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I graduated from the University of Pennsylvania Veterinary School in 1968. My knowledge of avian medicine was gained from the 4 pages in Current Veterinary Therapy, Stroud's Digest on the Diseases of Birds (written by the Birdman of Alcatraz) and Dr. Margaret Petrak's Disease of Cage and Aviary Birds. While helpful, we were still in kindergarten UNTIL 1980. I can still feel the excitement, sharing, and the camaraderie of the first AAV meetings. These meetings were some of the highlights of my career.

Dr. Greg Harrison introduced us to safe inhalant (Halothane) anesthesia and venipuncture. We were amazed at the surprising amount of blood that we could safely take from a bird. Greg's dear wife was always so welcoming, helpful and supportive to everyone. The microsurgery course given by a Texas hand surgeon was terrific. Now we felt more comfortable with anesthesia and surgery.

Many contributed at each annual meeting of our "family" that began with 100 of us but then rapidly increased. Dr. Ted Lafeber and Dr. Bob Altman were very experienced and shared their knowledge and enthusiasm with us especially with cases and drugs that they found helpful. We went home from these annual meetings more confident that we would make a difference in the health, comfort and happiness of the feathered beings' life journey. We were also mindful that birds are very social, and a cage was not a proper existence for birds. How we addressed this varied among veterinarians.

We are very indebted to Dr. Ron Spink for organizing the first AAV meeting in 1980 in Kalamazoo, Michigan. We would also like to thank him for designing and selling the first hospital cage that supplied heat and access for oxygen and nebulizing the bird. It was called the AVI-VET. Mine is still working after 45 years!! The Ellman electrosurgery unit purchased at the early meeting also contributed to our confidence, surgical skills and hemostasis. It still works and is over 40 years old!!

We also knew it was a good day when we received the AAV newsletter in the mail. It was created by Greg and Linda Harrison. So many shared cases and experiences that made us better avian veterinarians and the newsletter would, with each issue, renew the excitement and wonderful closeness of our avian veterinary family.

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