

*Chapter Twenty-Two***Recollections**

There have been many special events, significant challenges and fond memories in the 50-year history of the American Association for Laboratory Animal Science. The editors asked several senior members for their recollections of these events and challenges. This chapter consists of selected responses.

***What is Your Fondest Memory of AALAS?***

My fondest memory is of Joseph Garvey explaining that the good thing about annual meetings is that they happen only once a year. At the banquet in Boston (1961), Mel Rabstein thanked the local committee for the hospitality and warmth extended to the AALAS and stated that he had felt perfectly at home at this banquet, relating that he had been straddling a table leg all evening.

—Gene Bingham

When the Nathan R. Brewer Award was established.

—Nathan Brewer

Attending the annual meetings. My first AALAS meeting was held in Chicago in 1966. I thought it was fantastic. I learned more during that five-day period than in any other comparable period in my life. Annual meetings always provided tremendous learning opportunities and the chance to see old friends and colleagues and to meet new ones.

—Derrell Clark

My fondest memory of AALAS is of escorting my wife to the annual banquet. She was, and still is, a beautiful woman.

—Robert Flynn

“Fondest” means most pleasant to me. First probably was working with Joe Garvey and Bennett Cohen. They were both low-key negotiators, pleasant and polite. Very few played a more effective role in starting the Animal Care Panel. Second was starting the NCAB AALAS in 1960-1962. Charlie Durbin, the first president operated like Cohen & Garvey, and the local businesses gave us great support. The response to early National Meetings was also most rewarding, especially the commercial companies’ support.

—William Gay

On a personal level, my fondest memory of AALAS is of the year of my service as AALAS National President in 1975. It was clearly one of the most enjoyable experiences of my 42-year career in veterinary medicine. On a more global level, I would have to rate the privilege of associating with so many wonderful, enthusiastic and dedicated professional, technical, and administrative persons over the years. Our AALAS National Headquarters staff was superb in handling the business aspects of our young, but rapidly growing, organization. The people at USDA and NIH were eager and willing to work with us and listen to our concerns and advice on the evolving regulatory aspects of laboratory animal medicine.

—Keith Kraner

Without question, my fondest memory is of the outstanding individuals I was privileged to meet and work with during the formative days of The Animal Care Panel/AALAS. Perhaps the most meaningful and consequential activity involved Roger Estep shortly after his election as president of AALAS. At that time I was involved with AAALAC as chairman of the Council on Accreditation. Roger offered to set up several “get acquainted” meetings in the D.C. area. One of the first such activities was a meeting with Dr. Ronald Lamont-Havers, Associate Director for Extramural Affairs at NIH. Chuck McPherson, then with the Animal Resources Branch at NIH accompanied Roger and me. Although unplanned in advance, an opening in the conversation permitted me to make an unplanned suggestion to Dr. Lamont-Havers that the NIH might require institutions receiving support to abide by the *Guide for Care and Use of Laboratory Animals*. The new regulation was subsequently enacted. (Editor’s note—this was the genesis of the NIH/PHS Policy on Humane Care and Use of Laboratory Animals).

—Ed Melby

***What Challenges did you Face That Were Unique to That Time Period?***

The most significant challenge was to overcome the inertia of the committee chairs to accomplish some specific goals that they and I had agreed on. I wasn’t very successful at it.

—Gene Bingham

There were animal housing problems, problems with vendors who were selling animals of questionable quality, but most challenging were problems posed by antivivisectionists.

—Nathan Brewer

Implementing AALAS’ first strategic plan. The need to strengthen *Laboratory Animal Science* as a scientific journal and initiate a publication focused on clinical, technical and management information. Enhancement of computerization, computer networking, and information exchange. The need for a comprehensive assessment of the animal technician certification program.

—Derrell Clark

The major challenge facing me, at the time AALAS was founded, was the need to run long-term, length-of-life, toxicity studies on mice when the only available animals were sick and heavily parasitized.

—Robert Flynn

For me this time was 1956 to 1968. First was raising money to support the central office. Joe Garvey was a most prudent manager, and early presidents were good at twisting arms. Second was selling the importance of excellent and well-funded animal care programs to biomedical research managers. Some were “Scrooge revisited.” Third was the many infectious diseases that laboratory animals had in their colonies. Many of these were not life threatening to the animals, but disastrous to research data. The emergence of laboratory animal medicine and excellent facilities and disease control programs were extremely important to the success of the field.

—William Gay

Some of the more important challenges of the 1960s and ’70s were those related to defining and developing training standards and programs for professional and technical personnel working with research animals. We were largely inventing the field at the time; there was little in the way of solid scientific literature to reference and we were still trying to find our own identity as laboratory animal veterinarians and technicians. As I survey the status of the field now, it seems clear that a lot of things were done right. An important point to recognize in all this is that AALAS was the central stabilizing and focusing organization that kept these growing efforts on track.

—Keith Kraner

Prior to enactment of the Animal Welfare Act, there were essentially no “teeth” to stimulate institutions to seriously improve their animal care facilities and programs. Those of us who became involved had to basically demonstrate to our respective institutions the importance to animal research of disease prevention and control, husbandry, nutrition, etc., while concurrently mounting our own competitive research programs to attain recognition and acceptance by our peers.

—Ed Melby

### ***Describe Some of the Most Important Changes in Technology and Animal Care.***

Better anesthetics and analgesics and more extensive use of them. The continuing better understanding and identification of pathogens of laboratory animals. Certainly, the development of the ELISA was instrumental in these gains. The development of the transgenic and knock-out technology and cryopreservation are important technological gains that have moved biomedical research forward with important gains.

—Gene Bingham

Probably the most important changes were: 1. Those of housing (better ventilation and temperature control, more space per animal), 2. Better animals made available by knowledge obtained from germ-free animal research, 3. Better care of animals because of better educated animal caretakers, 4. Increased appreciation of animal caretaker improvement by institutional authorities.

—Nathan Brewer

1. Advancement in knowledge about animal care and use
2. Improvement in facilities and equipment
3. Inclusion of concern about animals’ mental and psychological state along with physical health in considerations of animal well-being
4. Move toward performance standards

—Derrell Clark

The most important changes in technology and animal care were all related to the development of colonies of mice and rats free of most parasites and pathogens. The development of small, pilot, germ-free colonies showed that rodents could live, for at least a short time, without a bacterial flora. Next, germ-free animals were given a bacterial “cocktail” to enhance their ability to live in the non-sterile world. From there, small colonies of mice and rats, free of most pathogens (“specific-pathogen-free”), were developed.

—Robert Flynn

The most important changes were disease control, facility design and management, and recently molecular genetics. Genetics was always important and was used, but the new molecular biology has given us short cuts and precision in making hereditary changes never before possible. This question will no doubt generate lists of diagnostic tests, specific-pathogen-free animal colonies, building isolation and traffic control methods, sterilized or irradiated food, and automatic watering devices.

—William Gay

I believe the most important changes in technology and animal care are related to the caliber and training of the professional and technical personnel who carry out the day-to-day animal care programs. Also, it is clear that those individuals who have developed advanced technology in caging and housing materials and environmental systems deserve special recognition. Finally, the scientists among us who have identified and characterized the vast array of diseases and other factors that can influence the outcome of animal experiments have been of incalculable value.

—Keith Kraner

At one point in time the Fischer rat was used extensively in geriatric research. The basic premise (or finding) had been that the strain had an average life span of 15–18 months. Those rats, when submitted to necropsy, were found to be “walking museums” of rat pathology which shortened their life span. To prove the point, we set up a parallel life time study, by caesarian deriving and barrier sustaining a colony on the premises of a commercial breeder. Those animals nearly doubled their life spans, not only proving the point, but significantly altering the design of subsequent geriatric research on rats.

—Ed Melby

### ***What Were One or Two of the Major Events That Changed Laboratory Animal Science?***

Technological gains. Education: AALAS certification programs, postdoctoral training of veterinarians. Laboratory animal medicine being recognized as a specialty by the AVMA. The Animal Welfare Act—we can thank our adversaries.

—Gene Bingham

The establishment of organizations dedicated to the improvement of laboratory animal care. The knowledge gained from research involving germ-free animals.

—Nathan Brewer

Societal concern and sensitivity toward animals. Legislation.

—Derrell Clark

The major event that changed laboratory animal science (from my point of view) was the development of large commercial colonies of laboratory mice and rats free of all parasites and most pathogens.

—Robert Flynn

The two major events were development of training programs to provide professional/technical personnel who could make a difference in quality animal care, and the second was federal legislation beginning in 1966. The first was the work initiated by the laboratory animal community to provide properly trained professional and technical staff. The improvements in animal health care and technical training were well underway before 1966. When the American College of Laboratory Animal Medicine had been formed, local branches were training technical staff. These two initiatives by the laboratory animal community have had more to do with the quality of research animal care today than any other event in recent history. The second was the USDA Animal Welfare Act of 1966, 1970, and

1976. This legislation put the biomedical community managers on notice that there would be public oversight of their use of animals and that they needed to support the best possible programs. Thus money became available at all levels of support to build the facilities and support professional and technical training to meet that need.

—William Gay

In my opinion, there were clearly two major developments that have had enormous influence on laboratory animal science. The first is the work of pioneer commercial laboratory animal breeders who have used the most advanced scientific and technical concepts and methods available to provide us with the magnificent laboratory animals we have today. The second event was the passage of the original Animal Welfare Act, as well as its later amended versions. This legislation was the lever used in many, many institutions to get the resources needed to upgrade the facilities and personnel caring for laboratory animals and to rein in some of the unacceptable methods used by a few investigators.

—Keith Kraner

Introduction of cesarean origin barrier sustained rodents. Implementation by the National Institutes of Health of the policy requiring institutions to adhere to requirements outlined in the "Guide for the Care and Use of Laboratory Animals."

—Ed Melby