



Veterinary

VIEWPOINTS

Summer 1995

New Dean Appointed— Franklin M. Loew, DVM '65, PhD

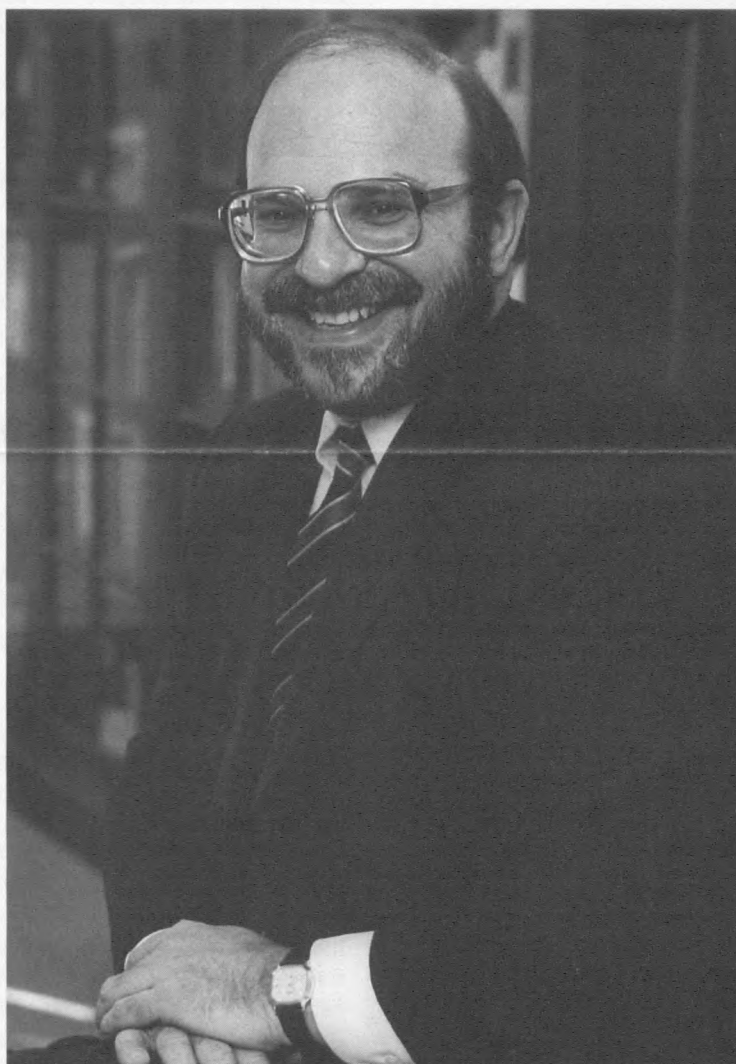
Once again, Cornell tapped the ranks of its distinguished alumni to select a new dean for the College of Veterinary Medicine. Franklin M. Loew, DVM '65, PhD, dean of the Tufts University School of Veterinary Medicine since 1982, has been appointed the college's eighth dean. He succeeds Robert D. Phemister, DVM '60, PhD, who will return to teaching after serving as dean since 1985.

Dr. Loew's appointment begins September 1. He is leaving one of America's newest veterinary schools to come to Cornell, which in 1876 was the first university in the United States to award a doctor of veterinary medicine degree. "I look forward to returning to my alma mater," Loew said. "Veterinary medicine at Cornell is a premier program nationally and internationally. Still, there is much to be done to maintain—and reclaim—Cornell's excellence in all facets of veterinary medicine."

Frank Loew grew up in Syracuse, New York, and says that he wanted to become a veterinarian "since I fell in

"Frank Loew has had a truly distinguished career. He has been an outstanding dean at Tufts and also has been a personal friend for many years. He is a dynamic individual with an exciting vision for the future of the profession and an ideal choice to lead the college into its second century."

—Robert D. Phemister,
dean, 1985–1995



Dr. Franklin M. Loew, eighth dean of the College of Veterinary Medicine

love with horses when I was eight years old." He recalls "hanging out" as a boy at Dr. Walter Matuszak's (DVM '43) practice, and their family dog was a patient of Dr. Louis Wilson's (DVM '34). Loew worked at a stable through high school and during breaks as an undergraduate student at Cornell's College of Agriculture and Life Sciences. He spent two summers at a dairy farm in Skaneateles, New York, to get the farm practice experience

that was still required for admission to the Veterinary College at that time. Dr. Bruce Widger (DVM '51) made regular calls at the farm, and Loew remembers that many conversations with Dr. Widger reinforced his desire to pursue a career in veterinary medicine. Loew received his B.S. degree in 1961, and since he had often accompanied horses from the stable to the Large Animal Clinic at Cornell, he was already familiar with the

"We are extraordinarily lucky to have Dr. Loew return to Cornell as dean of the veterinary college. He will be an imaginative and energetic leader of a college with a distinguished tradition. Because of his quality of mind and the range of his interests, he will be intellectually engaged in other parts of the university as well."

—Don M. Randel, provost, Cornell University

Veterinary College when he entered the DVM program later that year.

It was during his third year as a veterinary student that Loew met Mary Moffatt, a librarian in Cornell's Uris Library. They married in the fall of his fourth year and today have two sons—Timothy, a private banker, and Andrew, who recently completed his freshman year at the University of Chicago.

After he received his DVM degree in 1965, Loew worked as a post-doctoral scientist for RJR Industries and then as a research assistant at Tulane University's School of Medicine. In 1967, Dr. Loew entered the doctoral program in physiology and pharmacology at Canada's University of Saskatchewan, and his PhD degree was awarded in 1971. He remained at the university as professor of physiology and director of the Animal Resources Centre and a research program in toxicology until 1977. His research focused on the safety of what is now known as

(continued on page 5)

Nathanielsz and Cummings Elected James Law Professors

James Law, founding dean of the college and the first professor of veterinary medicine and surgery in the United States, played a seminal role in establishing veterinary medicine as a rigorous academic discipline and in demonstrating the close connection between animal and human health.

Law chose six professors to teach at the New York State Veterinary College when it opened in 1896. Nearly a century later, six James Law professorships have been established to recognize faculty who have earned distinguished national and international reputations in veterinary medicine and the biomedical sciences. The most recent to be elected by the Cornell Board of Trustees to Law professorships are Peter W. Nathanielsz, MB, PhD, MD, the James Law Professor of Reproductive Physiology, and John F. Cummings, DVM '62, MS '63, PhD '66, the James Law Professor of Anatomy.

The excitement of biology

When Dr. Peter Nathanielsz sat down to write his book *Life before Birth and Time to Be Born*, he had in mind prospective moms and dads, their eyes glued to the pages. "What I hope," he says, "is that they'll start it Thursday night and keep right on reading until Sunday." This compilation of 30 years' research on fetal development, written by one of the world's preeminent reproductive physiologists, is selling briskly in 10 languages.

"Our society has left most people biologically illiterate," Nathanielsz explains, his speech clipped, with an accent that bespeaks his English upbringing. "They know more about what goes on under the hoods of their autos than what goes on in their own bodies. I've tried to reverse that in the book." And in so doing, to promote recognition of the critical importance of prenatal care. "It's mind boggling how little attention our society pays to it," he says, considering that premature birth is the leading cause of birth defects and infant mortality in the United States. Then there's the fact that our infant mortality rate is higher than in 19 other countries.

Since 1986, Nathanielsz has been director of the college's Laboratory for Pregnancy and Newborn Research, sponsor of 11 research projects aimed at understanding, and thereby managing and treating, premature labor. Since coming to Cornell in 1982, his work has attracted well over \$16 million in research support from the National Institutes of Health alone. Of the laboratory's many discoveries, Nathanielsz and colleague Dr. Thomas J. McDonald were the first to show that the onset of labor is triggered not by the mother but by the fetus.

Nathanielsz's fascination with biology was ignited by a high school science teacher, and it settled on physiology while he was at Cambridge University, England, where pioneering work in using sheep as a model for fetal development had been in full swing since the 1930s. This past year, his alma mater awarded him a Doctor of Science, his fifth Cambridge degree.



Dr. Peter W. Nathanielsz, James Law Professor of Reproductive Physiology

The author of nearly 200 professional publications, Nathanielsz is a firm believer in enticing the next generation of scientists while they're young. He is particularly proud of the undergraduate research program in his laboratory, where 20 undergrads work each summer. He has supervised more than 25 honor projects, interviewing a prospective new student each week. Of them, he says, "They're razor sharp, dedicated, and fun!"

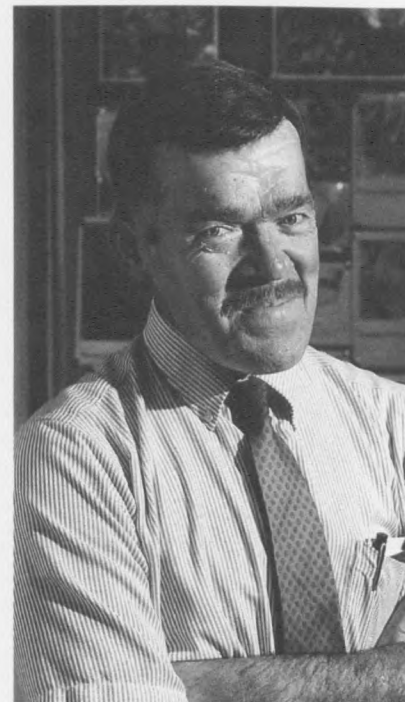
Developing animal models

Dr. John Cummings is just back from São Paulo, Brazil, where he saw his first epidemic of equine motor neuron disease. "Back in 1990, we thought this was a little-known disease that appeared infrequently in the northeastern United States, but reports have snowballed; now we know it's a global one," he says. Cummings, a comparative neurologist, has been a central figure on a team of Cornell faculty in relating this equine disease to amyotrophic lateral sclerosis, or so-called "Lou Gehrig's Disease" in humans.

Typically, just one horse in a stable succumbs to the disease. But since 1991, 25 cases have been confirmed among the 370 horses in the Brazilian mounted police troop. Cummings and other members of the Cornell team are using this opportunity to launch a collaborative international study to benefit both veterinary and medical science. "The findings we're making in the horses, while not identical to those in Lou Gehrig's Disease, are more or less parallel," he explains. "It's now thought that oxidative stress plays a role in both."

Known for both his research and teaching, Cummings, who once intended to become an equine practitioner, says in his disarming way that his plans were "subverted" in a gross anatomy class taught by a now emeritus professor. His PhD project, completed before a two-year stint in the Division of Neuropsychiatry at the Walter Reed Army Institute of Research, demonstrated the relationship between polyradiculoneuritis in coonhounds and the Guillain-Barré syndrome in humans. Since joining the faculty in 1967, Cummings has worked on various animal models for human neurologic diseases with support from the National Institutes of Health, Morris Animal Foundation, ALS Association, U.S. Department of Agriculture, and the Zweig Memorial and Travers funds, resulting in more than 80 publications in both veterinary and biomedical journals.

Recently elected secretary of the faculty, Cummings is credited with an engaging literary style that makes



Dr. John F. Cummings, James Law Professor of Anatomy

the minutes of monthly faculty meetings a document to be relished. "I'm no H. L. Mencken," Cummings avers. "The credit goes to the faculty; they give me the material!"

Much respected as a teacher (his courses in histology and organology have long been recognized by students as among their most rigorous and rewarding experiences), Cummings is a major contributor to the new curriculum, serving as course leader of the first Foundation Course, *The Animal Body*.

"The new curriculum is a lot more fun for students but requires much more intensive preparation on the part of faculty," he observes. Despite the changes, Cummings is quick to point out to all his former students that "the college still isn't a country day school." ■

People, Honors, and Awards



Biomedical Communications

Dr. Fred W. Quimby

Fred W. Quimby, VMD, PhD, Dipl ACLAM, received the Charles River Prize at the AVMA annual meeting in Pittsburgh in July. The annual prize, awarded by the Charles River Foundation, recognizes distinguished contributions to the field of laboratory animal science. Dr. Quimby is professor of pathology and director of Cornell's Center for Research Animal Resources. In recent years, he also has worked on animal facility planning and development with the University of Indonesia, Edmonton Zoo in Canada, and King Faisal University in Saudi Arabia.

Also at the AVMA annual meeting in July, two college faculty members were recognized by the Student American Veterinary Medical Association (SAVMA) for their



Biomedical Communications

Dr. M. Susan Hackett

outstanding work in teaching. SAVMA receives detailed nominations from veterinary students across the country and honors just two faculty members with their awards each year.

M. Susan Hackett, DVM, received the 1995 Teaching Excellence Award in the Basic Sciences. A lecturer in the Department of Anatomy, she is involved extensively in the first-year DVM curriculum as a tutor, laboratory instructor, and lecturer. She also teaches a popular distribution course on ruminant anatomy. **John E. Saidla, DVM**, received the 1995 Teaching Excellence Award in the Clinical Sciences. He is the course leader for the foundation course Animals, Veterinarians, and Society and also teaches and provides clinical services in dentistry. In



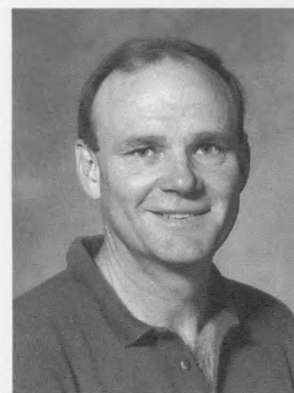
Biomedical Communications

Dr. John E. Saidla

addition, Dr. Saidla is the college's director of continuing education.

Maurice E. White, DVM, has been appointed chair of the Department of Clinical Sciences for a one-year term. He replaces Dr. Brian R. H. Farrow, who returned to Australia in May to become chair of the veterinary clinical sciences department at the University of Sydney. Dr. White received his DVM degree from Cornell in 1975 and joined the faculty as an assistant professor of medicine in 1978. He is now professor of medicine and will continue as a clinician in the college's Ambulatory Service while serving as department chair.

Veterinary Neuropathology, written by **Brian A. Summers, BVSc, PhD, MRCVS**, professor of pathology,



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Dr. Maurice E. White

with anatomy professors **John F. Cummings, DVM, PhD**, and **Alexander deLahunta, DVM, PhD**, was published earlier this year. Intended for veterinary and medical pathologists, veterinary neurologists, and other scientists who study the nervous system, the textbook focuses on spontaneous disorders in the major domestic animal species and also discusses comparable diseases of humans.

Joseph M. Piekunka has been appointed director of admissions. Mr. Piekunka holds an M.A. in educational administration and comes to the college from SUNY's Binghamton University, where he was assistant vice provost for graduate admissions and records for five years. ■

Budget Cuts Force Examination of Strengths and Priorities

On June 7, the New York State Legislature and Governor George Pataki arrived at an agreement on the 1995-96 state budget. It calls for a reduction in state support for higher education in what many believe is just the first step in a series of likely reductions for the State University of New York (SUNY). Cornell's allocation was reduced by approximately \$5 million, resulting in a reduction in support to the college of about \$1.2 million.

"We were neither spared nor disproportionately affected by the final budget," says Dean Robert D. Phemister. "All of Cornell's statutory colleges shared equally in the reduction, and Cornell shared in proportion to the other units of SUNY."

Dean Phemister termed this year's 5 percent loss of operating monies as a major, but by no means catastrophic, cut. Once again, he says, as in the series of rescissions that occurred between 1988 and 1992, this reduction "forces us to critically examine what it is that we are doing, to decide—given fewer resources—what we will no longer do, and to find ways to operate more efficiently." Doing so now is all the more crucial given that state support is likely to decline even further in the years to come.

Strategies to meet the budgetary shortfall are focused on achieving economies while at the same time ensuring the future strength and vitality of the college. Thus the burden of cost-cutting at this time

has been borne by central administrative units, sparing academic departments wherever possible. In the end, cuts to central units are three times greater than those to departments. Savings have been realized through a series of measures:

- cutting back centralized functions in personnel, financial administration, and, to some extent, facilities management, by shifting more responsibility for these activities to departments
- removing college subsidies from several services such as the Biomedical Electronics Service unit, which has now become a self-supporting operation housed in the Diagnostic Laboratory
- reducing the size and scope of other centralized services, including

disbanding the Biomedical Communications unit, while transferring digital imaging—its most vital service—to the Department of Pathology

- establishing partnerships with other colleges and campus units, such as working with the College of Agriculture and Life Sciences to establish a joint electron microscopy facility

Additional savings have been derived by:

- merging the departments of Avian and Aquatic Animal Medicine and Microbiology, Immunology, and Parasitology, both of which focus on infectious diseases, to form the new Department of Microbiology and Immunology

(continued on page 7)

What Are Their Plans? Class of '95 Graduates

Karen Gellman, DVM '95, has known for a while where she'll be in the fall: diving in for another three years to earn her PhD in the nascent field of biomechanics and kinematics. Her classmate, Jim Fahey, on the other hand, got his PhD 13 years before his DVM. Now Fahey, a first-time dad in his early forties, is settling into private practice in a small-animal hospital in Kittery, Maine.

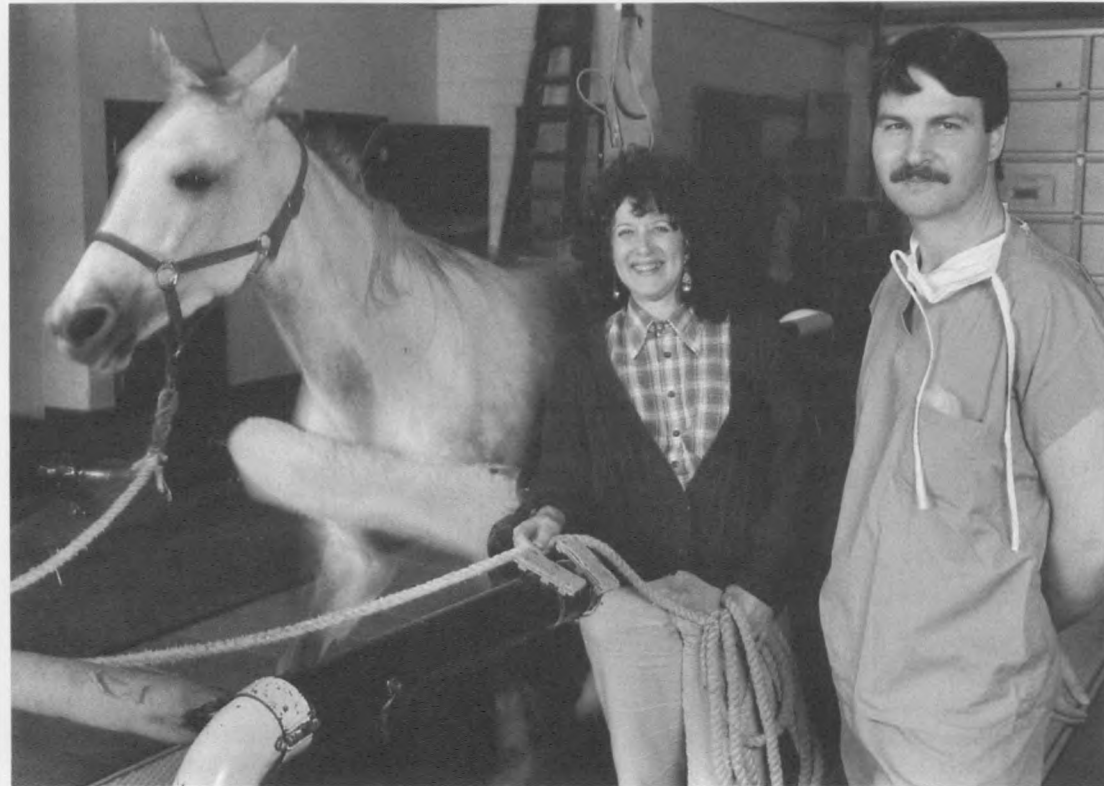
When it comes to degrees, Fahey and Gellman are exceptions to the rule. Most of this year's graduating class, 81 in all, ended up with just one set of letters after their names. And this fall, or at most the next, they will be settled into a practice that specializes in companion animals.

"Small-animal practice is where the growth is in veterinary services," notes Dr. Eugenia G. Kelman, assistant dean for student services. "For our graduates, the employment picture is very good. On average, each has three job offers from which to choose."

Dr. Mary Rorke landed hers at the West Parc Veterinary Clinic in Manhattan the way many of her classmates will land theirs—through previous work experiences. "A lot of students go back to the practice where they worked in high school or college," Kelman points out. In Rorke's case she answered a newspaper ad that Dr. Harold Zweighaft (DVM '56) placed in a New York City paper eight years ago. After just a few months working together, Zweighaft encouraged her to apply to veterinary school, despite the fact that Rorke had graduated from college 10 years before with a degree in music.

"When I was very young I wanted to be a vet but ended up in a different field," she explains. "The ad sparked my interest again. Dr. Zweighaft was supportive and encouraging all along the way." Last summer, Zweighaft asked Rorke to join him in his practice, where she looks to further her interest in soft tissue surgery; happy, she says at age 39, "to become a good general practitioner."

With about two-thirds of the class being native New Yorkers, most will eventually settle in the Northeast. But before taking that first job, a



University Photography

significant number will do a year's internship, often secured through the AVMA Intern Matching Program. "We have a somewhat higher percentage of graduates who do internships, 17 out of this year's class of 81," Kelman says. "I hear students say they're looking to practice high-quality medicine and they know an internship year will sharpen their skills." It's a real tribute to the college, Kelman adds, that so many students are accepted for internship training.

Dr. Sandra Coester and Dr. Suzanne Mullings are both off to internships next year. Mullings is excited about her match with Veterinary Specialists in Rochester, New York. With an interest in cancer biology born of the two years she spent as a PhD candidate at the Cornell Graduate School of Medical Sciences before veterinary school, Mullings hopes to combine internal medicine with the continued study of cancer. "That will give me the best of both worlds," she says, "research and the practice of veterinary medicine."

Coester is going west to Fountain Valley, a Los Angeles suburb. Her match with the All-Care Animal Referral Center will allow her to continue working in oncology, as the practice has a 50-patient cancer ward. But overall, she says, "I just

Dr. Karen Gellman, who received her DVM degree this spring with the class of 1995, is now working on a PhD in biomechanics and kinematics with Dr. John Bertram, assistant professor of anatomy. She will use the high-speed treadmill in the college's Equine Performance Testing Clinic for her research on aspects of locomotion and gait.

want to get a very firm basis in general medicine, surgery, and internal medicine with both dogs and cats. Then I'd like to move on and, hopefully, become board certified in feline medicine."

Dr. Karen Gellman and Dr. Steven Kaplan are two graduates who will be continuing here for PhDs. Gellman received a graduate research assistantship in her first year and has completed the required rotations through three different laboratories. She's set to begin her PhD project with the college's resident expert in biomechanics, Dr. John E. A. Bertram, MS, PhD.

"While researching aspects of locomotion and gait, I hope to work with the equine sports medicine clinic developing different modalities of diagnosing and treating lameness in performance horses," Gellman says. Her sights are set on an academic job that combines teaching and research with clinical applications.

Kaplan, a veteran of the Armed Forces Institute of Pathology externship program, wants a career

in immunology, particularly in using DNA manipulation to develop vaccines against parasites. He's wide open when it comes to setting (government, industry, and academic laboratories all have their appeal) and even to country of residence. As a dual U.S.-Israeli citizen, Kaplan will have an enviable range of options.

What he also has is debt—as does 79 percent of the senior class. The typical outstanding loan is \$47,900, up from \$45,149 last year, according to Gloria R. Crissey, director of financial aid. Kelman points out that entry-level salaries in private practice—ranging between the mid \$20,000s and low \$30,000s—haven't kept up with inflation, whereas student debt has climbed continuously during the past decade. Yet, she observes, earning power does increase over time. "Once a recent graduate has been on the job a few years and has developed good practice management, speed, and the art of diagnosis, salaries rise considerably." ■

Alumnus Advocates Alternative Therapies— Allen Schoen, DVM '78



Dr. Allen M. Schoen '78 demonstrated acupuncture techniques in a seminar for veterinary students and faculty in February.

A decade ago Allen Schoen, DVM '78, was known as the vet of last resort. Today the news media has dubbed him the modern version of James Herriot for the way he's popularized the use of so-called "alternative" modes of treatment for animals beyond the help of conventional medicine. Dr. Schoen returned to the college in February to present a week-long series of seminars and demonstrations.

"When I first started out in practice I found there were times when I did everything in medicine and surgery that I'd learned to do at Cornell and would still be left with only two alternatives: an animal living in pain or being put down," Schoen recalls. At such times he would turn to a senior member of the practice who, Schoen says, had a few "tricks up his sleeve"—old-time remedies used before what are now accepted procedures. Much to his surprise some of these medicinal herbs and chemical forms of acupuncture worked, allowing seemingly hopeless cases to lead good-quality lives.

These "opened my mind," Schoen says, to exploring the validity of a whole range of treatments from other medical systems, including Western and Chinese herbs, nutritional supplements, chiropractic, homeopathy, and acupuncture, not as a replacement for modern medicine but as a complement to it. As the vet of last resort he had ample opportunity to conclude that no one form

of medicine had all the answers.

"Conventional medicine is wonderful for acute emergencies but oftentimes we lack good answers for some chronic problems like arthritis, allergies, and on-going diarrhea," Schoen explains. "So my attitude was, let's look and see if some of these other therapies might help."

Schoen now advocates a balanced approach, often recommending a combination of surgery, medications, and alternative therapies, taking, he says, "the best from all the different worlds." It only seems to make sense, he says, considering that modern medicine has existed for just 150 years, whereas the first textbooks on the veterinary use of acupuncture date back to 1100 BC.

In response to the interest shown within the veterinary community, as well as among his clients, he has written both a veterinary textbook on acupuncture (with a second on other complementary treatments on the way) and *Love, Miracles, and Animal Healing*, for a lay audience. In the latter he uses stories to illustrate not only what alternative therapies can do for animals but also the impact of the human-animal bond, of compassion and love, on the healing process.

His short courses offered in the college were received with enthusiasm. "My vision for the future of veterinary education is that all these different therapies will be taught side-by-side with conventional medicine." ■

Franklin M. Loew (continued from page 1)

canola oil, one of Canada's greatest agricultural success stories. He then took up the post of director of comparative medicine at Johns Hopkins School of Medicine in Baltimore.

During the 1970s, a renewed interest in veterinary careers was sparked by the publication of *All Creatures Great and Small* and other books by British veterinarian James Herriot. Between 1971 and 1979, eight new veterinary colleges were established in the United States, and Loew served on a committee that helped oversee the inception of a school in New England. The School of Veterinary Medicine at Tufts University in Massachusetts opened its doors to the first class of DVM students in 1979, and in early 1982 Loew accepted the invitation to become the school's second dean.

Loew has a reputation as a resourceful and enthusiastic fundraiser in both the public and private sectors. Under his leadership at Tufts, the veterinary school campus in North Grafton expanded with the construction of new hospital facilities for large and small animals, a building dedicated to biotechnology and reproductive research, and a diagnostic laboratory. A successful capital campaign raised \$2.4 million in private support to renovate an empty building into the school's primary academic facility. At the request of the donor of a \$1 million

"Frank leads by example. It is no secret that he lived and breathed Tufts vet school, that his passion for his work is unparalleled, that his compassion for humans and animals is sincere, his intellectual curiosity insatiable, and his humor ever at the ready. It is a fitting reward for his labors as a scholar and administrator that he will return as dean to his alma mater—one of the nation's oldest schools of veterinary medicine and one held in the highest regard."

—Sol Gittleman, senior vice president and provost, Tufts University

gift, the building was dedicated in 1993 and named the Franklin M. Loew Veterinary Medical Education Center in recognition of Loew's service to the school and university.

An internationally known lecturer and writer on animals and society, Loew has been forthright in addressing some of the most contentious issues facing the veterinary profession today, including the use of animals in research, the changing moral status of animals, and what he calls the "urban prism" through which most Americans and Europeans view domestic animals and wildlife. At Tufts, he spearheaded the development of innovative academic programs and centers, such as the Center for Animals and Public Policy, to incorporate contemporary topics and issues into the veterinary curriculum and public discussion.

Loew is an elected member of the Institute of Medicine of the National Academy of Sciences. Among the many honors he has received are Canada's Queen Elizabeth Silver Jubilee Medal from the Governor-General in 1977 and the American Veterinary Medical Association's Charles River Prize in 1988. While at Tufts, in addition to serving as dean, he has been the Foster Professor of Comparative Medicine, as well as chair of the school's Department of Environmental Studies and president of the university's for-profit subsidiary, Tufts Biotechnology Corp., Inc.

Dr. Loew returned to Cornell earlier this summer to celebrate his thirtieth reunion with the DVM class of 1965. In an address to alumni that weekend, he spoke about how it feels to return to his alma mater. "Deans are not the people who make institutions great," he said. "It begins with the faculty, staff, and students and encompasses their work in both service and scholarship here on campus. Then our graduates go out into the world and it is their dedication and commitment—to animals and the people who care for them—that continually reinforces Cornell's reputation for excellence in veterinary medicine. The alumni of this college are its greatest strength and I look forward to hearing from you, as well as our loyal friends and supporters, about ways in which we can better serve people, animals, and the profession. As dean, I intend to do all that I can to make you proud of this college. It is a great pleasure to come home to this wonderful place we call Cornell." ■

Consolidated Research Grant Program Enables Faculty to Compete More Effectively for Dwindling Dollars

What is there about the molecular structure of the canine parvovirus that allows it to have certain properties, say, the ability to infect a variety of animal species? Why do certain types of tumors caused by an oncovirus of fish appear in one season of the year and disappear in another? Which genes does herpes simplex virus use to replicate itself, and precisely how do they work?

Research is currently under way at the college on these questions. The budget for *each* project is more than \$300,000.

Who backs such costly endeavors? These three studies happen to be funded by the National Institutes of Health (NIH), which is willing to support such research because broadening the fundamental understanding of viral diseases and cancer is the path toward developing more efficacious therapies for these diseases in humans as well as animals.

Attracting support from such a federal agency requires that researchers both conduct exceptional research *and* write superb grant proposals—good enough to beat out competition that becomes ever more keen as dollars dwindle. The NIH alone reviews more than 22,000 applications for research grants annually.

Writing sophisticated proposals is an art; it takes excellent research as well as practice in grant writing, combined with feedback from those with a proven track record in acquiring external funding. That's precisely what the college's Consolidated Research Grant Program (CRG) is designed to provide.

Established in 1986 to give new faculty modest support for generating preliminary data on promising research, the program's larger purpose is a pedagogical one: to help faculty write better grants.

"Part of our educational mission is toward this type of faculty develop-



ment," explains Dr. Douglas D. McGregor, associate dean for research and graduate education. "Each proposal is reviewed by a committee of eight faculty, most of whom have sat on national advisory panels and reviewed hundreds of grant applications. The committee prepares a written report that's deliberately structured to help applicants write better proposals in the future."

Although the number of times young faculty members may apply for these small grants is limited, it's not uncommon for them to be denied the first time around or for them to revise their proposals several times before they are strong enough and contain sufficient data to command support.

The CRG Program is funded with monies from the U.S. Department of Agriculture, the New York State Agricultural Experiment Station in Ithaca, and gifts from friends and

Above: Dr. Joel Baines, assistant professor of virology, and DVM/PhD student Ashley Reynolds. "Seed money" from the CRG program enabled Dr. Baines to begin experiments on the replication of herpes simplex virus when he first arrived at the college in 1993. Findings from those studies were significant enough to support an application to NIH, and last year he received more than \$350,000 from the federal agency to further his research.

alumni. It supports projects ranging from the study of disease processes in the whole animal to an analysis of disease mechanisms at the molecular level, and everything in between. A total of \$300,000 to \$400,000 is awarded each year.

Typically, 40 or so faculty apply and about half of their proposals are accepted. "No preference is given to a particular species or to one kind of

research over another," McGregor points out, "rather, the goal is to see that the best possible science prevails."

Colin R. Parrish, BSc, PhD, an assistant professor of virology at the James A. Baker Institute of Animal Health, first applied for a CRG in 1988 for preliminary work on parvoviruses. He received about \$16,500 that year and another \$14,500 from a second proposal the next year. The first external support came from NIH in 1990. Three NIH grants later, Parrish's studies of the molecular structure and evolution of this group of viruses are now recognized worldwide.

Paul R. Bowser, MS, PhD, associate professor of avian and aquatic animal medicine, received three CRGs totaling less than \$40,000 to investigate a dermal sarcoma in walleye found in New York's Oneida Lake. His current studies, in collaboration with Dr. James W. Casey of the Department of Microbiology and Immunology, focus on the mechanisms that allow the tumors to develop in the fall and regress in the spring. They are funded by \$319,000 from NIH and an additional \$160,000 from the USDA.

Two years ago, Joel Baines, VMD, PhD, an assistant professor of virology, received about \$20,000 in CRG money for his early studies on the herpes simplex virus. The NIH has now awarded him more than \$350,000 to determine how the virus replicates itself. Understanding this could lead to new antiviral therapies for a number of diseases caused by herpes viruses, including encephalitis in humans, bovine and equine abortion, and Marek's disease in chickens.

Since its inception in 1986, 228 Consolidated Research Grants have been awarded to young faculty totaling \$3,092,369. Twenty-two of these faculty subsequently received external grants to the tune of \$5,612,630, an exceptional 181 percent return on the college's investment in its faculty. ■

Biomedical Communications

Research and Service Notes

Soft Palate Displacement in Horses

Dorsal displacement of the soft palate (DDSP) is the most common cause of upper airway obstruction in horses, and it leads to impaired performance and abnormal respiratory noise (choking down) in racehorses. This is an abnormality in which the soft palate becomes displaced over the epiglottis, thus obstructing the airflow. In a study funded by the Morris Animal Foundation, Norm G. Ducharme, DMV, MSc, Dipl ACVS, and Richard P. Hackett, DVM, MS, Dipl ACVS, are trying to find out why horses displace their palates during exercise and hope to develop new ways to treat and prevent the disorder.

In examining a test group of horses with DDSP, they have found that the disorder can occur early in exercise, during maximum speed, and at the end of an exercise session. Contrary to previous reports, all of the horses in the test group were

found to have epiglottises of normal length. Ducharme and Hackett found that some horses displaced during inhalation, exhalation, and after swallowing.

During the first phase of the study, the investigative team measured electrical activity in normal horses exercising on the college's high-speed treadmill. They determined when the various muscles involved in maintaining the position of the soft palate contracted in relation to the respiratory cycle. In the second phase, now under way, they will compare the findings with those from horses afflicted with DDSP in the hope of pinpointing possible causes of the condition.

Conjunctivitis in Eastern House Finches

Dr. George V. Kollias, the Jay Hyman Professor of Wildlife Medicine, and other researchers at the Veterinary College are collaborating with biologists in the Cornell Laboratory of Ornithology to try to determine

what is causing a highly contagious outbreak of conjunctivitis among Eastern house finches.

Dr. André Dhount, director of bird population studies at the Ornithology Lab, reported that birds with runny, crusty eyes were first observed in late 1993 in Virginia and Maryland. Since then the disease has been spreading north and west, and members of the lab's Project FeederWatch program reported diseased birds last fall at about 20 percent of sites in Maryland, Delaware, and Pennsylvania; 19 percent in New Jersey and Massachusetts; 17 percent in Rhode Island and Connecticut; and 10 percent in New York, South Carolina, and Virginia. In the past six months, the disease has spread to Illinois, Maine, and Michigan, and thousands of finches in New York alone are estimated to have died of the infection.

Mycoplasma gallisepticum (MG) has been the only organism consistently isolated from affected birds; most birds tested by conventional methods, however, have been MG-negative at most

laboratories. Nonetheless *M. gallisepticum* remains the primary suspect as the new house finch disease is similar to several common and long-standing respiratory diseases in poultry caused by that organism. The scientists are certain that the finch disease is not a threat to humans, and they have reassured poultry breeders that it should not spread to their flocks. Although it is not known whether MG infection is a serious threat to the finch population as a whole, the sudden appearance of the disease has raised important questions for wildlife veterinarians and ornithologists.

In addition to trying to pin down the cause, Dr. Kollias, Dr. Dhount, and their colleagues are seeking answers to several questions: Has the disease-causing organism been present all along in finch populations until something—such as a weakening of their local immune systems—induced the outbreak? Does the limited genetic diversity of the Eastern house finches make them more susceptible to disease? ■

Budget Cuts

(continued from page 3)

- 15 individuals (5 faculty and 10 staff) taking advantage of the state-sponsored early retirement incentive program
- 26 people being laid off, an equivalent of SUNY's prediction that for every \$10 million dollars in budget reductions, 250 positions would be lost
- an 8.1 percent tuition increase for DVM students, raising the annual cost for New York State residents from \$12,100 to \$13,080. (Nonresident tuition will rise from \$15,900 to \$17,610, a 10.8 percent increase.)

Dean Phemister points out that, as large as the tuition increases are in percentage terms, they are smaller than those for students in the other statutory colleges. "Moderating tuition increases while giving the highest priority to obtaining private scholarship support is a practice that's been in place for the last

decade," he says by way of emphasizing the continuing importance of gifts from alumni and friends. Scholarship support has tripled in the last 10 years, most noticeably as a result of the 5-year fund-raising campaign, which will conclude in December (see page 8).

Although the state's share of the college general operating budget has been cut back, certain programs that receive support from agencies other than SUNY have not been adversely affected by the 1995-96 state budget. The Diagnostic Laboratory, which provides a variety of services including the Quality Milk Promotion Services/Mastitis Control Program, will receive approximately the same level of funding as last year from the Department of Agriculture and Markets. Likewise, funding for the Equine Drug Testing and Research Program through the Racing and Wagering Board will remain the same.

Nor is funding in jeopardy for the

\$90 million series of state-funded construction and renovation projects currently under way. Conversion of the former teaching hospital to a secondary teaching center and upgrades to ventilation and necropsy facilities in Schurman Hall are slated to go ahead in the next year as planned, although monies for these projects may be released more slowly. The new Veterinary Medical Center, including the new teaching hospitals, should be ready to open in the fall.

As painful as some of these changes have been, particularly the staff layoffs, Dean Phemister is optimistic that the college will survive this round of budget cuts with its essential programs intact, just as it did following the reductions from 1988 to 1992, when it lost a total of \$2.4 million in state support.

"If you had asked me at the end of that period if the college had been fundamentally weakened I would have said no," Dean Phemister says.

"On the contrary, I feel good about the adjustments we made then and I feel good about the strategies we have in place now. Remember that, in spite of the cuts, we still receive major support from the State of New York. Coupling that with the inherent strength of our faculty, our ability to compete nationally for research dollars, and the overall diversity of the college's funding base, I believe we will continue to sustain programs of the highest quality." ■

Correction: A photo caption on page 8 of the Spring '95 issue incorrectly identified a harbor seal undergoing cataract surgery as a sea lion. We regret the error.

Calendar of Events

(unless otherwise noted, all events are at Cornell)

August

14-18 Olafson Pathology Short Course*

September

23 Cornell Homecoming Weekend Annual Alumni Tailgate Party (for more information, call 607-253-3744)

October

6-7 Equine Fall Conference*

November

10-11 Parasitology Short Course for the Veterinary Technician*

11-12 Farrier's Conference*

March 1996

22-24 Cornell Annual Conference for Veterinarians*

*For more information about continuing education programs, call 607-253-3200

Fund-Raising Campaign Tops \$30 Million

As of June 30, 1995, the college has raised \$32,900,696 in a major fund-raising effort to secure private support for new endowments as well as current programs. Four and a half years into the five-year campaign, the college is almost 10 percent ahead of its \$30 million goal.

The Cornell Campaign for the College of Veterinary Medicine began in October 1990, as part of a major endeavor to raise a total of \$1.25 billion to re-endow colleges and units across the university. More than 300 veterinary alumni throughout the United States—approximately 10 percent of the college's graduates—have been actively involved as volunteers to solicit support from fellow alumni, animal owners, breeders, and other friends of veterinary medicine.

The primary goal of the campaign has been to secure support for new endowed professorships, DVM student scholarships, graduate fellowships, and clinical residencies. Endowment funds are a critical source of support for all institutions

of higher education. The principal is invested in perpetuity, and only the annual income is used to support the purpose for which the fund was established. More than 120 new endowments, totaling over \$20 million, have been established at the Veterinary College as a result of the current campaign. Most of the funds are scholarships that provide debt-free financial aid to veterinary students.

Still, of the original \$30 million goal, the college set out to raise \$26 million for new endowments. Thus, the Campaign Committee, led by co-chairs Robert E. Clark, DVM '52, and Jay W. Geasling, DVM '75, has pledged to continue its efforts through the end of the Cornell Campaign on December 31, 1995. At a time when the college is once again facing significant cuts in state support (see page 3) and other sources of public funding are becoming increasingly constrained, private support from alumni and friends is now more vital than ever. ■

Veterinary VIEWPOINTS

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For more information about the college, check our site on the World Wide Web at <http://zoo.vet.cornell.edu>

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