

HELLO TO ALL!

I hope this finds you well. We're nearly to the end of an exciting year of growth for the Animal Physical Therapy Special Interest Group and about to embark on an even more exciting future.

I hope that all of you have participated in the 2007 Orthopaedic Section and APTSIG elections. Our officers and committee chairpersons have much responsibility to our membership and are anxious for your input and volunteer assistance with upcoming projects.

Recently, APTSIG members lectured at a number of important professional conventions and symposia. These include the American College of Veterinary Surgeons Symposium in Washington, DC and the International Symposium for Physical Therapy and Rehabilitation in Veterinary Medicine in Arnhem, The Netherlands in October 2006. APTSIG officers and committee chairs in attendance at these meetings also met to discuss other issues of importance to the APTSIG membership.

We have been in frequent contact with our international counterparts and have begun the initial process of forming an international organization for physical therapists and assistants in animal rehabilitation. Our eventual goal is recognition as a subgroup of the World Congress for Physical Therapy (WCPT). We will be sure to keep you updated on this progress.

The APTSIG Strategic Plan has been approved and is being implemented, as you can see by the buzz of activity within the SIG. We will re-evaluate the Plan and our progress so far at our Business Meeting at CSM 2007 in Boston, Massachusetts.

We have initiated an official Practice Analysis to define and determine the role of the physical therapist in animal rehabilitation in the United States. Many of you will be invited to participate in this Analysis as we ask you to complete surveys and interviews. Our goal is to complete this Analysis in approximately 2 years.

The Orthopaedic Section has given its approval in our movement towards establishing a *Journal of Animal Rehabilitation*. We are currently in search of co-editors (a physical therapist and a veterinarian), an editorial board, and reviewers. We hope to 'publish' our first issue in 2009. I'm certain that you'll hear more regarding this effort in the near future.

Our education committee chairperson, Gina Epifano, has an exciting program planned for CSM 2007 in Boston, Massachusetts. Our programming and business meeting are scheduled for Thursday February 15, 2007 and will include presentations on canine orthopaedics, sports medicine, and rehabilitation by Sherman Canapp, DVM, DACVS and Laurie Edge-Hughes, PT, as well as your APT-SIG executive committee. We hope to see you there!

Till we meet at CSM!

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MANUAL THERAPY EXPERIENCES

Steve Strunk, PT

Long ago, a childhood friend told me the reason her father bought a dog for her and her brothers was to teach them the attributes of compassion, kindness, and caring. Albert Schweitzer wrote that true ethical behavior has as a foundation reverence for all life. Someone whom I consider a hero of modern times, Jane Goodall, credits her childhood canine companion, Rex with inspiring her to study animal behavior. Undoubtedly many people choose career paths influenced by their experiences with and love of animals; perhaps many of you. So it was for me as well.

My first experiences in manual therapy techniques were practiced by intuition in my early teens during the mid-'60s, treating my dog Tippy, a very active male Border collie/beagle mix. He had a propensity for throwing himself out of whack, requiring attention for various sprains/strains, and other physical maladies. To sooth his conditions, I developed techniques that I would later come to know as soft tissue and joint mobilization/manipulation.

In the mid-70s, I began studying Yoga for stress reduction. Some of the stretches from Yoga and some I created were adapted into a routine for treating my dog, including 'downward facing dog.' These were combined with manual techniques, involving controlled motion very similar to therapeutic applications I would later learn of and those that continue to be developed and studied.

A whole new world opened up to me when I began studying Tai chi chuan (Taijiquan) in the late '70s. This included not only interest in other Chinese martial arts and physical culture, but forms of bodywork including Moshou, Anmo, Tuina, acupressure, and Japanese cousins Anma and Shiatsu, energy work including Chi Kung (Qigong), and other aspects of traditional Chinese medicine. I incorporated some of the manual therapy into treatment of my pets. In addition, the slow, balanced weight shifting movements of Tai chi proved invaluable in treating one of my dogs that developed ataxia. This involved manual contacts similar to what I would later learn and study more in depth as PNF and NDT.

My greatest joy, first as a PT student and now as a practicing PT, is to learn new manual techniques. Naturally, as soon as possible, I practice whatever I have learned on my animal friends. Some of my favorites come from the teachings of osteopathic manual medicine. I find the exaggerated, indirect, and direct techniques applicable to the spectrum of somatic dysfunction from acute, subacute, to chronic. Also, perhaps attributable to my studies of mind-body medicine, I continue to combine the esoteric with the research-based as representative of the art and science, respectively, of manual physical therapy. The result is what my great friend Mike Marks, PT refers to as 'certified eclectic.'