

# Florida veterinarian

Advancing Animal, Human and Environmental Health

Fall 2005

## Poultry nutrition expert's life much more than chicken feed

By SARAH CAREY

**B**orn in Pakistan, U.S. citizen, works for a German company and lives in India. That's what Salim Bootwalla, D.V.M., Ph.D., '95, who held master's and doctorate degrees in poultry nutrition and physiology before he even entered veterinary school at the University of Florida, says when people ask where he's from.

"My friends still tease me that I have been a professional student," Bootwalla says. "But it has paid off, not only in terms of monetary remunerations and positions in my company, but also in the tremendous satisfaction I receive from working with our customers and colleagues in my company.

It all fits together -- poultry nutrition, management, biosecurity, animal welfare and friendship."

A key mentor in Bootwalla's decision to attend veterinary school was Gary Butcher, D.V.M., Ph.D., the college's poultry extension veterinarian, whom Bootwalla met during his post-doctoral program in poultry nutrition in 1998.

"He insisted that I consider pursuing my career in veterinary medicine and encouraged me to apply to vet school, thinking

*"One major thing I learned in veterinary school is that all animals deserve respect, regardless of the purpose for which they are kept."*

- Salim Bootwalla, D.V.M., Ph.D.

that a combination of a poultry nutrition and a veterinary background would give me a unique advantage for advancing my career in poultry science," Bootwalla says.

That projection has definitely come to pass.

Bootwalla, who says he spends more time on planes and in hotels than at home in Mumbai (Bombay), India, works as technical services manager for Degussa, a German-based specialty chemical company that happens to be the largest producer of amino acids used in animal nutrition for poultry, swine and dairy cows. His present working territory includes India, Pakistan, Bangladesh, Nepal, Sri Lanka and Indonesia.

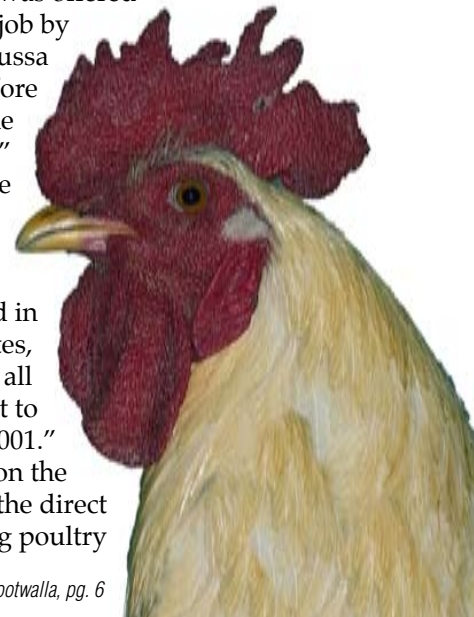
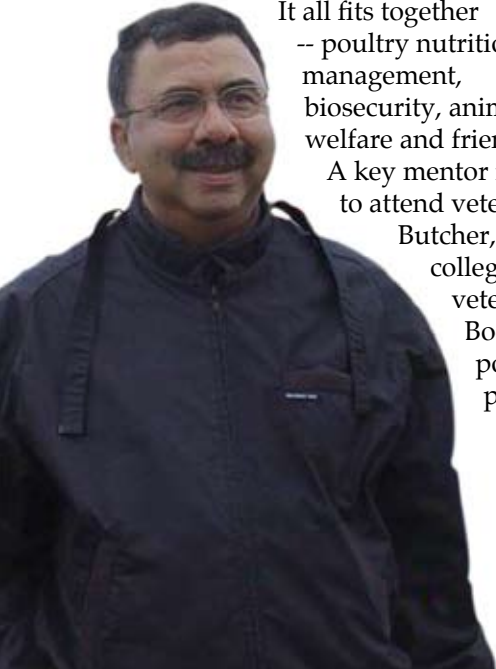
"I was offered a job by Degussa before

my graduation from the UF veterinary school," Bootwalla said. "The company was looking for a technical services person to cover the Middle East.

This position was based in the United Arab Emirates, and I was responsible for all the countries from Egypt to Bangladesh from 1995-2001."

His present position on the Indian subcontinent was the direct result of the fast-growing poultry

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Julie Levy, D.V.M., Ph.D., has been named the 2005 Outstanding Woman Veterinarian of the Year by the The Association for Women Veterinarians.

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# Message from the dean



Dean Joe DiPietro

**F**all is in the air here at the University of Florida, “the Foundation for the Gator Nation.”

Heard that slogan before? Well, you’ll be hearing it more and more because it’s part of a new UF public relations and marketing campaign that kicked off this fall. Here at the UF College of Veterinary Medicine, we’re an active part of the Gator Nation and we celebrate this sense of unity and team spirit in a variety of ways.

Last weekend, we held Homecoming activities here at the college, drawing some 250 people back to Gainesville for our annual alumni barbecue and pre-game activities. Even though it doesn’t exactly feel like fall, weather-wise, Homecoming is always a major event here at the college and this year was no exception.

On Oct. 2, Team VetMed once more demonstrated our college’s unique ability to work together for a meaningful cause. More than \$34,000 was raised for student scholarships, thanks to the 70 or so riders who cycled for pledges during the annual Horse Farm Hundred bike ride.

The camaraderie experienced by our team members, who consist of veterinary students, faculty, alumni and other friends of the college, during the training phase as well as the actual ride, is truly remarkable. I’m proud to be a part of Team VetMed. I’m even more proud to note the team’s growth in terms of number of riders participating and in terms of the commitment reflected by the dollars raised for such a good cause.

The college is doing its part to assist the animal and human victims of Hurricane Katrina, and we hope to do more. The Board of Directors of the American Association of Veterinary Medical Colleges has established a Disaster Fund to provide grants to member institutions for unbudgeted, non-reimbursed expenses incurred in disaster relief activities.

Initially the AAVMC will provide \$20,000 regardless of how much is raised by matching contributions provided by students, faculty, staff and alumni of the 32 North American colleges of veterinary medicine and 16 affiliated departments of veterinary science and comparative medicine. In addition, the AAVMC will match donations made to the fund by colleges and other association constituents up to a total of \$50,000, thereby creating the potential for a \$100,000 fund.

As the current president of AAVMC, I’m gratified to report that our college has raised \$3,730, clearly surpassing our goal of \$2,500 for the Disaster Fund.

It’s just one more demonstration that at the UF CVM, we’re a family that cares. Best wishes for a great fall.

Dean Joe DiPietro  
“Joe”

## College breaks ground for Deriso Hall

by Sarah Carey

**W**hen Deriso Hall is completed in late 2006, faculty and staff of the college’s Food Animal Reproduction and Medicine Service will finally have all of their base operations under one roof.

“As long as we’ve existed, we’ve never had everything together,” said Dr. Owen Rae, FARMS service chief and a longtime CVM faculty member. “What this building will do is give us a home base that will provide us with everything we need to function: a reception area, office space, a large seminar room with video projection capabilities, a large teaching area and two full-sized laboratories.”

Groundbreaking ceremonies for the 10,000 square-foot building to be known as Deriso Hall took place June 6, with approximately 60 people in attendance, including representatives from the university’s facilities planning division, Perry Construction, and many former and current faculty and staff members from the department of large animal clinical sciences.

Presentations began in the large animal hospital auditorium, with brief remarks by college Dean Joseph DiPietro, LACS chair Eleanor Green, professor emeritus Dr. Paul Nicoletti, attorney Robert Clark, Vice President of the Institute of Food and Agricultural Sciences Dr. Jimmy Cheek and UF President Bernie Machen.

Deriso Hall is the direct result of a public-private partnership that began with an estate gift to the college from Bob

and Evelyn Deriso, a Tampa couple who had interests in cattle at one time in their lives. The Derisos asked their attorney, Dan Brown, a friend of UF’s Nicoletti, how they could contribute in a meaningful way to help the cattle industry and Brown told them about Nicoletti’s contributions in the area of brucellosis, a deadly disease that affects livestock and that was a major concern to cattle owners in the Derisos’ day.

The rest, as they say, is history.



Earline Nicoletti, Dr. Paul Nicoletti and Dean Joseph DiPietro gather during the Deriso groundbreaking ceremony on June 6.

The Deriso’s \$1.3 million gift was made in honor of Nicoletti’s professional contributions toward brucellosis control, and was subsequently matched and supplemented with additional state dollars.

UF President Machen took note of the collaborative aspects of the Deriso gift in his remarks.

“The only way we’ll continue to grow and prosper is through partnerships between the public and private sector,” he said. 🍀



In front row, Dr. Owen Rae, Dr. Wy Cripe, Delores Foreman, Dr. Paul Nicoletti, Dr. Zuleika Cotto, Dr. Traci Krueger, Dr. Maarten Drost, and Dr. Lou Archbald. In rear: Dr. Max Irsik, Dr. Carlos Risco, Dr. Art Donovan, Dr. Mauricio Benzaquen, Dr. Ken Braun, Dr. Jan Shearer and Dr. Eleanor Green.

## University of Florida Veterinary Medical Teaching Hospital is now VMC

**T**he University of Florida Veterinary Medical Teaching Hospital has changed its name to the University of Florida Veterinary Medical Center to more accurately reflect its advanced care and out-patient services. The new name is effective immediately and was developed with input from clients, clinicians and faculty.

The VMC is part of the UF College of Veterinary Medicine and is located on the university’s Gainesville campus. The college’s mission includes providing superior patient care, educating veterinary students in clinical and practice skills, and advancing new knowledge to enhance animal, human and environmental health.

“Although the Center continues to implement the college mission, we felt our old name failed to adequately reflect the extent of the hospital services we provide,” said the college’s dean, Joseph A. DiPietro, D.V.M. “Our new name better represents the comprehensive and sophisticated array of diagnostic capabilities and innovative services we offer our animal patients, including cardiology, animal behavior, dentistry, acupuncture and integrative care.”

DiPietro added that the new name better communicates UF’s high number of board-certified veterinary specialists — most of whom have training on a par equivalent to medical oncologists, cardiologists, surgeons and others.

The VMC consists of a small animal hospital that cares for companion animals including dogs, cats and exotic pets, and a large animal hospital that cares primarily for horses. Nearly 17,000 animals from all over Florida and beyond were seen and treated at UF last year.

For more information, call (352) 392-4700, ext. 5000, or visit the college’s Web site at: [www.vetmed.ufl.edu](http://www.vetmed.ufl.edu).

## UF scientist finds unexpected link between cat and human AIDS viruses

By SARAH CAREY

A University of Florida researcher has discovered an unexpected link between the viruses that cause feline and human AIDS: Cats vaccinated with an experimental strain of the human AIDS virus appear to be at least as well-protected against the feline version of the disease as those immunized with the vaccine currently used by veterinarians.

The surprise finding may mean cats with feline immunodeficiency virus, also known as FIV or feline AIDS, could eventually be treated even more effectively using some form of the experimental human vaccine. Researcher Janet Yamamoto, a professor at UF's College of Veterinary Medicine, also theorizes that these emerging relationships between the two viruses could one day lead to a vaccine for human AIDS.

Results from Yamamoto's research were published in the Sept. 8 online issue of AIDS.

FIV is a natural infection of domestic cats that results in an immunodeficiency syndrome resembling HIV infection in humans. Since its discovery in 1987, FIV infection of cats has been used in vaccine studies as a small-animal model of human AIDS.

"We were the first to demonstrate that you can make an effective vaccine against a virus in the AIDS family of viruses," said Yamamoto, a co-discoverer of FIV.

Yamamoto holds the patent on the only approved vaccine available through veterinarians to protect cats against FIV. Her most recent studies have attempted to improve the efficacy of that vaccine by using strains of FIV found in cats in which the disease had not progressed for some reason over a period of several years.

To determine the extent to which the human and feline AIDS viruses react to each other, and any implications that might exist for vaccine efficacy, Yamamoto began experimenting with long-term, nonprogressive strains of FIV that led to the current commercial vaccine. Now she is working on an HIV vaccine consisting of HIV virus from long-term, nonprogressing individuals.

"We purposely made vaccines with strains that weren't virile," Yamamoto said. "We found that whenever we tried using less virulent strains of virus, we were able to make a better vaccine."

Yamamoto's team was also

surprised to discover that a core protein found in HIV also effectively protects cats against FIV.

"So what does this mean to human AIDS research? The viruses HIV and FIV are from the same viral family," Yamamoto said. "For that reason, the amino acids that make up the proteins in both viruses share some common regions. There appear to be regions of HIV, or variations of the core protein we used in our studies, that may provide protection in vaccine form against HIV."

Some compounds made from separate virus strains have been successfully used in vaccines against viruses from the same subfamily, such as smallpox in humans, which is made from cowpox virus, and human measles vaccines for canine distemper in puppies.

"Therefore, protective vaccines based on cross-reactive regions of AIDS viruses can provide broad immunity, and may be useful against viruses that are currently evolving in a new host, such as HIV infection of humans," Yamamoto said.

Alan L. Landay, a professor of immunology and microbiology and associate department chair at Rush University Medical Center in Chicago called Yamamoto's findings "very exciting."

"This raises a potential whole new area for research in the field of vaccines that with the current approaches haven't yielded any success to date," said Landay, whose research team is working to develop novel immune strategies to treat HIV infection. "We need to explore all the potential options available to us for developing an HIV vaccine." 🌱



Dr. Janet Yamamoto

## College co-sponsors zoonotic disease conference

by SARAH CAREY

Seeking to strengthen collaborations in a world where terrorism has become a part of everyday reality and agri-terrorism is one more fear, UF's College of Veterinary Medicine recently joined state agricultural and health officials in sponsoring a summit focusing on emerging zoonotic diseases.

These types of diseases continue to pose a threat to both human and animal health, with up to 75 percent

of newly emerging diseases being zoonotic -- transmissible from animals to humans -- in origin. Growing awareness of the potential for bioterrorism has heightened the importance of understanding and monitoring such diseases and their causes, many speakers said.

Held at the Gainesville Hilton, the day-long event drew attendees from the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention as well as physicians, veterinarians, agricultural officials and other scientists from all over the state and nation.

Among the many speakers who gave presentations was Dr. Paul Gibbs, professor of infectious diseases at the UF veterinary college. Gibbs gave an overview of the driving forces of naturally occurring diseases and epidemics,

"It has been said that the earthquake, that led to the Asian Tsunami



Dr. Ray Mobley, extension veterinarian from Florida A & M University visits with Dean Joseph DiPietro from the UF veterinary college and Dean Robert Frank from the college of Public Health & Health Professions.



Pictured left to right after lunch at the meeting are Dr. Carina Blackmore, acting state public health veterinarian; Dr. Thomas Holt, state veterinarian and director of the Division of Animal Industry; Dr. Lonnie King, keynote luncheon speaker and dean of the College of Veterinary Medicine at Michigan State University; and Dr. Paul Gibbs, professor of infectious disease and viral disease expert.

in 2004, literally rocked the earth's rotation for a millisecond," Gibbs said. "In the 21st century, emerging zoonotic diseases have the potential to devastate the global human population, effect of which could be to 'rock' the earth for a century or more." 🌱

## Canine Influenza Co-discoverer In the News

Stories about canine influenza, a newly emerging pathogen co-discovered by UF scientist Dr. Cynda Crawford, have appeared in national newspapers and media outlets throughout the country and abroad.

The New York Times, the Drudge Report, and most major radio and television networks have covered the story.

Coverage has appeared in National Geographic, U.S. News & World Report, Web M.D., the Washington Post and elsewhere. CNN, CBS Evening News, Good Morning America, CBS Early Show, NPR and others also featured news

segments about canine influenza.

Crawford, together with colleagues from the Centers for Disease Control in Atlanta and Cornell University's virology laboratory, reported in 2004 that several racing greyhounds had



Dr. Cynda Crawford with racing greyhounds

contracted equine influenza virus, representing the first time the virus had jumped species from horses into dogs.

Crawford became aware in April of reports the same virus had made its way into the pet dog population. She has since been amassing samples from sick dogs, working collaboratively with CDC and Cornell in an effort to garner more research about canine influenza.

Dr. Paul Gibbs, Dr. William Castleman and Dr. Richard Hill from UF also assisted in Crawford's research. Their work appeared in the Sept. 26 online issue of Science Magazine. 🐕



Salim Bootwalla surveys a poultry farm in India as part of his job description with the German-based Degussa

industry in that area. The poultry industry around the world is worth more than \$250 billion.

"In addition to the countries I routinely visit, I go to other countries to attend scientific or company meetings, or go on vacation, etc." Bootwalla says, adding that he's routinely in Germany, Singapore, Malaysia, Indonesia and Thailand and has probably visited 60 countries altogether.

"I enjoy different cultures -- their food, traditions and artwork," he says. "I look at the world as a very colorful place. One really starts believing in God when we see our world with such diversity."

Among the memorable events Bootwalla reports experiencing while traveling are bomb blasts in Lebanon, Pakistan and Sri Lanka, nearly missing the tsunami in Thailand, having a brief meeting with Mother Teresa in Calcutta, and having chance meetings with supermodel Naomi Campbell and actor Jodie Foster.

"Last but not least, I've been interrogated many times by immigration officials at various international airports for my dubious distinction of being a Saddam look-alike," he says.

Working for a highly sophisticated, multi-billion dollar industry is both challenging and exciting to Bootwalla.

"Feed for poultry represents 70 percent of the cost of production, therefore producing top quality food economically is extremely important," he says. "Nutrition also plays a vital role in the growth, well-being and immuno-competency of poultry."

Bootwalla's job is to make sure that poultry are raised in the

environments that provide adequate biosecurity and humane conditions.

"One major thing I learned in veterinary school is that all animals deserve respect, regardless of the purpose for which they are kept," he says.

The world needs its chickens, as certain statistics clearly point out. The total world production of broiler chicken, for example, equals roughly 65 million metric tons of chicken meat. About 5.5 billion laying hens in the world produce about 56 million metric tons of eggs. In fact, of all feed produced for food animals (614 million metric tons), about 277 million metric tons are produced for poultry feed.

Bootwalla said he has many good memories of the Class of '95, for which he was class historian.

"I've kept records of all the good and sad memories in the form of pictures," Bootwalla said. "One of our classmates, Melanie Penn, passed away during our school years during a car accident. Her absence is still felt very strongly among all of our class friends and faculty members in the vet school. She was not only a close friend to all of us; she also caused awareness among us on the issues of the environment and animal welfare."

In addition to Butcher, Bootwalla recalls several UF faculty members as mentors, including James Himes, D.V.M., Paul Nicoletti, D.V.M., and Michael Schaer, D.V.M.

"Time flies," Bootwalla says, "I believe we should enjoy life to the fullest. There are infinite things in the world to see and appreciate. We should often put a brake on our busy work schedules and enjoy the world around us. It is really true that 'life is too short.'" 🌿



Salim Bootwalla enjoying a sunset during his travels to one of the 60 countries that he has visited.

## RDVM day

Evaluations received by participants in the 2005 Referring Veterinarian Appreciation Day portray an extremely positive reception to the full day of free continuing education, food and tours of UF's Veterinary Medical Center on July 9.

Exactly half of the 218 veterinarian participants completed and turned in their evaluations, and of those who completed the forms, 99 percent said they'd attend the program again.



Dr. Terry Curtis, '97, and Dr. Melissa Mueller, '00 visit during Referring Veterinarian Appreciation day July 30 at the UF Hilton Hotel.



From left to right: Drs. Andy Howe, Susan Tanhauser, Tracie Daniels, Missy Maler, and Amy Stone, all from the Class of '99.

## Alumni news



The UF CVM's Class of 1985 celebrated its 20 year reunion June 17-20 during a cruise on the Royal Caribbean ship Sovereign of the Seas. Pictured from left to right in the back row are Dr. Susan Baker, Dr. Rick Beldegreen, Dr. Pat Gauvin, Dr. Bill Whittler, Dr. Geoff Gardner, Dr. Rob Boswell, Dr. Paul Curasi and Dr. Steve Brinsko. From left to right in the front row are Dr. Lori Wise, Dr. Diane DeLany, Dr. Lewis, Dr. Julie Jones Reynolds, Dr. Mary Smart-Denison and Dr. Nanette Parrato-Wagner.

# Honors and Awards

## Dean named to food systems institute



Dean Joe DiPietro

Joseph A. DiPietro, D.V.M., dean of the University of Florida College of Veterinary Medicine, is one of a select group of scholars who have been selected to participate in the 2005 Food Systems Leadership Institute.

The institute emphasizes advancing and strengthening the food system by developing strong and effective leaders prepared to bring cultural change to food system organizations, with a special focus on the country's land grant universities.

"Our nation's food systems are critical to the highest standard of living we enjoy in this country," said Ken Swartzel, the institute's director. "Shaping the food systems of the future to be productive, sustainable and equitable will require strong leaders able to implement the vision, strategies and partnerships to meet these goals. We are welcoming an excellent group of experienced

leaders into the FSLI program who will fill these critical leadership roles."

The institute is a partnership between the National Association of State Universities and Land Grant Colleges, which secured a \$1.1 million grant from the W.K. Kellogg Foundation to develop and implement the program. The University of North Carolina will host the program in collaboration with the Ohio State University and the University of Vermont.

DiPietro is president of the American Association of Veterinary Medical Colleges and also is a member of the National Agricultural Research, Extension, Education and Economics advisory board. He recently was named to the board of directors of the National Commission on Veterinary Economics issues.

The NCVEI's mission is to improve the economic base of the veterinary profession, ensuring that the delivery of veterinary care and service meets the needs of society. The commission develops and implements strategies to ensure the future relevance, direction, responsiveness, capacity, and economic health of the veterinary profession. 🐾

## Levy named Outstanding Woman Veterinarian of the Year

The Association for Women Veterinarians has named Julie Levy, D.V.M., Ph.D., an associate professor of small animal medicine at the University of Florida College of Veterinary Medicine, its 2005 Outstanding Woman Veterinarian of the Year.

A board-certified internist, Levy is perhaps best known as an advocate for homeless cats, both through her community volunteer work and her research into more effective ways to control stray cat populations and protect feral cats from disease. Active in student clubs and activities, Levy also has been honored for her teaching skills. In 2004, she received the Carl J. Norden Distinguished Teaching Award from UF.

"Dr. Levy brings a number of unique talents to the department, to the college and to the community, including expertise in feline medicine, a strong work ethic and a commitment to

community service that has made Alachua County a national leader in feral cat population control," said college Dean Joseph A. DiPietro, noting also that Levy has garnered a strong national reputation and a burgeoning international reputation for both her clinical and research expertise.

Levy is a cofounder of Operation Catnip, an organization that brings together veterinarians, technicians, students and community volunteers in an effort to trap, neuter and return feral cats to their home environment. Levy also is heavily involved with community efforts to abolish euthanasia at animal shelters.

"Her efforts in these two projects alone attest to her strong sense of humanity and social responsibility for animal welfare," said Michael Schaer, D.V.M., associate chief of staff of UF's Small Animal Hospital. 🐾





## Ag discovery

A group of 16 high-school minority students considering careers in animal science or veterinary medicine visited UF June 27 as part of a three-week internship program known as Ag Discovery. The program, a partnership between Florida A & M University and the Florida Department of Agriculture and Consumer Services, is geared toward providing hands-on experience to students between 14-16 years of age and provided field trips, lab study and workshops. While at UF, the group received an overview of the college and veterinary trends by Dr. Jim Thompson, associate dean for students and instruction, a tour of the Veterinary Medical Center, and a surgery lab during which they learned how to gown and glove, and the importance of working with sterile instruments. The students also were able to conduct mock surgeries under the supervision of college faculty and staff. 🐾



Ag Discovery coordinator Dr. Ray Mobley of FAMU; Cherise Charles of Trinidad, Ag Discovery counselor and junior pre-vet student at FAMU, and a fourth-year veterinary student (name unavailable) from St. Georges School of Veterinary Medicine, also from Trinidad, who is completing her internship.

# Calendar items for Florida Veterinarian

### Dec. 3-7

The 51<sup>st</sup> annual convention of the American Association of Equine Practitioners will be held in Seattle. A reception for alumni of the UF CVM will be held Dec. 5 at the Sheraton Hotel. Contact Jo Ann Winn at [winnj@mail.vetmed.ufl.edu](mailto:winnj@mail.vetmed.ufl.edu) or call (352) 392-4700, ext. 5013.

### Jan. 7-11

The North American Veterinary Conference will be held in Orlando at the Gaylord Palms Resort with the Marriott World Center serving as co-hosting hotel. The college will hold its annual alumni reception on Jan. 8, time and place TBA. For more information, see [www.tnavc.org](http://www.tnavc.org)

### March 10

Party in the Jungle for the Love of Animals, a fun-filled evening benefit for the UF CVM, will be held at Parrot Jungle Island in Miami beginning at 7 p.m. The jungle fun includes cocktails, exotic offerings to please your palate, an auction, interaction with animals, fancy desserts, dancing, and entertainment by Marty Becker, D.V.M., co-author of "Chicken Soup for the Pet Lover's Soul". Contact Kristi Esmiol at [esmiolk@mail.vetmed.ufl.edu](mailto:esmiolk@mail.vetmed.ufl.edu) or at 352-392-4700, ext. 5200.

### April 1

The CVM Golf Classic will take place with a 1 p.m. shotgun start at Haile Plantation Golf and Country Club in Gainesville. All proceeds benefit the college and D.V.M. student scholarship funds.

### April 15

The annual college Open House sponsored by the Student Chapter of the American Veterinary Medical Association, will take place from 10 a.m. to 4 p.m. For more information, contact Sarah Carey at [careys@mail.vetmed.ufl.edu](mailto:careys@mail.vetmed.ufl.edu) or call (352) 392-4700, ext. 5206.

### April 22

UF's Spring Weekend, which includes the traditional Orange & Blue game, will be held and members of the college's Class of '81 will be honored for their 25-year graduation anniversary. Contact Jo Ann Winn at [winnj@mail.vetmed.ufl.edu](mailto:winnj@mail.vetmed.ufl.edu) or call (352) 392-4700, ext. 5013.



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