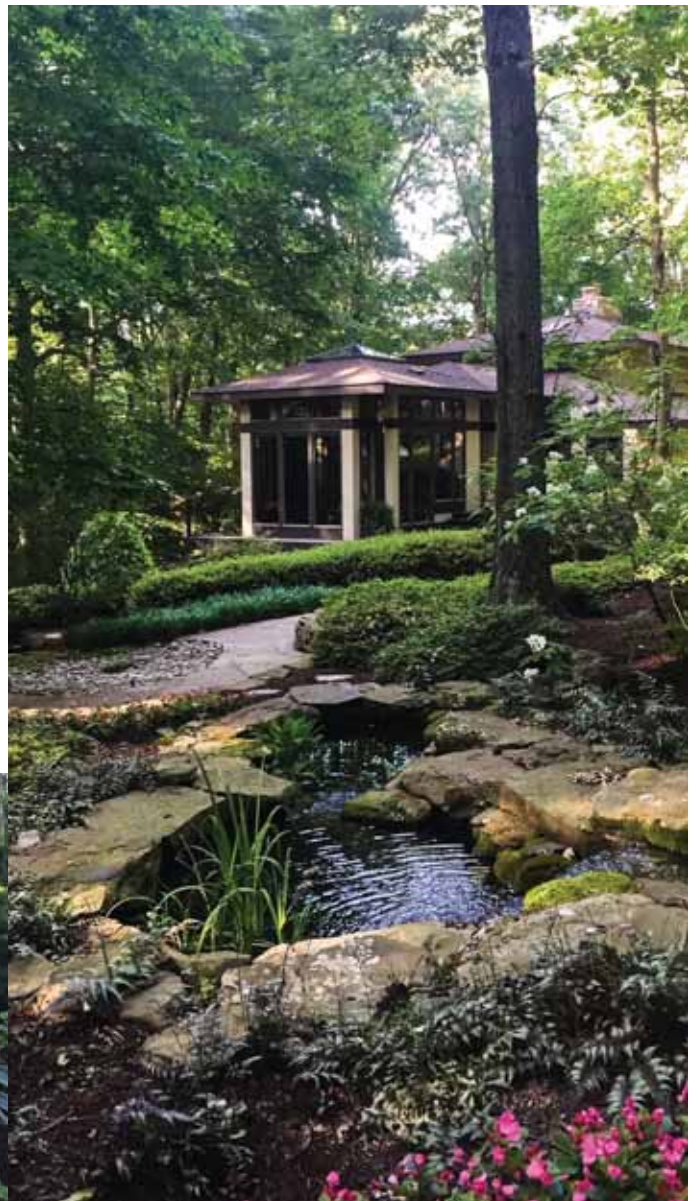


# THE FOUNDERS SERIES: CARVEL TIEKERT AND A CONDENSED HISTORY OF THE AHVMA

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**T**he AHVMA is an organization, borne out of an idea whereby practitioners of many complementary modalities could collaborate, bond and learn together, and find a niche for their expanding knowledge. One could scarcely discuss this group without mentioning the prime mover and original founder of the association, Carvel Tiekert, DVM. Under the astute management of Carvel and his wife and life partner, Lorraine, they guided a fledgling startup of loosely bound, diverse thinking (ornery) handful of practitioners into a thriving and ever growing association.

How do you condense a long life, well lived? Born, July 19, 1938, as one of several sons in a fiercely independent and driven family of artisans and craftsman, he has multiple talents that include woodcraft and show gardening. Lorraine created a haven in the style of a Japanese Tea Garden, which has been featured in magazines and garden tours, and they devote endless hours to maintaining their grounds.



Japanese Garden pictures provide by Hannah Smith

Carvel didn't have pets as a child because his family couldn't afford them. "My parents believed that you couldn't have something you couldn't take care of properly," and that sense of responsibility is characteristic for him. Growing up, his parents always had a garden — partly due to the Victory Gardens of WWII. Carvel's mother was a nurse, but she had a burgeoning interest in nutrition, and the gardening that she did was organic (before it was cool). One event made a major impact on Carvel. When a younger brother who had suffered chronically poor health became rather ill with pneumonia, his mother treated him, giving a massive dose of vitamin C. Subsequent to this illness she gave him 1000 mg of vitamin C a day, and from then on he very seldom missed school.

Despite not having been raised with animals, Carvel had an innate interest in them and in medicine — so veterinary medicine became a goal somewhere around his eighth or ninth grade years. He was accepted into Cornell as an out-of-state student in the agricultural college, and then into the veterinary college, a feat, because at the time Cornell only accepted a maximum of two veterinary students per year from the state of Connecticut. During his years in undergraduate college, he worked at anything (mostly dishwashing) that would give him free food and a bit of pocket money. During his veterinary college years, he labored for academicians doing research and then worked for the Geigy Chemical Corporation in their medical toxicology division, including helping to develop their teratology protocols. He was asked to consider a full-time position after graduation, but declined the offer since he wanted to practice.

After graduation in 1963, Carvel was fortunate to work for two primarily small animal veterinarians who were great mentors. Six months into that job he received a notice from the draft board "inviting him" to become part of the United States Army the following July. He was posted originally to the Union Stockyards in Chicago, but through a bit of luck and a willingness to tell the General that he had research experience, he was transferred to a research position at Edgewood Arsenal in Maryland where he co-authored a study on "Regulation of glycolysis in brain, in situ, during convulsions" in 1966. After his army stint on December 11, 1967, he opened a clinic in Connecticut as a salaried employee to another veterinarian, and in 1971, he purchased the practice. His wife, Lorraine, handled a lot of the paperwork and accounting for the practice, and it thrived. In 1967, he was rear-ended by a drunk driver and suffered whiplash injury, which bothered him on and off after

that, and by the mid-70s had progressed to some paresthesia and motor control problems. The recommendation at the time was to see an orthopedic surgeon, with the suggestion of a spinal fusion of his neck. That prospect, with the spectre of a poor success rate for that surgery, made him opt to try a chiropractor. After a single treatment all of the motor control problems disappeared with about 50% of the paresthesia problems. After a series of about six treatments, the paresthesia basically disappeared.

## **A Brief History Highlights Flyby or, How the AHVMA Came to Be**

In the early 1970s Carvel became interested in nutritional aspects of disease, partially due to subscriptions to *Prevention* and *Organic Gardening*; and as he explored that interest he attended the Northwest Academy of Preventive Medicine (human) conferences where Jeffrey Bland, PhD was the major figure in that organization at the time. He also looked at a number of other "alternative" modalities. He began to incorporate nutrition into his practice and c.1976 – 78 he started to go to the Western States Veterinary Conference, where he attended some sessions sponsored by the International Veterinary Acupuncture Society.

In addition to his interest in complementary medicine, Carvel has maintained an interest in surgery, particularly dentistry and orthopedics, and has logged many an hour in the surgical suite of his American Animal Hospital Association approved clinic. Some of his therapies include acupuncture, homeopathy, homotoxicology, herbs, nutrition, electromagnetic therapy, ozone, thymus extracts, and chiropractic. He has some significant expertise in prolotherapy, and has lectured often on that topic. He is a member of innumerable associations within the holistic community. A pithy quote in a 1994 interview sums up his belief in medicine: "There is only one healer – and that's the body. Our job is to put the body into a frame of reference so that it can heal itself." In his spare time, (probably about 3 a.m.), he has managed to write articles for publications like the Townsend Letter.

One of his many "hats" has been his role in veterinary politics over the years, which has proved invaluable in our dealings with other veterinary groups. In addition to founding the American Holistic Veterinary Medical Association and filling the role of the Executive Director role for many decades, he has served recently as an AHVMA Board Member, has been

an Executive Board Member of the Maryland Veterinary Medical Association, and has served as the Secretary/Treasurer of the MVMA.

There have been many events of a political nature over the years that saw Carvel's involvement. In 1996, a committee was formed by the AVMA to create new "Guidelines for Alternative and Complementary Veterinary Medicine." It was done with considerable funding on the part of AVMA; and Alan Schoen and Carvel Tiekert from the AHVMA were invited to be part of the seven-member committee that formulated those guidelines. Then, in 2002, the Registry of Approved Continuing Education (RACE), a division of the American Association of Veterinary State Boards, was instituted which initially approved our sessions. When this group eventually started to find holistic continuing education to be unacceptable, Patricia Bailey founded RAIVE (Registry of Alternative and Integrative Veterinary Education) to combat this bias, and Carvel immediately appreciated its benefits. AHVMA has been RAIVE-approved ever since.

In 2004, a White Paper on the scope of practice was conceived by the American Society of Veterinary Medical Association Executives at the instigation of one of its members. It was developed over a long weekend at the offices of the American Animal Hospital Association and was attended by a number of executive directors of state and allied associations, the lawyer attached to the Texas VMA, and Susan Wynn and Carvel of AHVMA. It was developed because of the concern of complementary and alternative veterinary medicine and its relationship to conventional medicine with the expectation of protecting veterinarians in that role. In 2006, the Association continued to work on the idea of getting the AHVMA into the house of delegates of the AVMA — a task that would take a number of years. One of the considerations at that time was that the AHVMA board moved to change the Constitution and bylaws to redefine membership categories, requiring AVMA membership in order to be a voting member of the AHVMA.

Carvel also participated on the Advisory Board for Xymogen, and helped to develop supplements for another nutritional company. Most recently, he has worked as a liaison to Biopathica in the U.K., facilitating the practitioners' pipeline to Heel therapeutics.

The inception of the AHVMA began c. 1980, when Carvel and Lorraine went to visit a couple of practitioners — the Goldstein brothers — who were working with a "natural" dog food: Marty

Goldstein was an IVAS-certified veterinary acupuncturist. They discussed that albeit small in number, there was a growing group of practitioners looking at things a little differently, and they strategized on starting an organization of like-minded veterinarians. Carvel contacted the Western States Veterinary Conference administration, which agreed to let them have a room for a half day meeting in February 1982. He then sent a letter out to veterinarians that were on various alternative medicine lists about a formational meeting for an association to explore non-conventional veterinary medicine. Although there was considerable discussion whether the word "alternative," "integrative," "holistic," or "complementary" was the best term, they settled on "holistic" since it was probably the most recognizable term for the public and would be the most functioning marketing term. Alas, the final name chosen was the American Veterinary Holistic Medical Association. The attendees to the original founding session, to the best of Carvel's recollection, read like a "Who's Who" of complementary veterinary medicine, and included Ihor Basko, Steve Blake, Stan Goldfarb, Mark Haverkos, Richard Kearns, Mike Lemmon, Joel Rossen, Cheryl Schwartz, Joanne Stefanatos, Dana Waer, Beth Wilderman, and Bob Goldstein, amongst others.

The Association was originally housed in part of a room at Carvel's clinic. With several upgrades in space and equipment, they eventually moved in 1999, to a house next door which moved the AHVMA from about 180 square feet of workspace to 900 square feet (and made his staff happy!).

The first Newsletter of the *American Veterinary Holistic Medical Association* in April 1982, was a short two-page document crudely typed up by Carvel and photocopied. The second newsletter in June of that year was interesting in that that edition had as its focus aloe vera, as a result of an article in the *JAAHA* concerning its treatment of burns. As he researched for that particular article, he ran across an article in which 18 people were treated for stomach ulcers, 15 of whom got better with the treatment of aloe vera. Aloe vera has bactericidal effects, and it was years later that *H. pylori* was discovered to be part of the problem. One of the beauties of integrative therapy is that we often get the corroboration of our successes many years down the road. The newsletter eventually grew to more content and pages and became a Journal thanks to technological improvements and the use of the Internet. From typing address lists, photocopied and labeled onto newsletters, to a Brother Daisy wheel typewriter that had the capability of integrating with a computer, to using



a computer for correspondence, (a screaming fast, Tandy 1000 with 10 MB storage), hooked to a dot matrix printer, technology kept advancing. In 1988, instead of a cut and paste newsletter (done on a light table), the process morphed into the AHVMA Journal, created completely via the wonders of computers. In 2005, the redesigned website went into effect, and Carvel explored the possibility of a commercial firm to do taping of the lectures, beginning with the Conference in Ogden, Utah. Broadcast fax and emails were instituted in 2005, to improve communication with the members.

The association reached the hundred-member mark in 1982. In 1983, Carvel was asked to provide a day of speakers at the Western States Veterinary Conference (now Western Veterinary Conference), for which they would do a level of funding. Then, in September 1984, in conjunction with the International Veterinary Acupuncture Society (IVAS), the first annual conference, was held in Austin, Texas. He negotiated the hotel for both of the associations which had back-to-back conferences. By all accounts, that first conference was great fun, with about 40 members attending. Charlie Allison, who was a well-known figure in Austin, set up great restaurant venues for those that came. A woman who helped Charlie with local arrangements was the Executive Secretary to the governor and presented a plaque to Lorraine and Carvel, making them honorary citizens of the Great State of Texas. That conference was a two-day conference with a single track and an annual business meeting. In January 1985, Susan Pitcairn sent in a proposal for a logo, and it was approved. That logo appeared on the front page of the Association newsletter for the first time in April 1985, and is still with us. At about that time, it was decided we should have an Advancement Fund, the purpose of which was to develop monies for research and scholarships; and Carvel put together a memorial card that veterinarians and clients could use to memorialize an animal or person for whom they wished to donate such funds.

In 1987, Carvel had been in communication with Christopher Day of the International Association for Veterinary Homeopathy and the British Association of Homeopathic Veterinary Surgeons (BAHVS) about putting together a conference with those two associations. Thirty-two members made that trip which was given in two parts. The first section was held in a hotel outside of Oxford, with 106 total attendees (between AHVMA, IAVH, and BAHVS) and several MDs. The second section was held in London and was mostly AHVMA members attending sessions on Radionics and Color Therapy.

In late 1988, the Western States Veterinary Conference decided to drop all of its allied groups, but at the same time Eastern States Veterinary Conference, now known as the North American Veterinary Conference, invited a holistic track which is still under the guidance of Carvel.

In 1992, our conference was scheduled in Hawaii on the island of Kauai, and everything was going just perfectly until Hurricane Iniki made landfall eight days before the conference was to start. It was the strongest storm ever to hit Hawaii and destroyed the hotel (Coco Palms, where Blue Hawaii was filmed). Scrambling to salvage the meeting, Carvel was able to assure that the airlines would transfer the tickets; and he was able to arrange something on the island of Maui. Surprisingly, 98 out of the 100 pre-registered members and all of the exhibitors were able to attend. Ihor Basko, our member that lived on Kauai and had been the local contact person, and David Jaggar, Executive Director of IVAS at the time, were unable to get to the conference because of damage to the airport on Kauai preventing them from leaving the island. That was not the only conference to be plagued by inclement weather, and Carvel managed to keep the conferences flowing despite the hurricanes in New Orleans with attendant flooding (1998), and the 2003 conference which forced some serious juggling by Carvel and the staff, as emergency personnel took some pre-registered rooms from veterinarians due to the untimely appearance of Hurricane Isabel which left 85% of the county without electricity.

The 1996 conference was held in Portland, and the Advancement Fund portion of the Association gave the largest grant at that point — \$7,000 for a formal research project to study the efficacy of herbal and homeopathic products for pain and cancer treatment at the Ontario Veterinary College. In 1997 the conference was held in Burlington, Vermont, and the most significant event that happened at that strategic planning session was the development of the Council of Elders.

In 1999, after having filled that position since the inception of the association, Carvel resigned from the position as Journal editor-in-chief, as well as layout editor and publisher. An editorial in the volume 17, January 1999 edition is a nice encapsulation of his time in that position and the changes for the association up to that point.

The events of September 11, 2001, resulted in a conference cancellation, because all flights were canceled. There was some

negotiation with the hotel resulting in a promise to return for our next cycle — 2004. This experience made the fact that the organization had accrued a fairly significant amount of money a true blessing, since there would be no income from the conference that year. The scholarship committee that year awarded the greatest amount they had up till that date with \$6,500 awarded out of the Advancement Fund.

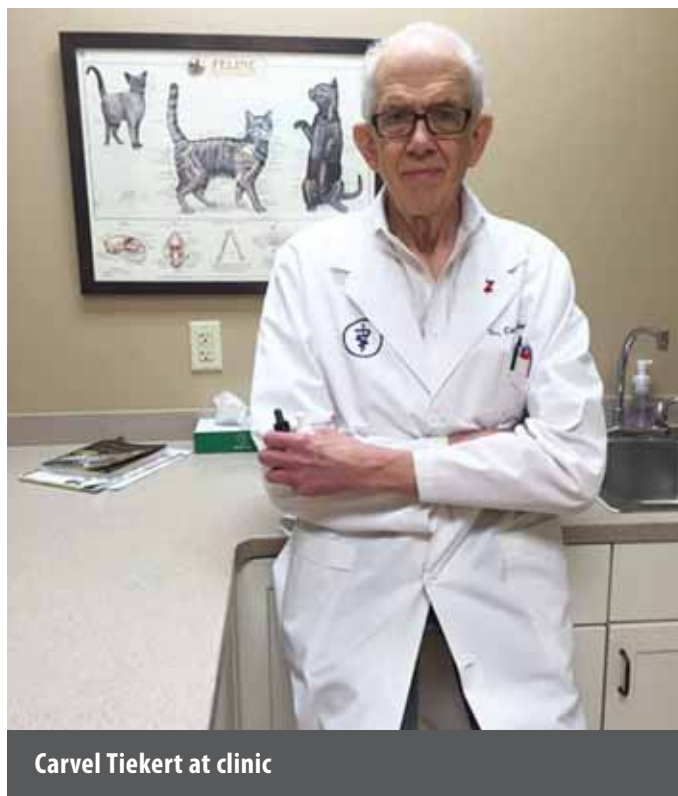
In 2004, Carvel organized the first homotoxicology seminar in Denver, helped by a grant from Heel-BHI. The seminar was successful and was held annually for many years. This meeting was singularly responsible for the growth of Heel and Homotoxicology in the veterinary field in the U.S.

Carvel created the Research Committee of the AHVMA to direct funding raised by the Advancement Fund towards worthy research objectives that matched the mission of the AHVMA. Carvel was the first to propose the idea of developing a separate 501(c)(3) foundation to replace the Research Committee since it would be more functional from both an accounting and marketing perspective. In 2009, the American Holistic Veterinary Medical Association Foundation was incorporated in Maryland. The Foundation activities stayed in Maryland under the auspices of AHVMA, until 2011. At that time its offices moved to California, its name was shortened slightly to American Holistic Veterinary Medical Foundation, the Research Committee became part of the Foundation, and with the hard work of Rick Palmquist and Nancy Scanlan, it began functioning as a separate entity, as the fundraising arm of the AHVMA.

Carvel has an expansive, categorical knowledge of many modalities after more than five decades in active practice, and has probably logged more continuing education hours than anyone else in the world! He acquired his Certification in Acupuncture in 1984, followed by a Certification in Veterinary Chiropractic care. He was a board member of the VBMA (Veterinary Botanical Medical Association) and has extensively studied Homotoxicology and Homeopathy. He is an unbelievable storehouse of information. He has been generous with his time and resources, often traveling at his own expense, to work on challenging issues or further the interests of the AHVMA or veterinary medicine. Always on the lookout for new people to teach and share their expertise, I was fortunate enough to have him attend my very first, inauspicious, Heel lecture. He was good enough to overlook the technology glitches and a bit of disjointed presentation,

and invited me to speak at an AHVMA Conference. Because of his willingness to take a chance on me, I credit him with my opportunities to lecture in and out of the United States, at Homotoxicology seminars, and conferences both major and minor. For that I remain eternally grateful.

In 2012, Carvel handed the reins of the Executive Directorship to Nancy Scanlan, DVM. He remains active and involved, despite some ongoing health challenges. In 2013, the first Carvel Tiekert Lifetime Achievement Award was given to Mark Haverkos, one of the original practitioners to help form the AHVMA. Dr. Tiekert says he made a commitment early on “...that when I leave this plane, I will have made it better.” To that, we can surely attest. He has given freely of his time, expertise, and finances, recently offering two separate \$25,000 matching funds donations to the AHVMF).



Carvel Tiekert at clinic

He and Lorraine have nurtured our AHVMA like a recalcitrant child, from its inception. Starting with a small group of perhaps 35 AHVMA members, the ranks have swelled to somewhere around 1,000. Better, indeed! It has been a privilege to call him mentor and friend. Though I initially found him a daunting figure as he firmly ordered the conference events, I soon learned not to believe the stern countenance, as it belied a heart of gold. So, if you see him roaming around the AHVMA conference, NAVC, or any number of other venues, give him a hug. And, while you are at it, give him a hug from me!