



# THE CORNER INFORMER

The Newsletter of The Southeastern Michigan Veterinary Medical Association

Volume 32 Issue 1 March 2026

## OUR PRESIDENT'S ADDRESS

We began 2026 together at our annual SEMVMA Membership Celebration on January 7 at the Birmingham Community House. It was wonderful to reconnect with fellow members and spend an evening sharing our successes, challenges, and much-needed laughter. During the event, we welcomed new members and recognized recipients of the Veterinary Technician Scholarships, Veterinary Debt Reduction Scholarships, and our Lifetime Members.

It was a privilege to honor Dr. Steve Bailey, Dr. Bruce Baker, Dr. Renee Riepe, and Dr. Barbara Scheffler for achieving Lifetime Membership in 2025. We also welcomed our newest council member, Dr. Ashley Brazen, and extended sincere thanks to Dr. Kathy Christy as she completed her dedicated term of service on council.

A special highlight of the evening was recognizing Barb Locricchio for her Outstanding Service to SEMVMA during her tenure as Administrative Secretary. Barb served as a friendly voice, helping hand, and steady guide for both our members and the board. While she is greatly missed, we are deeply grateful for the time she spent mentoring our new Administrative Secretary, Emilie Evenson, ensuring a smooth transition and setting Emilie up for success as she begins her role supporting SEMVMA and the veterinary community.

We concluded the evening with plenty of laughter as Dr. Steven Meyer, husband of past president Dr. Michelle Meyer, shared reflections on life as a veterinary spouse. Through stories of veterinary school experiences, sample drop-offs, and the occasional kitchen-table procedure, he offered a humorous and heartfelt perspective on supporting someone in our profession. Dr. Meyer also expressed his admiration for veterinarians and his sincere hopes for the continued health and well-being of our profession. Thank you to Michelle and Steve for their openness and honesty in sharing their experiences.

I would also like to extend my gratitude to Dr. Kaitlin Lonc for her outstanding leadership throughout 2025. Under Kaitlin's guidance, SEMVMA strengthened communication with Michigan State University to help mentor and support new veterinarians entering practice in southeastern Michigan. She also championed our Community Outreach Committee, encouraging youth to

explore careers in veterinary medicine while fostering mentorship and engagement among our members.

Our 2025-2026 Continuing Education seminars for veterinarians included anesthesia with Dr. Jane Quandt, cardiology with Dr. Saki Kadotani, respiratory disease with Dr. Stephan Carey and orthopedics with Dr. Ross Palmer. We will conclude our veterinarian seminars with internal medicine with Dr. Patty Lathan on March 25th. The technician CE included anesthesia with Dr. Quandt, cardiology with Tabitha Brown, LVT, brachycephalic anesthesia with Dr. Kate Cummings and behavior with Kristen Klebba, LVT, KPA, CTP, VTS. The final technician seminar will be on Fear Free techniques with Heidi Reuss-Lamky, LVT, VTS on March 25th. All seminars are available as in person or virtual-live via Zoom. Please remember to review the information including note availability when confirming with Emilie Evenson. Our upcoming CE topics for the 2026-2027 year include oncology, nutrition, dentistry and feline medicine (including new treatments for FIP). Sara Nunimaker, LVT our technician representative on council is continuing to encourage technician watch parties to help



*Barb Easton*

build our community.

The first months of 2026 have already felt eventful, bringing continued shifts in policy and economic conditions that affect our clients, teams, and colleagues. As leaders within the One Health framework, veterinarians play a vital role in educating our communities, supporting public health, and addressing misinformation. I encourage all members to stay informed by reviewing the MVMA weekly updates, particularly regarding legislation impacting telemedicine, mid-level veterinary practitioners, and public health policy.

Your knowledge and professional voice matter. Please consider engaging with your state representatives and senators to support policies that protect animal welfare, public health, and the future of veterinary medicine. Now more than ever, it is important that we support one another and remain actively engaged within our communities.

Thank you for your continued dedication to our profession and to SEMVMA.

— *Barb Easton*

**Southeastern Michigan  
Veterinary Medical  
Association**

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Office Hours  
Monday–Friday  
9 AM–12 PM

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1-248-651-6332

Emilie Evenson  
Administrative Secretary

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Dave Smith  
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Emily Socks, DVM

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## 2025/2026 CONTINUING EDUCATION

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### VETERINARY PROGRAM

03/25/2026 – Dr. Patty Lathan – Internal Medicine

*Sponsored by: Dechra*

Sign-in for the conference begins at 8:30 am, with the seminar beginning at 9:00 am. Continental breakfast and full lunch are included. The seminars will conclude at 5:00 pm. Printed notes are available upon request for an additional \$10.

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### TECHNICIAN PROGRAM

03/25/2026 – Heidi Reuss-Lamky, LVT, VTS (Anesthesia and Analgesia), (Surgery), CFVP Elite FFCP (Veterinary) – Implementing Fear Free Anesthesia Practice

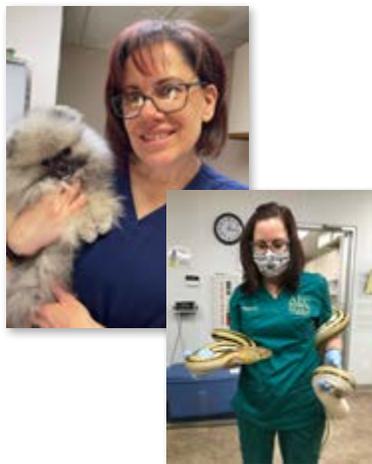
Sign-in and dinner for the conference begins at 5:45 pm with the seminar starting at 6:30 pm. The seminars will conclude at 8:30 pm. For each SEMVMA member in your practice, one technician or staff member can attend each of the seminars for FREE. The cost for additional staff members or for the staff of non-SEMVMA members is our regular charge of \$40. You must RSVP to ensure a meal and proceedings. Seminars will be held at the Management Education Center – 811 West Square Lake Road, Troy, MI, (248) 879-2456

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You can attend our meetings in person or virtual, your choice! Please contact the SEMVMA Office to register (248) 651-6332 [adminsevmva@semvma.com](mailto:adminsevmva@semvma.com)

## TECHNICIAN SPOTLIGHT

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**Kelly Blatz** has been an LVT for over 20 years, working in zoo medicine, emergency, exotic practice and general practice. She also taught in the vet tech program at Baker College. She is always learning and attending events to continue her education. Even if it means taking in bottle babies, she has dedicated her life to the field and everything it entails.

## INVEST IN THE FUTURE THROUGH MENTORSHIP

### Guiding Veterinary Students Toward CVA Certification

SEMVMA has developed a program to guide students in achieving certification as a Veterinary Assistant.

For more information and tools for mentoring students in your area on how to start a fulfilling career in Veterinary Medicine, please contact SEMVMA council member, Pierre DePorre at [pdeporre@deporrevet.com](mailto:pdeporre@deporrevet.com)

## SAVE THESE DATES! UPCOMING ACTIVITIES

*Look for additional details on our website*



### Bark & Brew 5K

Benefiting Leader Dogs for the Blind

Click or scan the QR code to the left to join the SEMVMA team.



### Annual Golf Outing 9 AM

**Clinic Picnic**  
Jimmy Johns Field • 4 PM



## MEMBERSHIP COMMITTEE REPORT

Please join us in welcoming the following new members to SEMVMA...

**Dr. Kimberly Lucic, St George, 2014 – Westarbor Animal Hospital, Ann Arbor, MI**

**Dr. Stephanie Pearson, MSU, 2020 – Veterinary Emergency Service West, Plymouth, MI**

**Dr. Susanna Rori, MSU, 2015 – Veterinary Emergency Group, Northville, MI**

The 2026 membership committee is composed of Pierre DePorre, DVM [pdeporre@deporrevet.com](mailto:pdeporre@deporrevet.com), and Barbra Easton, DVM [easton@vet-vision.com](mailto:easton@vet-vision.com). Please feel free to contact any of us if you have any questions. If you know of a veterinarian in the area who is not a member but may be interested in joining, please contact a member of the membership committee or the SEMVMA office and we will be happy to send them information.

# MEMBERSHIP CELEBRATION

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Thank you to everyone who joined us this year for our annual SEMVMA Celebration on January 7 at the Birmingham Community House. Even though Faithful Companion could not be in attendance with us due to a regional meeting; they still generously sponsored the bar which we appreciate year after year. They were sorry to miss the event, but wanted to pass along that they hope everyone had a wonderful time. Thank you, Faithful Companion!

The evening started with Dr. Kaitlin Lonc introducing and installing the newly elected officers and board members, prior to her handing over the gavel for 2026 to Dr. Barb Easton. For those who could not attend, our most notable changes to the board included installing Dr. Ashley Brazen as a newly elected council member. While the irreplaceable Dr. Kathy Christy completed her term on council. I had the honor of handing out our member awards and this year's award for Outstanding Contribution to SEMVMA went to Barb Locricchio who is now enjoying a well-deserved retirement after all

her years of service as SEMVMA's executive secretary.

Our technician scholarship winners were all in attendance this year. 1st place for their essay submission went to Elizabeth Lauer from MCC. 2nd and 3rd place winners from MSU were Elizabeth Derkatch and Janina Kavetsky, respectively.

Our debt reduction winners were also announced, and they were Katlyn Hillman a 2024 graduate of Ontario Vet College who now works at Kimball Animal Hospital and Arianna Troia a 2025 graduate of MSU who works at Briarwood Veterinary Hospital. Thank you to everyone who applied! Remember to pass the word to your staff members or students you may know that these funding opportunities are available on a yearly basis.

For those of you that attended this year, thank you for making it a great evening! We hope that you'll join us next year for our celebration at a new location (to be announced later this year)!

*-Dr. Becky Diellin*



*Our technician scholarship winners: Liz Lauer (1st place), Elizabeth Derkatch (2nd place), and Janina Kavetsky (3rd place) with Dr. Kathy Christy who presented their awards.*

*New SEMVMA Members Dr. Linda Okonkowski of MOVES, Dr. Lindsay Curtis of VES Plymouth, Dr. Emily Brook of Animal Clinic of Sterling Heights, and Dr. Arianna Troia of Briarpointe Veterinary Hospital being sworn in and welcomed by Dr. Barb Easton.*



*Barb Locricchio accepting her award for Outstanding Contribution to SEMVMA having recently retired from her many years as SEMVMA's Administrative Secretary from immediate past president, Dr. Becky Dietlin.*



*Dr. Barb Easton leading the Membership Celebration as the newly elected President.*



*Dr. Steven Meyer was our guest speaker sharing his perspective as a veterinary spouse.*



*Michelle Meyer, DVM and her husband, Steven Meyer, PhD.*



*Dr. Tari Kern and her husband, Chris Mocerì enjoying the evening at the Birmingham Community House.*



*Mrs. Sandy and Dr. Tom Kavanagh with our retired Administrative Secretary, Barb Locricchio.*

# QUICK TIPS FOR FELINE OSTEOARTHRITIS

**By Lauren Retallack, DVM, MBA, DACVS-SA, CVPP**  
**Oakland Veterinary Referral Services**

## RECOGNIZING PAIN IN CATS: FROM SUBTLE SIGNS TO SMART SURVEILLANCE

Cats are notoriously skilled at concealing pain, often displaying only vague or nonspecific behavioral changes. Traditional indicators—such as decreased grooming, reluctance to jump, hiding, or changes in appetite—can be easily missed. A combination of clinical observation, validated scoring tools, and owner input remains essential.

Feline Grimace scale	CSU Feline Acute Pain Scale	Glasgow Composite Measure Pain Scale
In clinic or at home, *app available	In clinic or at home	In clinic is easier, *could be used at home with appropriate client education
Uses facial markers to determine overall comfort	Uses color coded behavioral analysis for pain scoring	In depth, quantitative checklist
Does not localize pain, could be difficult for clients to use	Does not localize pain, mostly behavioral analysis	Requires client education for at home use

Discussing a normal routine with clients and their feline family members. Encourage owners to adopt a daily routine with their feline pets, equivalent to taking a dog for a walk daily. For example, play with a certain toy for 10 minutes daily. If the behavior changes, like the cat does not want to play, or plays for a shorter amount of time, this can be an indication of pain. Consider utilizing technology: indoor cameras for activity when alone, activity trackers (GPS or accelerometers), movement triggered toys and feeding dishes, etc.

## TREATMENT OPTIONS:

Don't forget the basics! Simple techniques like icing and warm compressing—though often under utilized—can reduce inflammation and promote comfort when applied safely at home. Thermal support via heated beds or pads helps ease stiffness and improve rest, especially in arthritic or geriatric cats.

New modalities to consider:

Extracorporeal shockwave therapy (ESWT)	Intra-articular injections	Pulsed electromagnetic field (PEMF)
In clinic	In clinic	In clinic or at home
Focused sound waves cause micro-trauma, leading to angiogenesis and healing	Variety of intra-articular medications: steroids, hyaluronic acid, *Arthramid® incorporates into the joint capsule/synovium	Low level magnetic fields reduce inflammation and pain
2-3 doses spread over 2-3 weeks can have a prolonged effect. Repeat PRN.	Duration depends on the product. Steroids have a short duration of action (1-2 months), while Arthramid may be a once-in-a-lifetime injection	Short duration of action (hours). Works best when done regularly, but would require special equipment (pet beds, Assisi loop, etc.).

Opioids remain central to feline analgesia in the hospital setting, but selection matters!

Butorphanol	Buprenorphine	Methadone	Fentanyl
Mu antagonist, kappa agonist	Partial mu agonist	Full mu agonist	Full mu agonist
Best for sedation only, minimal analgesia	Decent analgesia, mild to moderate pain	Excellent analgesia, moderate to severe pain	Excellent analgesia, moderate to severe pain

Fast acting Short duration	Up to 30 minutes for full effect (slow onset) Duration of action 4-6 hours	Fast acting Duration 4-6+ hours	Fast acting Short duration Consider using as a CRI
Safe for elderly, may need to follow up with additional analgesia	Not reversible! May not be the safest option for elderly or very sick patients	Excellent analgesia, reversible NMDA antagonism Great choice for painful, elderly or sick patients Not useful for at home administration	Excellent analgesia, reversible Titrate CRI to an effective dose Not useful for at home administration

NSAIDs are highly effective for many types of feline pain, but metabolic sensitivities demand careful use. However, they both carry specific labels from the FDA now.

Onsior	Meloxicam
Label: 2 mg/kg SQ or PO Q 24h x 3 days	Label: Single 0.3 mg/kg dose SQ prior to surgery
Injectable or palatable tablet	Injectable or liquid
Label allows for repeated dosing	Label allows for ONLY one dose given SQ prior to surgery. *Oral or continued use is off-label and against the FDA's "black box" warning.

Gabapentin, Pregabalin, and Amantadine

Gabapentin	Pregabalin	Amantadine
Synthetic GABA analogue	Synthetic GABA analogue	NMDA receptor antagonist
10 mg/kg PO Q 8-24h	1-3 mg/kg PO Q 8-24h	3-5 mg/kg PO Q 12-24h
Sedation, ataxia, most common for first 3 days or at more frequent dosing	Sedation, ataxia, most common for first 3 days or at more frequent dosing	May cause some mild GI signs
If side effects are too much, consider trying pregabalin	Controlled	Will take 3-5+ days for full effect; works best when given regularly with another analgesic

## KETAMINE: SUBCUTANEOUS AND IV USE

Ketamine is a potent NMDA antagonist and dissociative anesthetic with excellent analgesic properties, especially for wind-up pain and central sensitization.

- Subcutaneous ketamine (0.5–2 mg/kg SQ; commonly 1 mg/kg) is ideal for awake, painful cats. It offers longer duration and fewer immediate side effects than IV use, making it a great option for outpatient chronic pain management. It can be repeated monthly or PRN.
- IV ketamine can be administered as a bolus (0.5–2 mg/kg) or CRI (2–4 mcg/kg/min). It's particularly useful during surgical recovery or in combination with other CRIs (e.g., fentanyl-ketamine). IV use requires inpatient monitoring but provides rapid onset and flexible titration.

Side effects include tachycardia, hypertension, altered sensory responses, and increased intraocular pressure at high doses. Despite these, ketamine is safe for patients with mitral valve disease, HCM, and seizure disorders.

## TAKEAWAY

Combining established protocols with new technologies allows for individualized, compassionate care. Whether managing acute surgical pain or chronic conditions, a multimodal approach ensures better outcomes for feline patients—and peace of mind for their caregivers.

## -2025 ACADEMY MEMBERS-

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Gurpreet Kaur - North Hills Veterinary Hospital  
Tari Kern - Pawsitive Steps Rehabilitation and Sports Medicine  
Molly Lynch - Ann Arbor Cat Clinic  
Michelle Meyer - Serenity Animal Hospital  
Karen Michalski - Serenity Animal Hospital  
John Parker - Briarpointe Veterinary Clinic  
Julie Sherman - Serenity Animal Hospital  
David Smith - Leader Dogs for the Blind  
Emily Socks - Oakland Hills Veterinary Hospital  
Stephanie Tallis - Animal Medical Center of Troy  
Laura Van de Grift - Oakland Hills Veterinary Hospital  
Jennifer Weng - Oakland Veterinary Referral Services  
Kelly Wilson - Leader Dogs for the Blind  
Andrea Zelten - Jeffrey Animal Hospital

The Southeastern Michigan Veterinary Medical Association developed the SEMVMA Academy to celebrate the commitment of veterinarians to the continual improvement of their professional knowledge and competence achieved through continuing education. The Academy is the first institution in the State of Michigan to recognize and reward veterinarians for their commitment to advance their continuing education. Academy members must have earned at least 50 hours of continuing education.

## TEAM SPOTLIGHT

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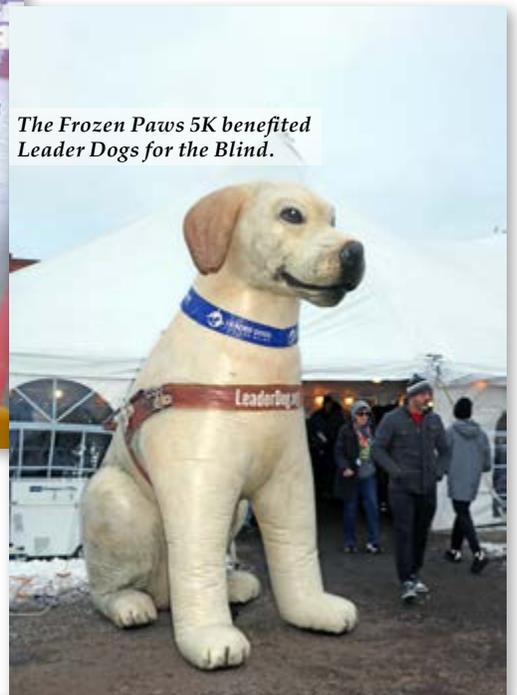
**Megan Coppa** - tech assistant at Vet Vision. Megan is an amazing teammate who works to make a great environment for her patients and co-workers. Megan shines in patient care and handling and has focused her continuing education in fear free practices and the handling of fearful/aggressive patients. She continually advocates for ways to make patients more comfortable for exams and procedures. Megan is known for helping her co-workers find joy and laughter in daily practice. Outside of work, Megan enjoys an eclectic variety of live music and spending time with friends and family.

# SEMVMA TAKES ON THE FROZEN PAW 5K

The 2026 Frozen Paw 5K took place on January 18, bringing runners and walkers to Downtown Rochester for a spirited winter race. Several SEMVMA members joined the event, showing support for a cause close to the veterinary community. The race benefited Leader Dogs for the Blind. Participants warmed up afterward at the Rochester Fire House, where a pancake breakfast offered a cozy finish to the chilly morning.



*Bobbi Foster, LVT, Barb Easton, DVM, Dave Smith, DVM, and Melissa Weisse, the CEO of Leader Dog for the Blind after the Frozen Paws 5K.*



*The Frozen Paws 5K benefited Leader Dogs for the Blind.*

With over 700 registrants, the 2026 Frozen Paw 5K raised over \$75,000 for Leader Dogs for the Blind. There were 413 pints of beer, 272 cups of coffee, and over 600 donuts served. Seventy tours of the Leader Dog Campus were provided.



*Racers preparing for the Frozen Paws 5K.*

# OPPORTUNITIES

## VETERINARIANS

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## NEWSLETTER ADVERTISEMENT POLICY

In order to preserve the educational and informative purpose of the SEMVMA newsletter, the SEMVMA council adopts the following policy regarding advertising. Ads should be submitted to [adminsemvma@semvma.com](mailto:adminsemvma@semvma.com)

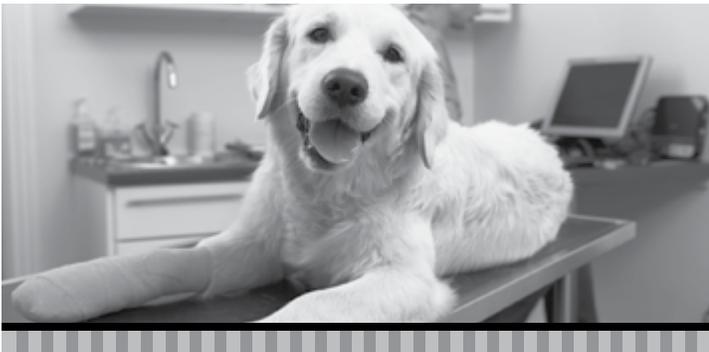
Practices or businesses with a common owner shall be treated as one business or practice for the purpose of this policy (referred to as "Common Owner Business or Practice"). A common owner is a person or entity which owns 5% or more of an entity or practice. Shareholders or sole proprietors of an entity or practice shall be considered an owner along with the entity that holds an interest in the business or practice.

Corporate ¼ page ads are limited to one business, owner or corporation for each issue of the SEMVMA newsletter. This is in the interest of having the newsletter inform the association and not overwhelm them with ads. The SEMVMA council may modify or waive the application of this policy on a case by case basis at the discretion of the council.

Ads will run only once unless a request is submitted to the Administrative Secretary to run longer. Classified ads are \$15 for 60 words or less and \$25 for 61–100 words. Corporate ¼ page ads are \$135 per issue or \$500 for four issues. Payment is due at the time of the initial ad placement.

SEMVMA Members interested in providing Relief Veterinary Services can advertise in the newsletter at no charge. The classified ads must follow the same guidelines regarding number of words and deadline restrictions as all other classified ads. If you are a SEMVMA member interested in placing a classified ad, please contact 888-SEMVMA-5 or [www.adminsemvma@semvma.com](http://www.adminsemvma@semvma.com).

Newsletters are published quarterly: on March 15th, June 15th, September 15th and December 15th. All ads should be submitted to the SEMVMA office by the 15th of the month preceding publication.



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## Pawsitive Steps

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*Thank you for your ongoing support and for being part of our journey—your trust inspires us every day. We're excited to celebrate these milestones with you and committed to continuing to serve you and your pet-owning families with exceptional, personalized and affordable care in the years ahead!*

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**TO:**