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ALUMNI E-NEWS

May/June 2020



Understanding and Combating COVID-19

Researchers at the UW School of Veterinary Medicine continue to lead efforts to understand and thwart COVID-19. Professor **Yoshihiro Kawaoka** led a study published earlier this month in the *New England Journal of Medicine* reporting that in the laboratory, cats can readily **become infected with SARS-CoV-2**, the virus that causes COVID-19, and may be able to pass the virus to other cats. Kawaoka is also helping lead an effort to **create a human COVID-19 vaccine** called CoroFlu. **Sandra Newbury DVM'03**, director of the UW-Madison Shelter Medicine Program, is leading research to test animal shelter cats that might have previously been exposed to human COVID-19 cases, and has worked to develop **recommendations for shelters** housing potentially exposed pets. In addition, Professor **Thomas Friedrich** and his team are **tracking genetic changes** in the novel coronavirus that occur as it spreads from person to person. Preliminary data from this research suggests that travel

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restrictions and physical distancing guidelines are working in Wisconsin -- something Friedrich discussed in a recent UW Now Livestream on COVID-19 transmission and testing.

[Watch the recording.](#)

School News

The latest updates on research, faculty and staff, and other happenings at the school.

On May 9 the school celebrated its newest alumni, the Class of 2020, with a virtual graduation and investiture ceremony, [viewable on the SVM website](#).

The UW School of Veterinary Medicine's involvement in the Vaccination Against Canine Cancer study, the largest interventional clinical trial in the history of veterinary medicine, is featured in a new [Big Ten Network LiveBig vignette](#) airing during BTN programming.



Professor **Lauren Trepanier** has been awarded grants from the American Kennel Club Canine Health Foundation for [research into bladder carcinogen exposures](#) in pet dogs and from the Morris Animal Foundation to study how [exposure to common environmental chemicals](#), like those found in tobacco smoke and yard products, and individual genetic differences in response to them, put dogs at risk for common cancers.

The Morris Animal Foundation has also funded research by **Barry Hartup DVM'93**, clinical instructor in the School of Veterinary Medicine and director of conservation medicine at the International Crane Foundation, to determine [why some endangered whooping cranes](#) raised in captivity have specific health issues while others do not.

Continuing Education

Upcoming courses to help advance your career.

Numerous upcoming conferences and other continuing education events have been canceled or are being rescheduled due to the COVID-19 pandemic. For more information, visit the [Continuing Education](#) page on the SVM website.

Continuing Education via Distance Learning

On-demand courses on a wide variety of topics also are available through our [distance learning site](#).

[Additional course details and registration information](#)

Alumni Updates

The latest news about your classmates and items of special interest to alumni.

Showing Support to Students

Thank you to all of you who have inquired about supporting our DVM students as they navigate the change and uncertainty caused by COVID-19. We appreciate your enthusiastic response to the suggestion from fellow alumna **Emily (Hierlmeier) Dressel DVM'18** to [send students notes of encouragement](#). We're so pleased to share that alumni have signed up to send cards to all members of our Class of 2020 and students entering their fourth year of study, but a number of VM1 and VM2 students remain on the list. Can you help us get notes to all students? We know that encouraging words from future colleagues will mean so much. [Please sign up here](#).

Alumni on the Frontlines of COVID-19 Response

We've heard from several alumni working on the frontlines of response to the coronavirus pandemic and share a few of those stories below. How are you involved in COVID-19 response operations, or how has your clinical practice or other work been affected by the pandemic? If you're comfortable sharing your experience for future coverage in SVM publications, **please send an email to oncall@vetmed.wisc.edu**.

- **Erica Carroll DVM'95 PhD'03,**
a



toxicologic pathologist at a large contract research organization, continues to safety test new drug and vaccine candidates for a variety of conditions, including, these days, infection with COVID-19 -- while working from a home office with a microscope. "I count myself extremely fortunate to be, at least indirectly, able to contribute, ultimately, to people's health," she says. "As we all do our part to prevent further spread of COVID-19, it is clear how thinking globally and acting locally are especially effective in this time of extraordinary challenge."

- **Natalie Mickelsen DVM'11**, who works for the U.S. Food and Drug Administration in India, is **helping her fellow citizens find a path back home** amid the pandemic. Many of the thousands of Americans who live or work overseas have found themselves stuck on foreign soil. The numbers overwhelmed the U.S. State Department's staff in India, and they reached out to other federal employees -- including Mickelsen -- to help get people home. As U.S. interest in Indian drugs, including chloroquine, has spiked, Mickelsen's regular work also continues, supervising all of the FDA's consumer safety officers in India.
- **Keith Poulsen DVM'04 PhD'12** and the Wisconsin Veterinary Diagnostic Laboratory have **loaned equipment and reagents** and provided training to the Wisconsin State Laboratory of Hygiene to help keep COVID-19 testing available in Wisconsin. WVDL is also producing the viral transport media that preserves patient samples for testing -- a key bottleneck in many places. "When human healthcare and veterinary medicine work together, they can be much more effective than when they work apart," Poulsen **told *The Badger Herald***. "Wisconsin has excellent examples of human and animal health working together."

Other updates:

- **Brandon Cross DVM'19** is **now practicing at VCA Lafayette Animal Hospital**.
- **Robert Magnus DVM'87** was **elected as mayor** in the city of Oconomowoc, Wisconsin. "At a time of uncertainty and considerable stress in our community, we have a lot of challenges and also many opportunities ahead," said Magnus, a political newcomer.

- **Maura Mansfield DVM'91** of Memorial Drive Veterinary Clinic in Manitowoc, Wisconsin, will present a **Pet Confidential webcast series** for the Manitowoc Public Library, covering the latest in veterinary care for small animals and pocket pets.

Ongoing Clinical Trials

Online Tick Study for Pet Owners

Spring has sprung, and with it, tick season has arrived. The Midwest Center of Excellence for Vector-Borne Disease, based at UW-Madison, has a new online research study on tick prevention for dog and cat owners. Participants will complete two brief online surveys about tick prevention. This information will help researchers determine whether acquiring a pet changes owners' tick prevention habits. Pet owners can enroll at bit.ly/PetsAndTicks. More information and flyers can be downloaded [here](#).

Note: Due to limited specialty service availability, we are currently unable to enroll new patients in clinical studies.

[Learn about other clinical trials.](#)

Upcoming Events

Alumni Reunion Canceled

The SVM **Alumni Reunion** originally scheduled for Saturday, June 27, has been canceled due to campus guidance about summer events given the predictions that physical distancing guidelines are expected to be in place well after the peak of COVID-19 cases in Wisconsin and across the country.

While we don't know yet exactly what options we can offer in place of the June event, we are exploring potential alternatives and we appreciate the feedback shared by members of the celebrated graduating Classes of 1990, 1995, 2000, 2005, 2010 and 2015.

[SVM Events Calendar](#)



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