Brian Sinclair holds "The Gentle Doctor" replica presented to him by SCAVMA. With Mr. Sinclair are Dean Pearson and Clayton Johnson, President of SCAVMA.

Tristan Visits Iowa State
College of Veterinary Medicine

Lynn Erdman*

Millions have come to know him as Tristan Farnon, the charming, inimitable character of the best-selling novels written by James Herriot. On the evening of November 7, 1979 in C. Y. Stephens Auditorium, over one thousand admirers had the opportunity to meet the man whom Tristan portrays, Mr. Brian Sinclair, at the student chapter meeting of the AVMA. The Yorkshire veterinarian, in his presentation entitled "Tristan Farnon on James Herriot," described some of the experiences shared by his older brother, James Herriot, and himself, together in their Yorkshire practice. He also noted the events which led up to the publication of Herriot's first novel, and gave us a behind-the-scenes peek at the ABC television series, "All Creatures Great and Small." As witness to the popularity of these novels describing the routine and the dramatic events of veterinary practice, they are published in 18 languages, including Japanese.

Brian Sinclair was born in Harrogate (in Yorkshire) and resides there now with his wife Sheila and their three daughters. While in his teens, he and his best friend aspired to be

*Ms. Erdman is a second year student in the College of Veterinary Medicine, ISU.
dentists, but his interest turned to veterinary medicine after hearing tales of vet school from his brother who was a veterinary student at the time. Brian also enjoyed assisting the local veterinarian with tuberculosis testing in cattle, and he was soon off to Edinburgh, Scotland. Admittedly “less than the perfect veterinary student,” he graduated from the Royal Veterinary college at Edinburgh in 1943. He enlisted in the Royal Army Veterinary Corps, and 120 days after his wedding, he was transported to India. For the next three years, he was in charge of mules used as pack animals by the troops in Burma. A camel, when angered, can quickly startle the novice, Sinclair was soon to observe, by everting its soft palate and regurgitating its quid in your lap. During his stay in India, Herriot (James Alfred Hite) wrote lengthy letters to his friend, often 20 pages, describing every-day affairs in Yorkshire with uncanny detail and wit. Sinclair was later assigned to the military dairy farms supervising the care of 70,000 water buffalo and teaching pregnancy testing to the Indian veterinarians. The closest thing to military action occurred when a few local tribesmen fired shots from home-made rifles into camp. On demobilization, Mr. Sinclair joined the Ministry of Agriculture and worked in northern England and Scotland, diagnosing cattle fertility problems. He lived in Inverness for a time, the town located just down the road from Loch Ness, but he never caught a glimpse of ol' Nessie.

From 1955 until his recent retirement, he was appointed supervisor of the Veterinary Investigation Centre, Diagnostic Laboratory at Leeds, England. The lab provides diagnostic services for veterinarians in the County of Yorkshire.

Brian Sinclair on James Herriot remarked, “He has his priorities firmly fixed:” first is his family, second his occupation and thirdly (“and well down the list”) his literature. Herriot still practices veterinary medicine in Yorkshire with his son as junior associate and three assistants. He is also writing another book at this time. Both Herriot and Sinclair are avid Monty Python fans.

Mr. Sinclair has a delightful attitude toward veterinary practice, merging it well with his humor and enthusiasm. Comparing attributes of different domestic animals, he quipped, “Dogs look up to you, cats look down at you, but pig’s equal.” He is not impressed by academia, but credits a good veterinarian with skill and conscientious interest. He considers that “having a sense of responsibility to the animal” is the most important value a veterinarian must have.

A replica of the statue, “The Gentle Doctor,” was presented to Mr. Sinclair in appreciation of his contribution to veterinary medicine. He graciously accepted the gift but wished he had Herriot’s gift of words to express his thanks for the statue. In parting, he wished to thank all the students, faculty, and staff of the College of Veterinary Medicine at Iowa State University for the overwhelming hospitality shown to him during his visit. The pleasure was ours, Mr. Sinclair.

Class of 1980
Pat Huston is engaged to marry Cindy Walter in June of 1980.

Class of 1981
Al Hogue married Loralyn Lange on December 29, 1979.

Dr. Greve’s Corner

Identify:
- Genus and species
- Habitat
- Treatment
- Is this a mature form?
In Response . . .

The following letter is in response to the quiz presented in the past issue (Fall '79). The editors and staff are grateful to Dr. Faulkner for his prompt reply and congratulate him on his perfect score.

Dear Dr. Greve:

I will admit that the diagnostic challenge you posed in "Dr. Greve's corner" in the recent publication of the ISU Veterinarian was at first more than I could handle.

However, I believe that I have finally identified the creature and can supply you with the asked for data:

Family: Tenurus (a sub-family or branch of the family Tenrus Desirus).

Genus & Species: Pedantus Sesquipedalis

Habitat: Found in and around Silo Tech.

Host: The Bowels of Towerus Ivorius.

Life Cycle: Inhabits Towerus Ivorius diurnally only—can be found feeding along side Hops Ingesticus wherever Hops are found. Occasionally, appears to reproduce by splitting in twain—but this may be a trick of the light at the time.

Treatment: According to all available data, it is best to just endure this parasite's ravages on the age old philosophy that "It, too, will pass".

Your friend,
Scott R. Faulkner, DVM

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Faculty and students enjoyed skits and casino games at the SCAVMA Christmas party in December.