education and to exchange academic materials, publications and other materials. Both schools will promote exchanges between the two faculties and encourage exchanges between students once a year during summer vacation.

Currently Dr. Yoshi Watanabi, assistant professor of surgery at Azabu's veterinary school, is at VHUP working with Dr. Bovee on the hypertension research project.

Ms. Dunn is looking forward to the visit of the fifth group of approximately 10 Azabu students and their teachers. This summer New Bolton Center will host a few students for the ten day long stay. We are attempting to arrange a pen pal connection between the Azabu veterinary students and the Penn veterinary students before the Azabu vet students arrive in Philadelphia in August 1992.

Quintuplets



Five lambs were born to a two-year old ewe at New Bolton Center. The lambs, four females at six pounds each and one male, at four pounds, and their dam were cared for in the Graham French Neonatal Intensive Care Unit for a few days. The ewe is part of the School's teaching flock.