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December 2007

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Good-Bye Ron

The Lab Animal Science community and family has suffered a great loss in the recent death of Ron Orta. Ron touched many lives, not just locally, but all over the country and the world. Ron was a well known and well loved man who will be greatly missed

Ron Orta 1945 to 2007



Ronald "Ron" Orta, 61 of Granite Falls, Washington died October 29, 2007. He was born November 21, 1945 in Hondo, Texas. Ron served in the US Navy during Vietnam. He graduated from Washington State University in 1973. He worked as an animal scientist for over 30 years.

Ron is survived by his wife of 24 years, GERALYN "GERI" ORTA; two sons, Scott and wife, Jennifer Orta, of Auburn, WA, and Shaun Orta, of Lake Stevens, WA; two brothers, Max and wife, Peggy Orta, of Los Angeles, CA, and John Orta, of Phoenix, AZ; two grandchildren, Austin and Ember.

Funeral Mass will be held at 9 a.m., Saturday, November 3, 2007, at St. Michael's Catholic Church, 1512 Pine Ave. Snohomish, WA 98290. Memorials may be made to ARDS – Acute Respiratory Distress Syndrome – Foundation, 3100 Dundee Road, Suite 402, Northbrook, IL 60062.

Published in The Herald (Everett) on 10/31/2007

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Upcoming Events

January 2008
Membership Renewal
Elections

January 16, 2008
Board and General Membership Meeting
and Pizza Party

April 23-24, 2008
District 8 Meeting – in Seattle
Vendor registration now available online.
http://www.wbaalas.org/Vender_Registration.htm
Attendee registration will be available soon.

Summer 2008
WBAALAS Picnic

Nominations now Being Accepted For the WBAALAS 2008 Board of Directors

President Elect

If you, or someone you know,
would like to be on the board and
be more involved with local AALAS
activities, please let us know.

Email susanb@sonuspharma.com

Soak up the Knowledge!

AALAS District 8 Meeting Seattle April 23-24, 2008

Topics to Absorb:

**Geckos
Humor in the Workplace
Murine Norovirus
Rodent Colony Management
Humane DNA Sampling
“Lean” Management**

Guest Sprinklers:

**Kathy Laber– AAALAC Council Pres.
Helen Diggs - UC Berkley Veterinarian
Chris Newcomer– 2008 AALAS President
Ann Turner– AALAS Executive Director**

Get Wet Workshops:

**Xenopus Frogs • Rodent Handling
Blood Draw Techniques
Rodent Necropsy • Gas Anesthesia
Rodent Imaging Technology**

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2007 Picnic

Members and families attended the picnic this year at Carkeek Park. Food was aplenty and it was a relaxing afternoon in the sun. The picnic was so well attended by canine members we might have to consider having the picnic at or near a dog park next year!

Thank you

Animal Specialties, Inc. for donating all the beverages, as well as the coolers to keep them in and also Shawn Hooper of **Charles River Laboratories** for donating items to the raffle. The coolers (and whatever was left in them!) were raffled off at the end of the picnic.



Be sure to read future newsletters and check the [website](#) for information on next year's picnic.

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A First Hand View of Disaster Planning

Cynthia Pekow, DVM, DACLAM

About 10 years ago, at a laboratory animal science meeting in Mexico, I met Araceli Olivares Guerrero, a woman from the city of Villahermosa, in Tabasco, a state in Mexico's south. She had some relatives in Seattle, and asked if it would be OK if she could come and learn about lab animal facility management at my facility, while staying in town with her relatives. Her goal was to pass her AALAS certification at the LATG level. The university who employed her was willing to let her come, because they were planning to construct a new animal facility, and wanted her trained to manage it. We had a fun year, during which she worked very hard, and indeed did pass the LATG exam, literally 24 hours before returning to Mexico. A few years later, the new animal facility was built, and Araceli had a key role in designing the facility and writing the SOPs for its management and animal care. We have kept in touch and visited over the years. Araceli is poised to complete her CMAR certification from AALAS. Her animal facility houses rats and mice for use by researchers at the university.

We have had some recent heavy rains and flooding in Seattle, but nothing like the disastrous conditions that hit Tabasco in early November of this year. You can read about the disaster on the web, for example at <http://news.bbc.co.uk/2/hi/americas/7076747.stm>. Basically, over 80% of the state flooded when rivers overflowed, affecting over 1 million people. Villahermosa has had floods in the past, but this is the worst recorded. I sent a message asking how she was doing. She let me know that by some miracle her home and the university had not flooded, but classes were cancelled and the buildings were being used to provide shelter for people left homeless by the floods. Her supplies of animal food and bedding were holding out, but she was worried about having enough water. She planned to save the animals critical to maintain breeding colonies.

On November 23, she sent me the following update (with apologies for any inaccuracies in my translation of her Spanish):

"Well, here we continue fighting against the water, even though we are not out of danger. A hill gave way in Chiapas [a nearby state] and formed a dam that blocked the course of the Grijalva River, and we're in terrible anxiety because if the river doesn't return to its course, all of Tabasco will disappear. It's an immense quantity of water held back. The animal facility survived its trial by fire with this emergency. We have been working without any problems, for the 15 days of this critical situation. The animals have been maintained very well, and the research investigations continue. I am very proud of this. When they advised me that we were in risk of flooding I didn't doubt for a minute that I would come to the animal facility. I brought my children [two teens] and lived here with them for a week, thinking that if the animal care staff couldn't make it in, I would be able to work with my children. Whatever might come to pass, if I couldn't get to work the animals could die, and then what would happen? But thanks to God, it all came out very well, except we are still not free of the worry that this dam in Chiapas might break, and we are very attentive to government announcements.

You know, when I came to your animal facility and started to study [for AALAS LATG certification] the first chapter I studied was about building security, and I thought "This won't come to pass in Mexico", with electronic card access and security cameras, etc, and now 9 years later I realize that now that we have come to this level, its impossible to do without them. The same with the disaster planning, I thought it would not be necessary and here you see me totally applying it in practice."

We all have disaster plans, and for most of us, we haven't had the need to put them into practice. But it's nice to know that that planning may actually help us out in a time of crisis.



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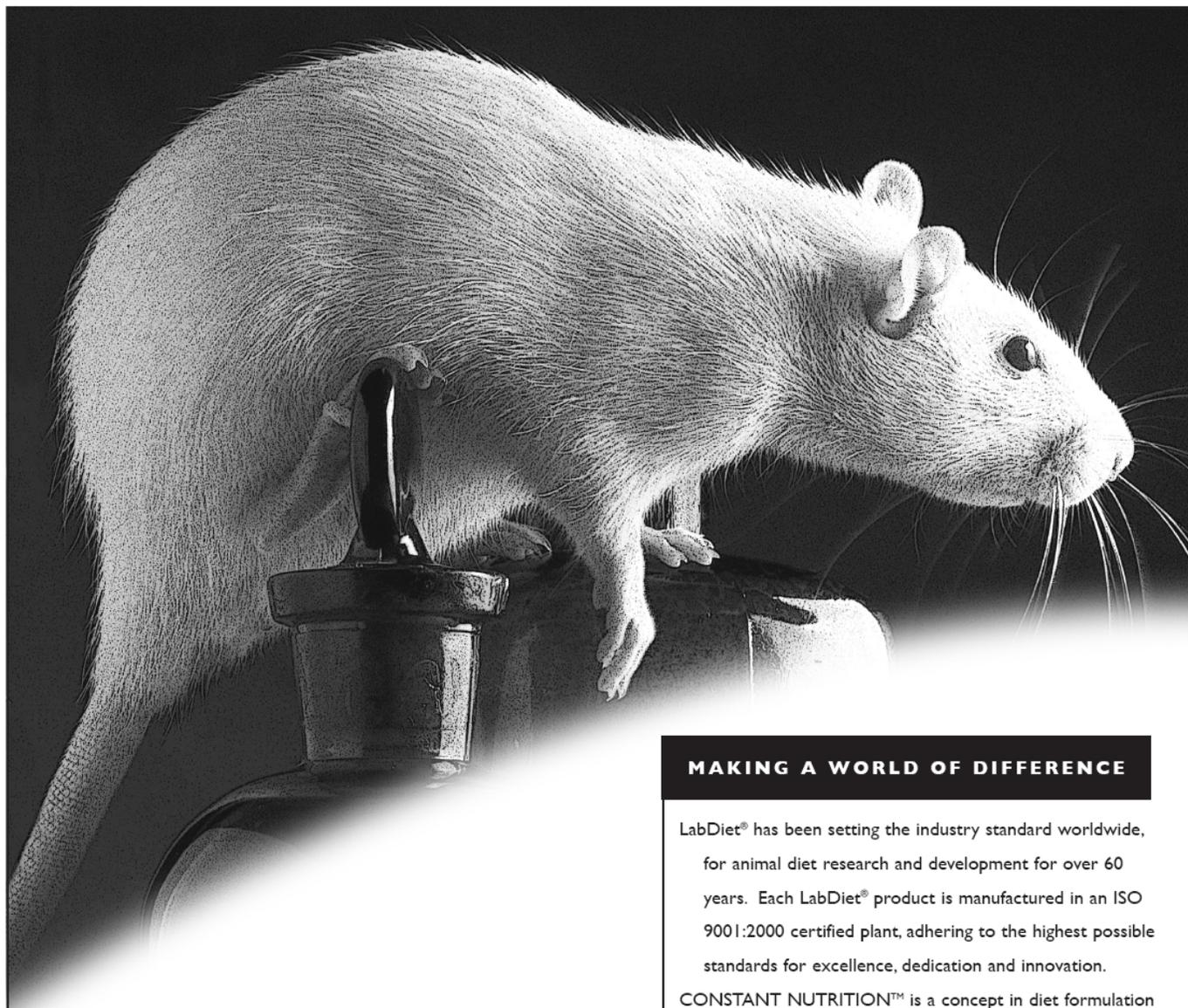


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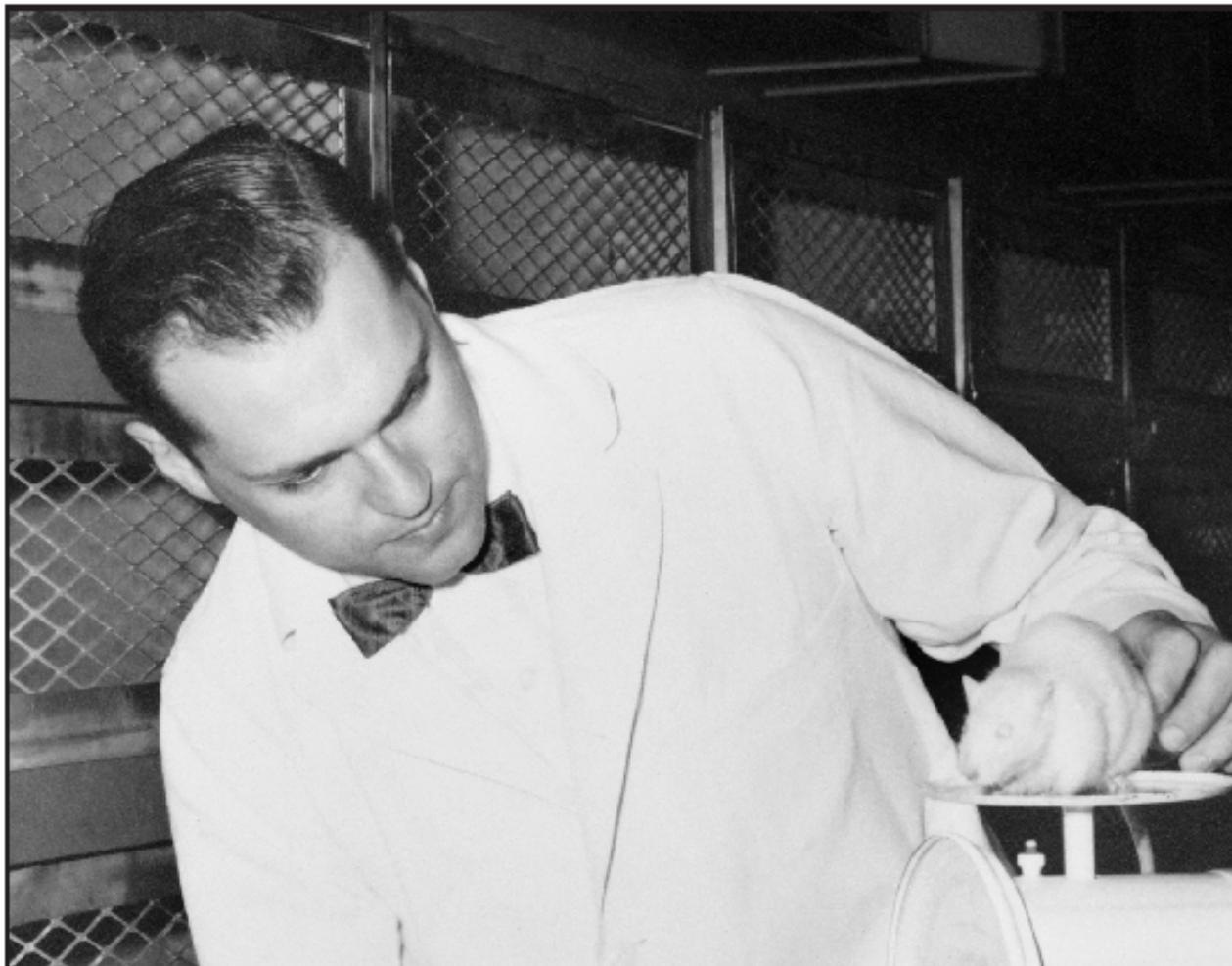


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Associated Press

A 4-year-old female Abyssinian cat named Cinnamon has had its DNA decoded by researchers.

Cat's DNA may aid research

ASSOCIATED PRESS

NEW YORK — An Abyssinian cat from Missouri, named Cinnamon, has just made scientific history. Researchers have largely decoded her DNA, a step that may aid the search for treatments for both feline and human diseases.

The report adds cats to the roughly two dozen mammals whose DNA has been unraveled, a list that includes dogs, chimps, rats, mice, cows and of course, people.

Why add cats? They get more

than 200 diseases that resemble human illnesses, and knowing the details of their genetic makeup should help in the search for vaccines and treatments, researchers say. The list includes a cat version of AIDS, SARS, diabetes, retinal disease and spina bifida, said Stephen O'Brien of the National Cancer Institute.

The new work is reported in the November issue of the journal *Genome Research* by a team including O'Brien and colleague Joan Pontius. It covers about two-thirds of the DNA of Cinnamon, a research cat that lives at

the University of Missouri in Columbia; more complete results are expected next year, O'Brien said.

Richard Gibbs of the Baylor College of Medicine in Houston, who led a team that decoded the DNA of a rhesus macaque monkey, called the new work "a good outline" of cat DNA. Scientists are looking forward to the complete version, which will be useful for making detailed comparisons to the DNA of other animals, he said.

The full complement of an organism's DNA is called its

genome. In cats, as in people, it's made up of nearly 3 billion building blocks. The sequence of those blocks spells out the hereditary information, just as strings of letters spell out sentences. Decoding a genome, which is called sequencing, means identifying the order of the building blocks.

The new work identified 20,285 genes in the cat, probably about 95 percent of the animal's full complement, O'Brien said. That's similar to the 20,000 to 25,000 genes estimated for humans.

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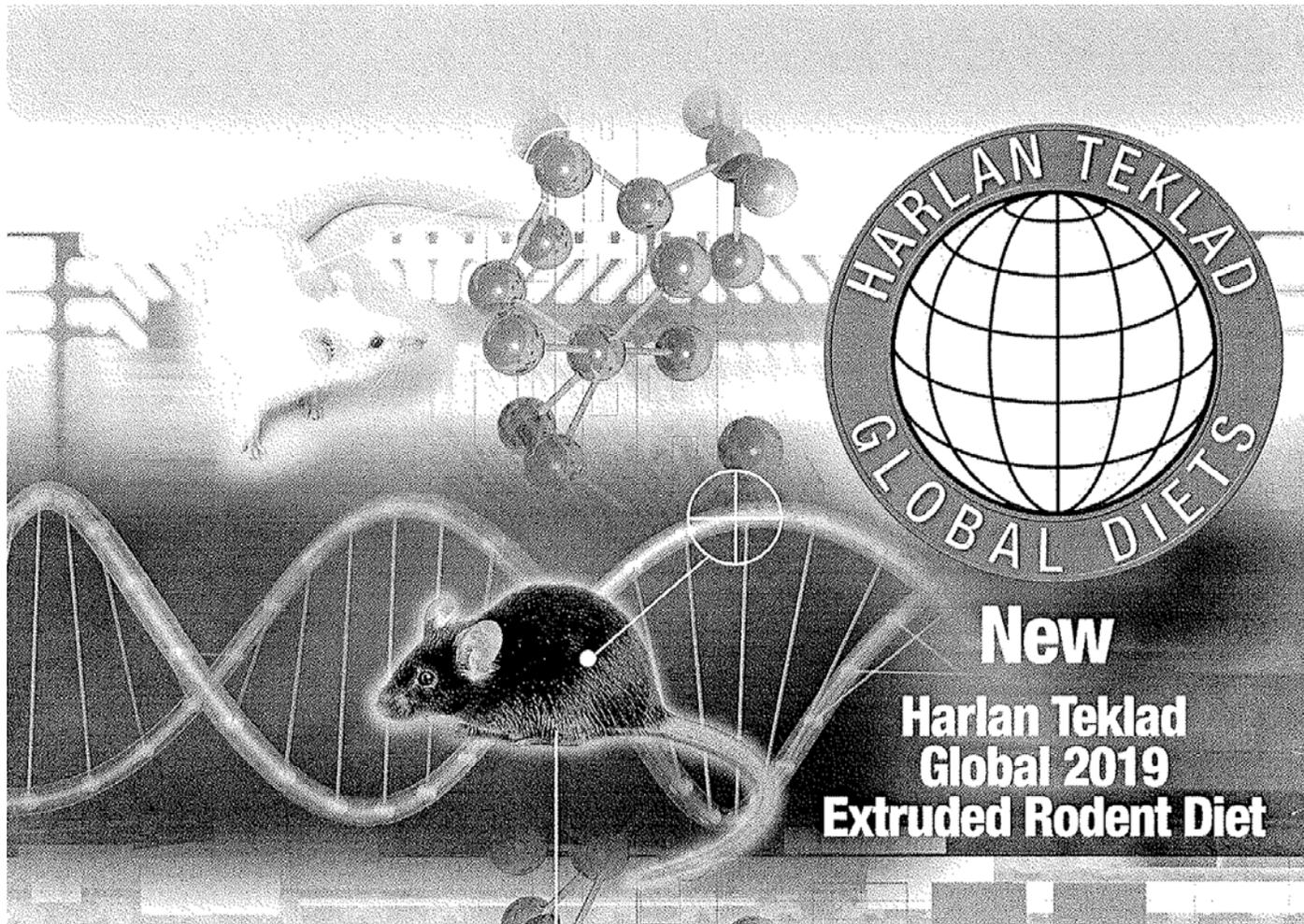
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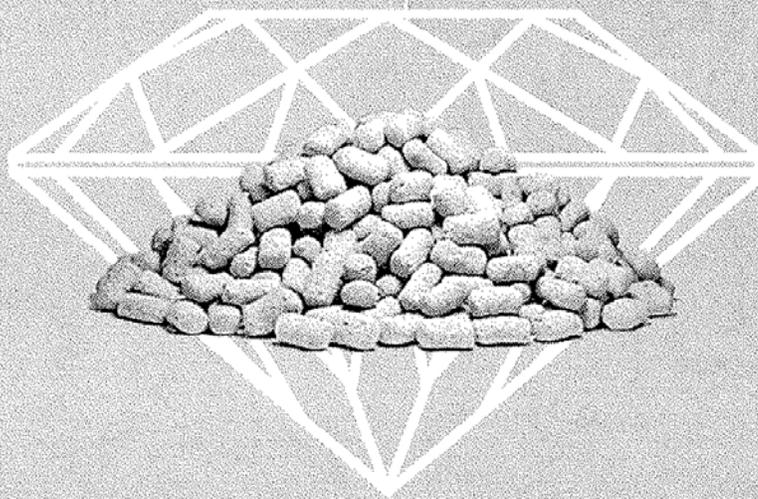
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Teeth thief now taunts

Man says mouse stole his dentures, then high-tailed it

The Associated Press

WATERVILLE, Maine — There's a mouse in Bill Exner's house that he says he has captured three times. Each time, the mouse escaped, and the last time, the rodent reportedly made off with Exner's lower dentures.

Exner, 68, said he and his wife, Shirley, scoured his bedroom after the dentures disappeared from his nightstand.

"We moved the bed, moved the dressers and the nightstand and tore the closet apart," he said. "I said, 'I knew that little stinker stole my teeth'; I just knew it."

They found a small opening in a wall where they suspected the mouse was coming and going, and their daughter's fiancé, Eric Holt, stepped in to help.

"He brought a crowbar and hammer and he sawed off a section of wood and pulled up the molding and everything," Exner said. "It was quite a job."

They retrieved the dentures, and Holt suggested his future father-in-law boil them in peroxide and whatever else he could find to disinfect the false teeth.

The mouse apparently isn't done. It frequently comes out and stares at Exner, his wife said.

"He's taunting him; I swear he's taunting him," Shirley Exner said.

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And, for one final time, Ron's business card ad.



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