



Mile High Branch of AALAS Newsletter

Volume 1 2022



<https://milehighbranchaalas.wildapricot.org/>

President's Message

Dear MHB members,

As we welcome in the year 2022, we continue to meet the day to day challenges associated with the pandemic. We are all experiencing staffing shortages because of Covid related illnesses and absences, putting a strain on our goal to provide quality animal care. These challenges can lead to abundant opportunities to learn, teach, and mentor by creating a platform for development. We have learned to be creative in our ways of providing quality care, by being forced to think "outside the box". We put forth the attitude to do what it takes while remaining positive, committed, and dedicated. To achieve our goals, we must remind ourselves to take care and seek the balance between our commitment to our job and to ourselves.

Together we all lead by; commitment, support, cohesiveness, and dedication to our mission of providing humane care and quality research. We are directly contributing to scientific gains that benefit people and animals.

Thank you!

I hope everyone was able to enjoy some fun activities for technician week. The Mile High Branch delivered planners to our Front Range institutions as a gift to each of the technicians in support of technician week. We recognize your hard work every day of the year.

The board members are busy searching for a venue for our fall meeting and look forward to this annual event. We are excited to; introduce new topics, speakers, and join together to socialize with colleagues within our research community. We are currently accepting posters and tech talk speakers for our fall meeting.

If you know of anyone interested in speaking, or have suggestions for speakers/topics, please contact myself or a board member.

I also encourage all facilities to take part in Biomedical Research Awareness Day (BRAD) on April 21st. BRAD is an international program focused on increasing awareness of the role of animals in biomedical research and medical advancements for humans and animals. This event facilitates bringing together staff and public, to educate and advocate for the importance of animals in medical research.

We, as the Mile High Branch, are looking forward to another successful year, and can't wait to see what the year 2022 has in store. Spring is just around the corner with warmer weather to follow. Take time to reflect, and enjoy all the opportunities our beautiful state has to offer.

Take care of yourselves,

Ruth



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The Mile High Branch is looking for people to present posters and give oral presentations at the next MHB meeting this coming fall.

Posters and presentations can be about your research, general husbandry, or even ideas for changes and improvements in our field.

All members of AALAS MHB (Researchers, Technicians, anyone) are welcome to present.

All Oral presentations will receive a \$50 honorarium.

Posters have a chance to win \$50 or \$75



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MHB Tech Spotlight

Meet Kelly W.

Kelly has contributed as an Animal Care Technician I at National Jewish Health since May, 2017. She enthusiastically assists in the operations of our facility on a daily basis. She is such a great contributor to our team!

Kelly is a reptile and arachnid hobbyist. Her colleagues enjoy all the fun facts that she shares with us related to these species.

Kelly's featured pet:

Sylvester, an 11-year-old, Male Ball Python

Sylvester is sweet and curious with new people, but can startle easily if there is any sudden motion.

He enjoys exploring when taken out of his terrarium. His main interests include eating, hiding, and cuddling. Interestingly, he can go up to 6 months without eating.



Picture of Kelly with her Ball Python



Picture of Ball Python

Would you like to be featured in an issue of the MHB newsletter? Send a photo and a bit about yourself. Please send this to [Dawn Olson](#)



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BRAD
Biomedical Research Awareness Day

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AALAS LEARNING LIBRARY
Animal Care and Use in Research and Education



All Mile High Branch Members have free access to the learning library as part of their membership. If you would like access, please contact [Dawn Olson](#).

Want to see your pet featured in an upcoming newsletter? Please submit a picture and the following information:

Name, Nicknames, owner, siblings, favorite toys, likes dislikes

Send all of this to [Dawn Olson](#)

If you submitted your pet, but didn't see them in this issue- check out the next issue!

Check IT Out

Have you heard? Cindy Buckmaster has a podcast about lab animal research and the folks that work in the field. You can listen to GetReal! at BUZZSPROUT.COM

Check out the website of The North American 3Rs Collaborative:
<https://www.na3rsc.org/>

Love to binge watch Youtube videos? There are 2 channels that will let you learn about the lab animal field at the same time!

Lab Animal Chat and Celebrate Animal Research and Education will help you learn more about the field while providing information to talk to others about what you do.



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The 2022 Awards Nominations are now open!

Deadline for nominating:

July 1st, 2022

Click [HERE](#) for the link to nominate a deserving MHB member.

[PMI LabDiet Award Nomination](#)

The recipient should have daily contact with laboratory animals. The recipient should demonstrate; positive attitudes toward animal welfare, performance excellence, pursuit of knowledge in the field of laboratory animal care, and innovative approaches to husbandry related problems. All considerations being equal, candidates having current membership in local or national AALAS will be given preference. This award is open to all in the field of laboratory animal care. Supervisory responsibility and formal degrees are not important considerations for this award.

[AALAS National Meeting Travel Award Nomination](#)

Nominee should be an animal care technician, supervisor, veterinary/animal health technician, or support staff with a minimum of one year work experience in laboratory animal science and not eligible for travel funds from their employer to attend the national meeting. Nominee's participation in a national meeting should foster a commitment to a future in lab animal science and provide opportunity to a member with less experience participating in national branch activities. Nominee's supervisor must sign off permission for nominee to attend national AALAS meeting and nominee is expected to either speak at a MHB meeting or submit an article to the newsletter on their experiences at the national AALAS meeting.

[Jon C. Fulfs Technician of the Year Award Nomination](#)

This award is given specifically for the activities of an individual within the branch and is based on the following criteria: Demonstrates a positive attitude, high performance level, and innovative approach toward the betterment of animal care. Promotes the field of laboratory animal technology through education or training of technicians and participation in the certification process. Assumes a leadership role that promotes the certification process. Supports AALAS (branch member, national member, AALAS certification). Actively participates in the MHB through years of service, presentation of papers, programs, workshops, posters, or special activities and awards. Individual accomplishments: additional certificates earned or pertinent education, participation in additional learning or information exchange programs for other societies, schools, etc; employment responsibilities, and personal projects and achievements which have benefited the Branch.

[Julia Granowski Member of the Year Award Nomination](#)

This award is given to a member who has dedicated their time and effort above and beyond their normal expectations. This person attends and participates in branch meetings including (but not limited to); general and board meetings, serves on the Board of Directors, is available to willingly help their fellow members, gives input to the Branch, volunteers, works hard to meet deadlines and encourages others to become active within the Branch. This person is dedicated to the field of laboratory animal science and its betterment. This person is respected by their peers for their commitment to the MHB and its goals.



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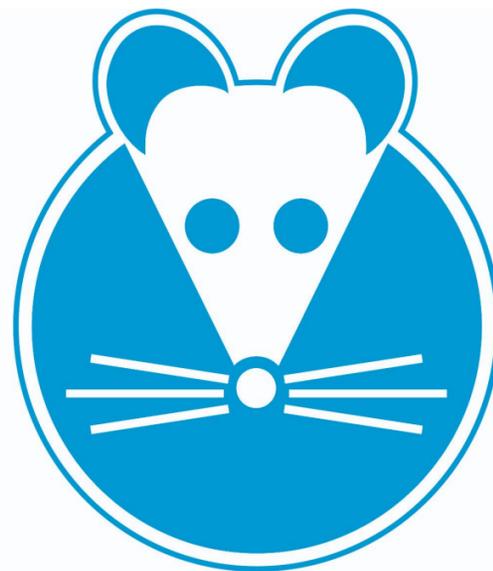


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Please join us for the
**Biomedical Research Awareness
Day (BRAD) 2022 webinar!**



**Gone fishing: How zebrafish
can teach us about human
health and disease**

Thursday, April 21, 1:30-2:30 PM ET

Presenter: Florence Marlow, Ph.D.

Associate Professor, Department of Cell, Developmental & Regenerative Biology
Icahn School of Medicine at Mount Sinai

Register at BRADglobal.org

We have all experienced illness and disease, either ourselves or our loved ones and friends. Sometimes illness has a known cause like an environmental exposure or infection with a pathogen, but other times our own genes and cells cause or contribute to the disease.

Dr. Marlow's research focuses on reproductive health and fertility using a vertebrate animal model, the zebrafish. Her talk will explore how this tiny vertebrate came to be an important genetic model for discovery of the genes that contribute to human health and disease.

Sponsored by

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BRAD is a program of Americans for Medical Progress



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What is your group doing for BRAD day? Send pictures and a write up and it will be included in the next MHB newsletter.

Featured Technician- is there someone at your institution that you would like to see featured in the next newsletter? Please send a picture and a brief write up about them.

Want to earn \$50? Submit an article to the MHB AALAS newsletter!

Authors of published articles will receive \$50 honorarium.

Here are the deadlines for upcoming issues:

June 17th

Sept 16th

Dec 16th

Submit articles to [Dawn Olson](#).

AVIDITY
SCIENCE



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Underwater

MHB Aquatics Corner

RSPCA 2022
FOCUS ON FISH
Practical refinements for fishes in research and testing

ONLINE EVENT ▶ 23 FEBRUARY 2022 | 11:00 – 16:15 GMT

LEARN MORE

FREE TO ATTEND

RSPCA's 2nd Annual Focus on Fish web conference: Feb 23, 2022

Free event replay for 2022 and 2022 editions available at <https://focusonfish.co.uk/>

The UK animal welfare organization again emphasized issues relevant to laboratory zebrafish, including ongoing work to characterize refinements in zebrafish enrichment, anesthesia, and euthanasia. This year, there was a special emphasis on planning and reporting zebrafish research with the [PREPARE](#) and [ARRIVE](#) Guidelines to make real improvements in how fish are treated in the lab. Clear communication and consideration of the many nuances of animal housing, handling, and experiences – like have become standard for most of our mammalian models – will continue to improve fish welfare and the validity of scientific data, but only if all involved make a concerted effort to apply consistent standards to care for our finned friends.

World Aquaculture Society conference: Feb 28 – March 4, 2022

San Diego, CA

Each year, this is a who's-who of zebrafish care – WAS serves as the primary meeting for the [Zebrafish Husbandry Association](#), where our peers gather to compare notes on best practices in zebrafish housing and feeding, water quality problems and solutions, health monitoring, and innovative new technical solutions to improve data collection and fish welfare. An added bonus is the opportunity to network with and learn from professionals who care for other aquatic species: everything from corals to koi, mussels to tilapia, shrimp to burbot! Anyone who works with fish in the lab should add this to their conference wish list.

You don't need to wait for the next WAS conference to connect with zebrafish husbandry colleagues. Check out the ZHA's site for information on [Danio Zoom Fridays](#) – these Town Hall-style zoom sessions are open to non-members, too!





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HUSBANDRY Sudoku

Complete the Sudoku puzzle below.

Each row, column, and 3x3 grid contains the letters in the word HUSBANDRY

				Y	N		U	
	B					R		N
				D	S		H	
		D			R	B	Y	
H			S		U			R
	U	N	D			H		
	D		N	R				
B		R					N	
	A		Y	S				



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THE NORTH AMERICAN
3Rs COLLABORATIVE





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In Memoriam

On January 5, we lost a legend in laboratory animal care and use. Ulla Kristina (Fichtelius) Stephens passed peacefully at the age of 86. Born in Sweden, Ulla Kristina received her BS degree from the University of Upsala. Her Masters was earned from Webster University while living in Colorado. Being an adventurous young lady, she migrated by ship in 1961 to New Orleans and began her illustrious career in laboratory animal care and technology in 1963 at the University of Texas Medical Branch in Galveston. She not only started a new career path, but met and married the love of her life, Sherwood Stephens.

It is hard to imagine that there is a laboratory animal technician, technologist, ILAM graduate, or animal facility manager, in our community, that has not benefited from the diligent and faithful dedication to our career paths forged by Ulla Kristina Stephens. When a house is built, one must start with a firm foundation before the walls and roofs can be added. Ulla Kristina was a major component of laying that solid foundation for which we have all benefited from.

Kristina continually strove with utmost resilience to create pathways of professionalism for laboratory animal caregivers. She spread her magical influence by working hard to create opportunities to serve on committees, in programs, and with organizations while mentoring people's involvement in them with profound wisdom, often leading to much success. Did she do this alone? Of course not. That was the secret sprinkle of her magic dust. Ulla Kristina always found a way to encourage, cajole, and/or support a person in laboratory animal technology to be an active participant in their career advancement and future by becoming involved in the organizations that helped improve animal welfare practices, support increasing their practical knowledge and enhancing their professional growth.

Ulla Kristina held several administrative positions throughout her career including, several at academic institutions in Texas, NCTR in Arkansas, University of Colorado Health Science Center, Oregon State University, University of Wisconsin, and the University of Georgia. She was a member of the following AALAS branches; Texas, Arkansas, Mile High, Oregon, Wisconsin, and the SEAALAS. Also, she was a member of the AALAS Board of Trustees representing District 7.

She authored and co-authored numerous chapters, articles and created poster sessions in support of ensuring best practice in animal husbandry and animal technology professionalism. Additionally, Kristina was also a frequent presenter in this effort.

Kristina was an early chair of the Council on Laboratory Animal Technicians (COLAT), Liaison to the Animal Technician Certification Board (ATCB), founding member and first President of the Laboratory Animal Management Association (LAMA), an active participant in the formation of the Institute of Laboratory Animal Management (ILAM) and a member of the first ILAM Board of Regents. She was frequently recognized as our AALAS bridge to European and Canadian associations, serving as liaison, presenter, or joint committee member to such organizations such as FELASA; SCAND-LAS, CALAS, and the IAT.

Some of the prestigious awards that Ulla Kristina received during her career were: – Purina Technician of the Year, AALAS' Animal Technician of the Year, George R. Collins, Joseph J. Garvey awards, the Charles River Medallion and the initial LAMA award named in her honor, the U. Kristina Stephens Award. Additionally, Kristina was the recipient of many AALAS branch awards.

Ulla Kristina Stephens was an ardent supporter of the laboratory animal care and use profession on a truly international level. She was a unique pillar in the animal technology field who will be sorely missed. Rest in peace our "Momma LAMA".



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Photo with Kristina and some other MHB members at a party at James' house.



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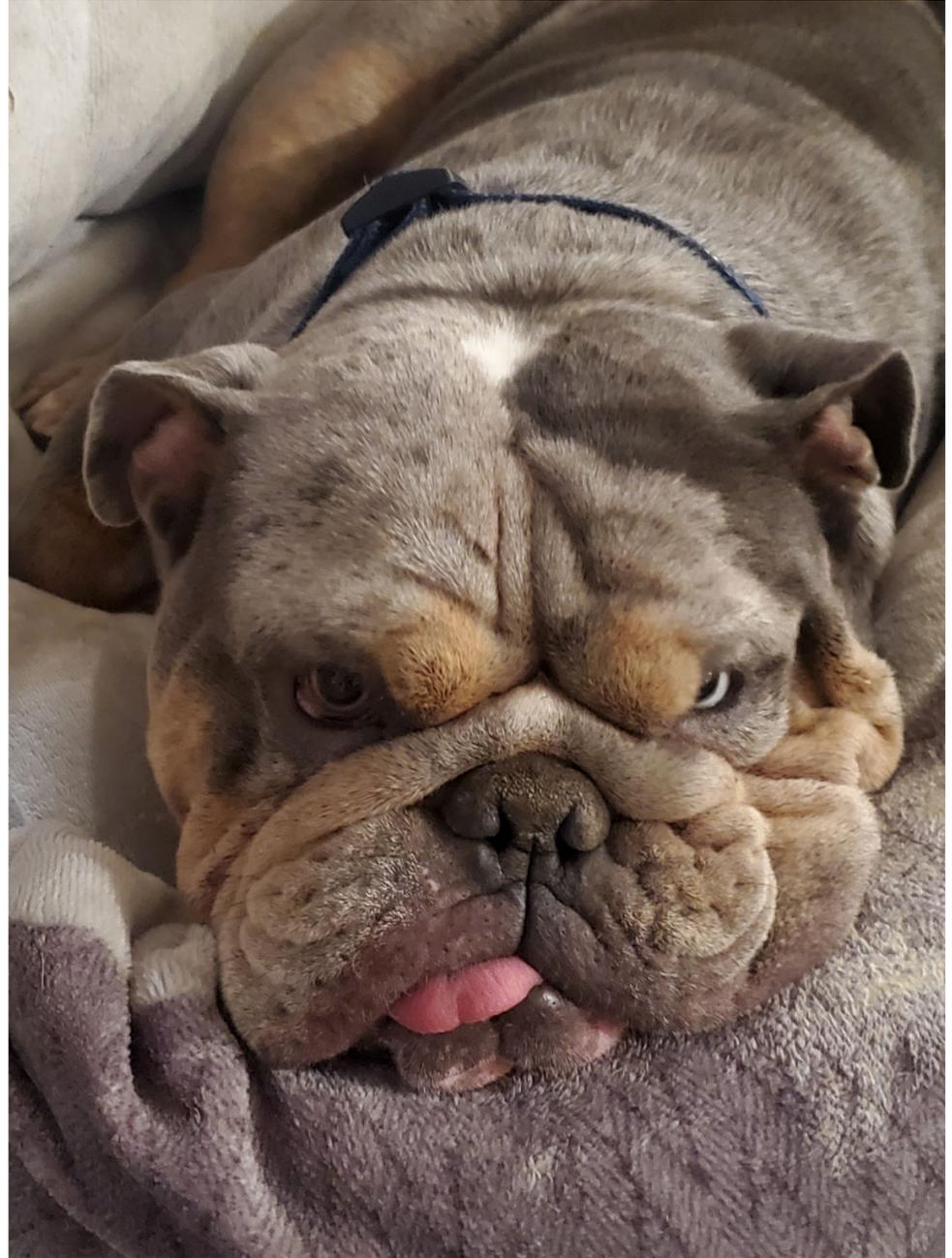
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Featured Pet

1. Name Sully
2. Nicknames Squishy
3. Owned by Michelle Wallace
- 4 Siblings Belle and Charlee
5. Favorite toys (or things to do)
Loves anything that has a squeaker in it.
6. Likes Napping and treats!
- 7 Dislikes Exercise!





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Featured Pet



Gus (left) and Cooper (right)

2. Gustopher and Coop-a-Loop

3. Sarah Williams

4. Logan (8 year old human)

5. Gus likes to steal Coopers ball so that he will chase him; Cooper is obsessed with tennis balls.

6. Gus likes to sleep 23 hours a day, and Cooper loves to play fetch.

7. Gus hates to be in trouble as he is a very sensitive soul, and Coop pretty much loves everything!



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Let me introduce myself. I am Mahtowa, a 4 year old CavaPoo. I live in Wyoming with my personal slave, Gail (Heidbrink) Thompson. My name came from a little village in Northern Minnesota, that my caregiver's Great Grandparents helped to settle in the 1800's. It is Ojibwa for "Spirit of the Bear". The caregiver calls "Mahtowa Thompson" when I am doing my best to ignore her and have more fun outside. Otherwise, she calls me Mahti or Sweet Baby Boy.

I have a very BIG brother at the ranch. He is a white horse with big patches of brown and black scattered on his body. He is a "Paint" named Doc San Pat. I get to ride in a special backpack when we take Doc out for a ride.

My favorite toy is a little rubber monkey with long ropes for the arms and legs. I can grab one of those arms or legs and spin around and around and around until I get dizzy. Mom claps her hands and yells "ride 'em cowboy". The monkey was a present when I was just a puppy and I take good care of him.

There are two things that I really love, love, love! The beautiful, warm hair dryer is so nice. I don't mind a bath because I know that the warm wonderful hair dryer is soon to follow. When Mom tries to dry her hair, I let her know that the hair dryer is really mine and she must share that warm, wonderful breeze at least 50% of the drying time.



Photo took best in show at the Wyoming State Fair

My other favorite thing to do is to ride in the car. My personal driver took me to Memphis not long ago. We went to the AALAS office and I had a wonderful time. Everyone was so nice to me and let me run around from office to office. Almost every office had small stuffed animals scattered around. My game was to steal one of those critters and watch those fun people chase me. What a fun game that was!

I don't like feral cats that jump the fence and invade my yard. Nasty invaders!

Mile High Branch members are not invaders, so come up to Wyoming. I will have my personal caregiver fix us something yummy to eat and drink!





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A Snowy Winters' Day

By Ulla Kristina Stephens

Dedicated to Mary Kuettel who volunteered to help.

It was right before Christmas in 1982 and it had been snowing all night with howling winds creating large drifts around the city of Denver, Colorado. It was a so called "Up-Slope Snowstorm" that first blew in from the West and then returned with a vengeance from the East. The snowdrifts made driving impossible and all traffic had come to a halt. My husband was snowbound in the Laramie Mountain Range, Wyoming, with a friend of his and I needed to fend for myself. Our rental home was situated in the eastern part of the city, close to a major thoroughfare. When I tried to open the front door from the inside, I found a wall of snow all the way up to the roof. The only way I could get a little elbow room to start removing the snow was to use a dustpan to cut my way through the drift a little bit at a time.

I had just taken a new position as the Assistant Director of the animal facility at the University of Colorado Health Science Center located in the middle of the city. Part of my responsibilities were to set work-schedules for weekends and holidays. My current concerns of "Who will be able to get to work" were quickly answered via telephone calls when one by one, the scheduled personnel called me to say, "I cannot get to work today". Mary, one of the animal technicians, called me and offered to come into the main facility since she lived just a couple of blocks from the animal facility. One Supervisor lived on the University's animal farm, where the cows and goats needed to be taken care of. He called and said he would take care of the animals on the farm, and I said that I would do my best to take care of the animals in the facility with Mary's help.

An animal facility needs daily care and the animals' welfare was foremost on my mind as the snow kept falling. I put on my hiking boots, packed a lunch, bundled up in my Swedish anorak (similar to a parka", and started my long trek throughout the quiet city. The snow kept falling and I was amazed how quiet the city was without the traffic. As I was walking along my regular driving route, I was intrigued by seeing the people along the way. People were out of their houses to shovel snow and actually talking to their neighbors. Imagine that. The sun peaked through the clouds and the day seemed to make a turn for the better. Several individuals approached me wondering "where are you going, and what are you going to do?" I explained to them that I needed to make sure that the animals in our care at the University would at the minimum have clean caging,



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food and water to drink. I was offered a cup of hot chocolate by one and a cookie by another. The people encouraged my effort and asked me to stop by on my way home. I kept on walking for about an hour and a half through the snow until I reached the University building. Mary was there already and we divided the work to be done. I was to take care of the rodents and dogs. Mary was to take care of the rabbits, cats, and non-human primates. When I set out to “check” an animal room, I had developed a mental checklist to follow. As I step into the room, I close my eyes and take a deep breath to pick up the odor of any dead animals in the room. I listened for sneezes or rasping breaths from the animals. I would make notes for the veterinarian to start treatment if they so prescribed. Then I would systematically check all cages to see if the cage needed changing, if feed is needed, if water is needed. I also keep an eye on the animals’ behavior. As I finish the room I would take a last look, close the door, and thankfully realize that all the animals in the room have shelter, food, and water. There were several rodent rooms to “check”. Two of the rooms contained long term aging studies and those rooms required special attention. The dog section needs daily cleaning of the enclosures. Water and feed are also daily chores in that section. Some of the dogs were on long term studies and had become playful and friendly. The dogs usually welcomed us when we entered their domain.

It was a special day for me. I felt that this day was needed for me to get back to the basics of animal care and I have often thought back on my trek in the snow to be able to provide the animal care. On my way home, I had to dodge many snow removers who operated the streets in tandem. The trek home to my dog took just about as long as before, but I walked home with a lighter heart with the moon and stars shining up above in the sky, knowing that the animals in our care were taken care of this snowy wintry day.

Thanks Mary, for your help.