

JANUARY 2020

# APVMA NEWSLETTER

American Pre-Veterinary Medical Association

## Updates from the Board

HAPPY NEW YEAR EVERYONE!

The month of January has quickly approached us and your executive board has been working hard to complete our goals before our term ends at the end of next month! The president has been working on transition documents for next year's board. The vice president has been collaborating with MagicEquus to set up a gold level sponsorship. The treasurer has been preparing for symposium and organizing information for the next treasurer. The secretary has been preparing a transition binder for the next secretary as well as working on the last newsletter for this board. The webmaster has been working on updating our website and social media pages.

**WANT TO BE INVOLVED?**

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**Click Here** to Become  
an Individual Member of  
APVMA

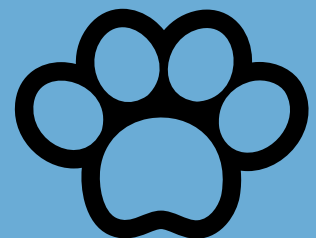
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**Click Here** to Become a  
Club Member of APVMA

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**Click Here** to Be Added  
Onto Our Email List

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## A Letter from Our President

APVMA Members,

It struck me yesterday that after I write this letter, I will only have one more to go. It has been an amazing honor to serve you all, but we are not done yet. This year your officer team is committed to making every last-minute count!

There are so many of you out there, who read this newsletter, that I have had the pleasure of getting to know. If it were not for your support, there is so much that we would not have been able to do. Because of you we were able to start our delegate program, which will not only give our members more opportunities, but will also drive our organization into the future. Some years we have had difficulties finding a symposium host, but thanks to the enthusiasm and initiative of our pre-vet clubs we now have the next few years contracted out. But maybe most importantly we have a number of students who are interested in running for APVMA leadership positions at this year's symposium. I say most importantly because it has been through student leadership that this organization has flourished, and because of future leaders like you that it will continue to grow. If you are interested in running for a position, please feel free to reach out to me.

As we head into spring semester, I want to encourage you all to keep your head up and just keep pushing through. Many of you all are waiting eagerly for the VMCAS to open up on the 22nd of January, and for remember that this semester's grades will be incredibly important for your application. So, don't give up yet!

Best,  
Sam

# APVMA DELEGATE WANTED!

Do you know a leader within your club that would be interested in putting their skills to the test on a national level? Beginning this year, the APVMA is starting an all new delegate program.

## What's in it for you?

- A National Leadership Title
- A Discounted Symposium Registration Rate
- An Amazing Opportunity for Leadership Experience
- Providing your Club with a Voice on the National Level
- Recognition at the National Symposium
- Offer Topics and Ideas for what you want to see at the Symposium
- Get your Foot in the Door for APVMA Executive Board Positions

## What are we looking for from you?

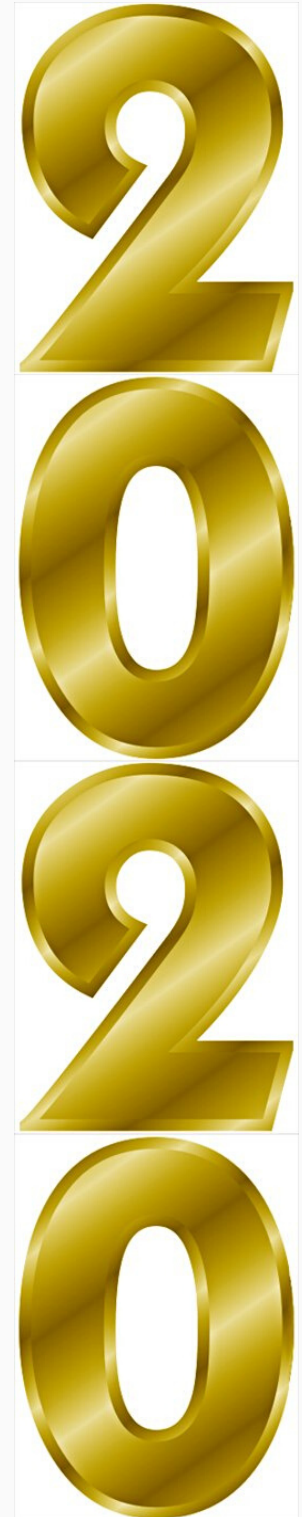
- One Delegate to Represent each Pre-Vet Club
- A leader and game-changer who can get information out about the APVMA
- Someone who will check in regularly and report back to their APVMA Executive
- Someone with innovative ideas about the future of APVMA
- A good communicator who can work with representatives from other clubs

## Want More Details?

Email President Sam Johnson at

## Start Off the New Decade Right!

1. Focus on a passion in your life
2. Do at least one act of kindness a day
3. Read more
4. Let go of grudges
5. Try something new
6. Travel somewhere
7. Cook more often
8. Compliment people more often
9. Stay organized
10. Catch up with an old friend
11. Create goals
12. Volunteer
13. Exercise to feel good
14. Find a new hobby
15. Spend more time outside
16. Meditate/Try Yoga
17. Expand your music taste
18. Create a budget
19. Spend quality time with family
20. Step out of your comfort zone



## Fun Fact of the Month

Did you know...animals that hibernate don't dream? Their bodies are too cold to produce the electrical currents that are needed to produce dreams. Although, there is one exception. The fat-tailed dwarf lemur is the only primate known to hibernate and they enter long periods of REM sleep during hibernation.



# Pursuing a Dream - From the Midwest to North Carolina and Back Again

By: Briittany Schepak

If there was one thing I knew as a child, it was that I would be a veterinarian one day. I had grown up with so many animals - from cats to parakeets to hamsters to ferrets - I couldn't imagine not working with them. I figured that the perfect job (to my 9-year old self) was to play with cats and dogs all day by becoming a veterinarian!

In high school, I finally got my first veterinary experience by shadowing at a clinic. I was so excited to see what a veterinarian really did . Unfortunately, I passed out from the smell of chemicals and the sight of a technician preparing a blood smear. I was told that I couldn't come back to shadow at a clinic. I was so ashamed of myself and wondered how I would ever be able to handle surgery or veterinary medicine if I couldn't handle looking at a blood smear. For the first time, the idea that I didn't have what it took to become a veterinarian entered my thoughts, and it left me wondering whether I was on the right path.

My family adopted my cat, Duchess, when I was 8 years old. (We had named him Duchess before our vet informed us that he was actually a boy.) He was the best companion to a young girl. He put up with being dressed up in doll clothes, being pushed in a baby stroller, and being held for indefinite amounts of time. Despite that, he always curled up next to me at night, taking up 2/3 of the bed. He was my cat, the one you only have once in a lifetime, and I valued his companionship over most people I knew. In November of my senior year, I noticed that Duchess was losing weight, so I begged my mom to take him to see the vet. She got him an appointment in December while I was in school, and I came home to terrible news. Duchess has cancer, and it would be around \$7000 for treatment. Neither my parents nor I had that type of money. We were left with doing what we could to make him comfortable until it was time. The vet told us that he might make it to June and his 10th birthday, but I knew in my heart that he would only hold on for a few months. On February 10th, Duchess lost his fight with abdominal cancer, and I renewed my dedication to veterinary medicine.

Later that year, I got accepted on scholarship to Central Michigan University and started preparing to take the science classes I would need to become eligible for veterinary school. I hoped that my love for science and Duchess would give me opportunities to gain experience. I started shadowing at a shelter clinic in the Spring semester of my freshman year and finally started gaining some experience. I spent many Saturdays prepping patients for surgery, administering vaccines, and watching patients recover. My experience at the shelter gave me enough confidence to join CMU's pre-veterinary club, where I met many fantastic individuals and learned how to network. I became the Academic Chair after the first meeting and gained the leadership skills I would use to become Secretary the next year and Vice president the year after. I also started doing research at an Alzheimer's lab and began working at the local cat clinic to start building my application for VMCAS.

My first cycle applying, I was extremely confident. I had over 1000 hours of small animal experience, leadership experience in my pre-vet club, and a fantastic GPA. I assumed I was an excellent candidate and didn't bother thinking of a back-up plan. My arrogance resulted in 3 rejections from my in-state institution, Michigan State University, as well as from The Ohio State University and Purdue University. I fared slightly better with Cornell University and North Carolina State University- receiving a spot on the wait-list for both. I was crushed. I spent a few days feeling like everything I had done was worth nothing. To finally start getting over my rejections, it took a message from a well-known veterinarian telling me that if I wanted to pursue this career, I would have to fight for it.

After the holidays, I called the schools that rejected me and discovered that I had a bad letter of recommendation and that I was missing large animal experience. I talked to other veterinary students and found a couple of large animal opportunities to make my application stronger. I also started to figure out what I was going to do with my gap year. Once I graduated, I set my sights on moving to North Carolina to get into my dream school, NCSU. So, in July, I packed up all of my stuff and moved myself and my cat, Quinn, to North Carolina, where I had a job at a clinic waiting for me. I was terrified of being 12 hours away from my family and of having no support system, but I was determined to continue to build my application.

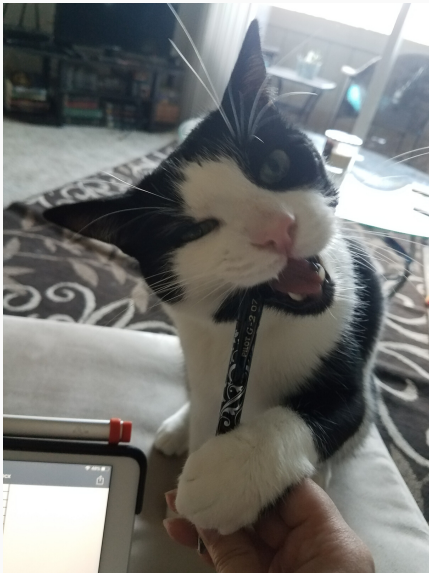
Honestly, taking a gap year was one of the best things I did for myself. I originally thought of a gap year as a failure to get into vet school but it was a fantastic experience! I was able to finally take a break from school, find my hobbies again, and remember how to live. I had money for the first time in my life and was completely independent from my parents. I volunteered in North Carolina State's research lab with veterinarians who worked to find a cure for mast cell tumors, and I found my love for veterinary medicine again through my job - something I had lost when I quit my job at the cat clinic.

During my gap year, I applied once again to veterinary schools, feeling better about my experiences and my new letter of recommendation. In December, I got another rejection from the one school I had uprooted my life for. NCSU rejected me, and I was crushed again. The only things that kept me from losing all faith were my interviews at Ohio State and Purdue. In January, I flew home to interview at Ohio State and cried on the drive home, thinking that I had completely botched my interview. I had resigned myself to yet another application cycle.

Then, 2 weeks later, I woke up at 6 AM to go to work and found an email from The Ohio State University telling me that I had been accepted as part of the Class of 2023. Needless to say, I was ecstatic! I wasn't expecting a response until February or March, and I had gotten one back in 2 weeks. They liked me - enough to offer me the chance of a lifetime!

Now, I have completed my first semester at The Ohio State University. I am about to run for a position on Ohio State's SAVMA executive board, and I am excited about all of the opportunities I have coming up for the next few years.

If I could pass on any advice that I learned through my gap year and my rejections, it would be to work hard and be persistent. Hard work allowed me to gain experience, and persistence enabled me to make it this far. Your ability to work hard and remain persistent in the face of rejection is important. Never lose faith in what you can do or what you offer as a veterinary student because one day, you'll be looking up at your vet school's logo on the side of the building. One day, you'll remember everything you've done and realize it was worth it.





## Auburn University's Pre-Vet Club



### President:

Bryanna Meredith is a senior at Auburn University majoring in Organismal Biology and minoring in English Literature. Her favorite veterinary experience has been her job as a vet assistant at the Division of Laboratory Animal Health at Auburn University College of Veterinary Medicine. She is currently applying for vet school and plans on later pursuing a residency in lab animal medicine to become board-certified. When she is not studying, working, or managing PVMA events, she loves to read, play video games, work out, and go hiking with her friends.



### Vice President:

Amanda Mish is a senior in Pre-Veterinary Medicine of Wildlife Sciences with a minor in business at Auburn University. She is a veterinary technician at her home veterinary clinic in West Palm Beach, FL. After Veterinary school she would love to work as a zoo veterinarian, with the hopes of one day opening her own practice. Aside from the veterinary field, she loves to spend time outside participating in recreational activities or spending time with friends.

**Want your  
club featured?**

Just email  
[apvmasecretary@gmail.com](mailto:apvmasecretary@gmail.com)  
for more details!

## Club Highlights

Since hosting the APVMA Symposium in 2018, Auburn's PVMA has worked hard to bring the focus back to serving their members and local community. Some of their events include meetings with the Dean of Admissions at AUCVM, social events with dogs and famous Toomer's Lemonade, and service events in collaboration with AUCVM and their local humane society. They are also working on bringing more mental health awareness to their members; last year they hosted a local psychology researcher studying mental health in veterinarians, who came to speak on common triggers and signs of depression in vets as well as to increase awareness for how to prevent these issues in the veterinary community. The club is also excited to attend this year's APVMA Symposium in the spring!

# Thank You to Our Sponsors!

