

4/27/12

To Branch Boards in the South Pacific Zone of District 8!

On behalf of the D8 2012 Planning Committee I'd like to thank everyone who attended this year's meeting and hope that your experience met or exceeded your expectations for educational information, commercial product updates and the always important networking opportunities with your colleagues. For those who couldn't join us this year, we are sorry we missed you.

The meeting was over 2 years in the making. The Planning Committee started meeting to plan it shortly after the 2010 meeting in AZ. We were very fortunate to have such a detailed and complete summary provided to us by the Desert Zone Planning Committee for their meeting. It certainly helped us get on our way and know what to look out for! Thank you Desert Zone for all your help!

In the two + years of this planning process we learned how important communication is and also the variety of ways that effective communication can be achieved. Every zone is going to encounter the problem of logistics and the challenges that come with having branches that could be hundreds of miles away from each other. Take advantage of electronic meeting technology as often as you can and keep accurate notes of your discussions. It can be very important as you proceed with your plans.

With that said, I'd like to commend my outstanding committee and the effort each did to contribute to the overall success of the meeting.

The San Diego Branch – Rick Alvarez & Anna Herrera representing the branch and Morag Mackay – D8 Trustee – Our face to face meetings were always held in Irvine, CA. These people would drive up to the meeting location time after time and never complained about it. Rick's involvement increased significantly as we got very close to the event and during the event and we were so glad he was there to help with our AV needs and negotiations on pricing. Way to go Rick! Anna was very helpful in working with vendor issues, site selection and advertising review. She also provided us with many conference call coordinations that helped us communicate when we couldn't all be together. Mo! What can I say?? She wasn't even going to be on the committee but somehow became one of our key members. Her ability to look at a situation from a common sense place kept many of our discussions on the right track. As the program completion was coming to an end – she spent many, many extra hours reviewing and correcting. Not to mention her efforts in publicity and getting the word out to other branches and getting us the COHEN money for this event. For lack of a better term, she was the 'guinea pig' for this effort and I am so grateful to her for what she got us.

She also helped coordinate the pins, art work, bags and other goodies that everyone seems to look forward too.

The Orange County Branch – Kim Rossall and Elliot Schwed – Kim not only provided her office space for our meetings but often times also paid for our lunches. Her generosity was greatly appreciated. Kim also was the main contact for the commercial attendees and worked with the hotel to make sure placement of the tables met our many changes. Elliot was always willing and able to assist in any way he could. His attention to our financial accuracy was a God-send. I felt reassured knowing he had this end of the meeting under control.

The Palms to Pines Branch – Bruce Kennedy and Christian Stoffers – Bruce went over and above to work on and create a comprehensive program for our attendees. I know for a fact he worked in the evenings, weekends and probably while traveling to make this happen. Bruce enlisted the help of John Hasenau and Roger Geertsema to help coordinate the workshops – and they did an excellent job with that. Christian became quite the expert for the 123SignUp program we used to register vendors and attendees. His calm and clear way of communicating progress and status of our registrations and his willingness to be on hand at the registration table all three days were commendable. He even called into one of our meetings while he was on vacation. Ok so it got him out of doing some house repairs but I was still impressed that he called in.

The Hawaii Branch – Diana Talerico and Robin Grain – The 3000 mile away branch! It was a welcome challenge to engage and include these hard working people in our zone. Diana and Robin did all they could to participate and help with the planning of this meeting. Their work assignments don't lend themselves to being able to do many other activities but we knew they were there in spirit. In fact, when we needed funding early on, it was the HI branch that came to our rescue. And of course the lovely shell leis we all received at the welcome reception were provided by the HI branch.

The So. Ca Branch – Stacy Pritt and Denise Breazeal – Representing the branch and Gene Rukavina – D8 Trustee. Stacy provided many good ideas on how the meeting should be handled based on her experience with other large meetings. It is this type of experience and knowledge that can turn a bad idea into a good idea. She was our scribe many times for key meeting ideas. Stacy also helped with publicity and spreading the meeting information to several other organizations. Gene was very helpful in his computer savvy way. He was able to connect with many online sites and link the registration process to easily accessible mechanisms to reach as many people as possible. It was the So. CA. Branch that was able to use its non-exempt tax status to receive the COHEN money from National. I'd like to thank the branch as a whole for allowing their filing status to assist this effort!

Poster Session - Gina Ma, Cindy Tessler and Kim Overhulse – made the poster session a success. I heard nothing but good comments about the quality of the posters, the ease of viewing them and the interesting content provided.

IACUC 101 – Mary Lou James – Mary Lou did a phenomenal job in advertizing and providing a very quality program for the attendees. Bruce worked with her throughout the planning stages and with both on board it may just raise the bar for future D8 meetings. Inclusion of similar interest meetings at the same time can be a win/win for everyone.

Vet Tech Program – Ellen Teneriello – Ellen led the focus and coordination of this opportunity. We have to remember that many of the up and coming veterinary students may very well end up in our field. To introduce them to our industry and teach them of the necessity of having caring people working with our research animals is literally securing the future of quality research animal care.

Well without all these people doing so much, this meeting would not have been possible. These aren't easy events to pull off. It takes a lot of dedicated people, a lot of dedicated time and resources. We all have 'real' jobs that must come first. Somehow we managed to do that and also put on a successful meeting for all our D8 membership and do so with professionalism and class! ☺

Thank you to all my Committee members, the Speakers and work shop Coordinators and trainers, IACUC 101 planners, Poster Session team, the Vet Tech effort, all the people who volunteered and worked at the registration table and National AALAS for their generous contribution to our financial needs.

Please note: There will be financial payouts provided to all the branches that contributed to the meeting. We do not know the actual amounts at this time. We will be able to provide these checks to you once we receive all the payment documentation and funds from the 123Signup program. This can take up to 3 months from the end of the 123signup arrangement. So please be patient! We will keep everyone up to date and informed as this time approaches.

In my opinion and many others I have heard from the meeting was a success and the attendees felt it was a worthwhile effort. It was my pleasure to work with all of you and I will never forget it. Of course I mean that in the best possible way..... !!!!! ☺

Denise Breazeal
District 8 2012 Meeting Chair