



News and Views

Volume 24

September 2012

Issue 3

2012

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Headlines

63rd AALAS National Meeting

Minneapolis, MN ♦ November 4-8, 2012
Minneapolis Convention Center



Each fall since 1950, the American Association for Laboratory Animal Science has held its annual National Meeting. During the five days of the meeting, members and nonmembers come together to enjoy the workshops, lectures, poster sessions, and exhibits. The program is designed to have topics relevant to the entire membership. Exhibitors have an opportunity to interact with AALAS members from the academic community, research institutions, government organizations, and commercial companies.

The AALAS National Meeting is the largest gathering in the world of professionals concerned with the production, care, and use of laboratory animals. The meeting format is continuously evolving, but some standard features are listed below.

Minneapolis Update: Trauma Recovery

The Program Committee and President Dr. Kathy Laber are excited to present the spotlight forum for the 2012 National Meeting in Minneapolis, MN: the Trauma Recovery Forum. Those with backgrounds and expertise in research, clinical care, management, and husbandry of animal models used to study trauma recovery are encouraged to submit proposals for abstracts, panel discussions, seminars, special topic lectures, and workshops for the 2012 National Meeting.

Call

 for nominations for **Branch Officers, Board of Directors, and for Branch Awards**
See nomination forms [on pages 3-7](#)

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Member-Submitted Article

Remembering Fechner

C. L. Suell, J. D. Schall, and M. S. Young

The best trainers have “been there, done that”. They tend to be those who are more experienced with whatever situation you find yourself in. They come in all shapes and sizes, and working at Vanderbilt University, I found they also come in different species.

Fechner was the “teacher” in our facility when I joined as a Care Technician. He had a certain distinguished swagger about him; he was confident. Fechner couldn’t speak English, but that didn’t hinder his ability to communicate with us. There was no mistaking his mannerisms; if he didn’t like what you were doing, he’d tell you. But, on the same token, you knew if he approved of your actions.

Fechner was a bonnet macaque.

Fechner was the one that everyone turned to when training any new staff members to do anything dealing with the non-human primates (NHP) in our facility. He knew every routine, and would perform them without hesitation. While some NHP’s had to be coaxed into their freshly cleaned homes, Fechner willingly hopped in. Fechner was famous in our facility for doing what we lovingly dubbed “Fechy-jumps” when about to get his new cage. He would bounce up and down on his top perch repeatedly, excited to show off his cage-changing skills.

I think it is pretty safe to say, Fechner was a favorite of all who worked in the facility. Our favorite “Fechy-ism” was how he learned to get your attention when he wanted treats by clapping his hands together, then motioning for you to give him what you had by gripping his fingers to his palm, repeatedly. If you tried to ignore his persuasion or pretend you hadn’t seen him, he would clap louder and louder, until you gave in.

Fechner was very skilled in all of the visual tasks used for research and he provided great data for the scientists. He was the trainer that many of the new lab members would learn with. Everyone tended to start with Fechner, and once he shaped them, they could move on and be successful in training other NHP’s. When I joined a neuroscience laboratory as a Research Assistant, I too was trained by Fechner.

Sadly, Fechner passed away September 24th, 2011 at the ripe old age of 18. But, that isn’t the end of our dear collaborator. His data has contributed to more than 30 research papers, and he continues to publish papers, with the help of his human counterparts, by utilizing some of the beautiful data he left us.

Following his passing, the laboratory decided to celebrate, not mourn, his life with a party dedicated to his legacy. There now hangs a [plaque](#) in our facility, preserving the memory of Fechner and his continuing contributions by listing each of the publications. Only a handful of people can say they knew a character like Fechner, and I’m not alone in saying I’m proud to be one of them. By knowing Fechner, we all learned a lesson that life is a learning opportunity, even if they come in monkey-shaped packages.

Member-Submitted Article (cont'd)



A plaque celebrates Fechner's life by listing the publications that he made possible.

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