

AAV Member Spotlight: Tracy Bennett, BS, DVM, Dipl ABVP-Avian

What was the first bird job you ever had?

When I graduated from veterinary school at Washington State in 1994, I immediately started practice with the late Bob Shelley, DVM in the Northgate area in Seattle. Bob had been practicing in avian medicine since he graduated from WSU in 1980. He was an excellent mentor and really got me through my first year in practice. It's interesting because after having our practice in the Fremont and Ballard neighborhoods we recently purchased a larger building and moved our practice to the Northgate area. I feel I've come full circle.

Most memorable AAV experience or contribution

I think my most memorable AAV conference was my first one in Tampa, Florida in 1996 I believe. A bunch of us from the Seattle area (plus 1 from the Midwest) crammed into a condo at the resort where the conference was located. I remember staying up late listening to the stories of the older vets and really starting to appreciate the community of avian vets I was a part of. I also remember doing the Macarena after a few drinks at the President's Reception with the late Skip Nelson, DVM and many others!

What was the last interesting avian medical or surgical issue you dealt with in your work?

Recently, I was treating a Auger Buzzard for an infection which inflamed his kidneys. Auger Buzzards are from Africa and they are beautiful birds. The funny thing I learned is that they are used for the mascot of the Seattle Seahawks. I think its hilarious that they got a bird from Africa to be our mascot instead of using the Osprey which is truly ubiquitous in this part of the world and is actually a "Sea Hawk." The buzzard recovered well and is doing fine by the way!

If you had not chosen your present career, what would you be doing?

I think I would have gotten my PhD in Biology and been a researcher in ecology and behavior. I went to graduate school in this area for 2 years before I changed my mind and applied to vet school. I'm sure glad I did.

What was your favorite class or activity in vet school/vet tech school/college?

My favorite part of vet school was the class where we got to put our arms up the cows behind. I had that class in the winter and it is really cold in Pullman, I still remember how nice and warm my arm felt. Just kidding, my favorite parts of vet school were the two avian externships I got to do in Oregon and southern California. I really learned a lot and they helped prepare me for my career in avian medicine.

Describe an anecdote that would be of interest to your colleagues

My husband to be and I spent part of Christmas Eve our senior year in vet school pulling rotten meat out of a Red-tailed Hawk's crop and we thought "welcome to your new life."



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