

Wanting to be a Veterinarian..

Have all of you always wanted to grow up and be a veterinarian?? AS far back as I can remember, I always knew I would be one. My mom was always telling stories about my exploits as a child (Lots of stories of me helping a neighbors hurt pet or fixing the broken leg on a hamster with a toothpick and tape). I was fearless with animals. I could always relate to them. I think the only time I ever questioned my passion was getting the Veterinary school rejection letter. WOW, Was that a wake up call. I still managed to get there, however, it wasn't quick, easy or pretty. Little did I realize that becoming a practicing veterinarian was going to be but a part of my professional life. I was very fortunate to have been successful as a practice owner and also to realize there was more to our profession than simply treating pets. I have done a year speaking tour, have given lectures at both Veterinary school and at multiple conferences, plus somehow managed to be asked to join the NAVC Board of Directors. I have written for multiple magazines, done a few editorials for this incredible journal and now have the distinct pleasure of assisting young veterinarians get started in new businesses all over the nation. What is incredible is how long our working life actually is and that we are all capable of mastering multiple jobs during this period. I want all of the younger veterinarians to understand that where you are now and where you will be in twenty or more years could be so so varied. I see it all the time. I have watched the veterinary profession grow by leaps and bounds. My first position was to be head anesthesiologist (ahh, that translated into being the one who poured the ether onto the cotton over the pets muzzle. My other job was to stick the used syringe back into the Pen G bottle after each shot – I also had to change the needle when I couldn't get it through the rubber top). Now I have the honor of working all over the country assisting in the creation of new hospitals, some spectacular, others just wonderful. My original passion was to specifically help pets. I have expanded this by becoming a consultant and raising the level of veterinary hospitals all over the country. (My alternate passion is architecture). Over the years, I have managed to visit thousands of veterinary facilities (my kids were very tolerant of dad saying on vacation- I won't be very long, just need to walk through this hospital- be right back). The diversity is never ending. I have seen everything, from the smallest to the largest, from the cleanest to the most disgusting places. My emotions range from incredible pride to immense disappointment. I know that none of the owners have allowed their facilities to become odoriferous, dirty and "old" on purpose. It sorta just creeps up on you over 10 or 20 plus years of "running around" trying to help everyone and worrying more about our clients and their money than paying attention to our facilities. I want to challenge every hospital (clinic) owner to take a step back and really look over your facility. Walk in the front door as a client does and grade your place. Does it live up to your standards or your mom's? If not, then do something about it NOW. Stop waiting for tomorrow. Clean it up, get rid of all the debris and broken equipment that you say you will fix next year, do some remodeling and some painting. You would be surprised at the difference. If you need ideas, come see me at the NAVC HOSPITAL DESIGN SECTION in January at Orlando, (with a full day set

aside for remodeling). Come get some fantastic, top of the line CE and learn some tips on improving your facility inexpensively.