



# AVAC

Association of Veterinary Acupuncturists of Canada

l'Association des Vétérinaires Acupuncteurs du Canada

**Join us on-line for our annual conference this year featuring Michelle Tilghman. A fantastic value that will allow you to improve your understanding of musculoskeletal issues and improve patient outcomes. Click on the link to know more.**

<https://www.avacanada.org/courses.htm>

President's letter:

“The Only Thing That Is Constant Is Change” — Heraclitus.



There is no denying that we face new challenges. We don't have to face them alone. Despite all that has happened around us, technology is allowing us to come together as colleagues and health practitioners as never before. With this pandemic seeing us isolated at home, a colleague in BC or PEI was as close as another in town. During this time AVAC hosted two community huddles and has modified our annual conference to be on-line, with the hands-on training at a later date. The AVAC team has continued to work hard to increase member benefits, to allow on-line payments for conferences and annual memberships and to bring

continuing education and meetings that meet the needs of a variety of practitioners. We are continuing to grow outreach and are working to help AVAC serve you better.

Dr Michelle Tilghman's conference on physical therapy and acupuncture will be virtual on October 30-November 1st. This year, you can learn without leaving your home and we have revised the price – it is a steal! Our Annual General Meeting will also be virtual. I want to thank our team who worked hard to plan our Montreal event and then regroup and go virtual.

Positions will be opening up in the Executive. We are looking for a new Continuing Education Coordinator and another board post will also be opening as I will be stepping down as President. I would like to thank Dr. Julie Schell, Dr. Rona Sherebrin, Dr. Gwendolyn Jeun, Dr. Tracey Henderson, Dr. Susan Nadeau and Dr. Tracy Radcliffe for their hard work and dedication.



When the winds of change  
blow, some people  
build walls and  
others build windmills.  
-Chinese proverb

# **AVAC ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING & CONTINUING EDUCATION ONLINE**

**October 30–November 1, 2020**

**Recorded and live interactive sessions, recordings available for 3  
months after the event**

**7.5 HOURS IVAS CE CREDITS PENDING**

**Live hands-on lab session TBA Spring-Summer 2021**

## **ACUPUNCTURE AND PHYSICAL REHABILITATION**

**Dr Michelle Tilghman, DVM, CVA, CCRP**

**MEMBERS \$125 NON-MEMBERS \$250**

**[www.avacanada.org/courses.htm](http://www.avacanada.org/courses.htm)**

## **AVAC Continuing Education Schedule for Oct 30 - Nov 1, 2020 with Dr. Michelle Tilghman, DVM, CVA, CCRP**

Friday lecture 1 hour

The muscle and fascial channels for the canine

Objective: To review the muscle and fascial channels with the emphasis on the commonly seen canine lameness. The lameness to be covered are hip dysplasia, luxating patella and cranial cruciate injuries.

Saturday lecture 3 hours Objectives:

Acupuncture is a very important modality in the physical therapy toolbox. Acupuncture and physical therapy lectures will cover

1. Pain- what pain looks like. How acupuncture and physical therapy can alleviate chronic pain
2. Mobility – The different physical therapy exercises that can increase mobility in the common canine lameness.
3. Trigger points- Trigger points can be a hidden source of pain and lameness. A review of the lameness and the common muscles for trigger points. The acupuncture and physical therapy treatments that treat them.

Sunday 2 hours

1. Acupuncture for Neurological Disorders and Diseases – 1 hour  
Objective: Using three brief case studies, this lecture will present and illustrate the integrated TCVM and Western diagnostic process for neurological disorders that initially present as intervertebral disc disease (IVDD). In all three cases, a TCVM diagnosis was established and the patient was treated with a combination of acupuncture and aquapuncture, herbal medicine, spinal adjustment, massage, hydrotherapy – all as a complement to Western veterinary protocols. In each case, the patient either did not respond or responded atypically to the first three treatments, prompting further diagnostic imaging. This lecture will follow treatment of all three patients for different neurological disorders.
2. Clinical Study of Acupuncture for Transitional Cell Carcinoma – 1 hour  
Objective: Transitional cell carcinoma (TCC) is a common cancer in the

canine. This is a case study of five cases of TCC, that have been treated with TCVM and Western medicine. The goal of the treatment is to increase survival and extend quality of life. Most of the cases have been tracked with diagnostics and ultrasound. As of this writing four of the patients are alive and well and one is deceased. Case elements discussed will include diagnosis method, medical, acupuncture, and TCVM/herbal interventions, protocols used, and dietary changes.



All things  
change,  
and we  
change  
with them.

Chinese proverb

## **Practicing Acupuncture During the Time of Covid**

Dr. Julie Schell BSc(Hons), DVM, CVA, ACVCHM, CVC

Thank God we are healthy enough to practice during this terrifying time, and also thank God our government feels that veterinary medicine is an essential service.

As long as we stay healthy, we are able to work every day to help our patients. During some of our AVAC Community Huddles we discussed some of the trials and triumphs of working towards surviving and thriving during these unprecedented times.

Fortunately, as acupuncture and holistic practitioners, we are very used to having extended (60mins plus) appointments with our clients, so that we can perform a thorough TCVM exam with history taking, the exam of 100 questions. We are used to seeing less patients per day than what is possible in a Western practice, but we instead often see and understand a deeper and more thorough side of our patients and their interactions with their owners and their lifestyle.

Because clients have not been allowed inside veterinary clinics, most of us have been having either distant consultations, either on the phone or via video chat sessions with our clients. Tools such as Facebook Messenger, MSN, Skype, Google Chat, Zoom Meetings, and many others have been helpful as the client can watch us in real time work with their beloved pets. I also find that sometimes the pets like to hear the sound of their owner's voice as I have noticed that they wag their tails when they hear their owners say their name virtually. It is interesting because other pets do not mind at all being away from their owners during their examinations, even during 60 minute TCVM consultations.

Not having clients in our hospitals does require that our team members are being used to help hold and comfort patients during acupuncture and chiropractic treatment, as well as go outside to pick up the pets from the parking lot and then bring the pets and herbal and food prescriptions out to their owners. This often requires more team members to be on duty at a time, and definitely lots of use of PPE. Some of us have shortened our office hours slightly in order to concentrate staff. It is a great feeling however, knowing that we have not had to lay off many or even any team members.

All practice phone lines are often in use all at once due to the increased client phone discussion times. It would be great to add a few more phone land lines to

accommodate, or purchase practice cell phones. We are trying to communicate more using email and text, however we find many clients prefer phone calls.

Taking photographs of the pet after the acupuncture needles are placed to show owners is often appreciated by owners, especially if they do not have or want to use the virtual technology. Even a short video can be easily sent to the client using Facebook Messenger.

Other clients are more than happy to wait in their vehicle in the hospital's parking lot, or drop their pets off to go and run errands and come back when their pet is finished. For clients that wish to admit their pets and come back at a designated time, we can charge a 'kenneling fee' since we would have to use a suite or a room to keep their pet while waiting for them to come back.

We are surprised how many new clients we are seeing, new puppies and kittens that are being adopted and we are also seeing many clients that we have not seen for years during this pandemic. We hope that clients will get their jobs back and we hope that as CERB wears off, that people will be able to afford their new pets. We hope that they will purchase pet health insurance to make things easier for them.

The shift to virtual learning is a welcome change for many veterinarians as it cuts back the costs of travel and closing the clinic to do so. For the first time AVAC will have a virtual conference with Dr Michelle Tilghman this October 2020, so please stay tuned for details. AVAC also has many pre-recorded seminars for sale- check out:

<https://www.avacanada.org/courses.html>

And IVAS/CIVT is offering its Annual Congress 2020 online as well:

<https://www.ivas.org/news/2020-ivas-civt-joint-online-congress/>

The disadvantages of online learning is that we will not get to socialize face to face, hand to hand, and hug to hug with our beloved colleagues. However, we will look forward to times in the future when that will be possible again.

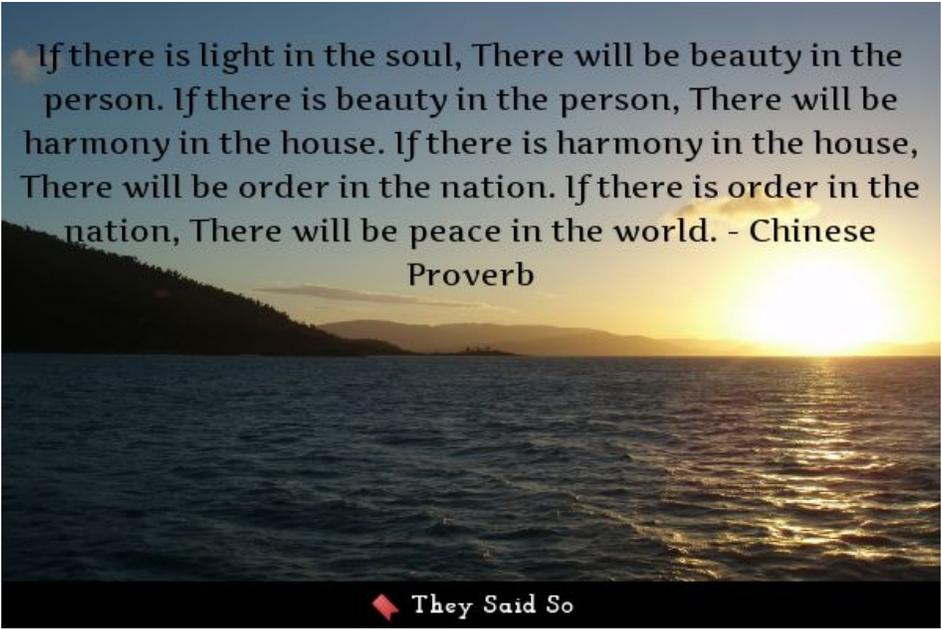
It is important to practice veterinary medicine and help our patients as much as we can, for we never know when or if we personally will become infected with COVID19, or if one of our team members will become infected. At that time, we will be forced to quarantine, most likely shut down our practice for at least 14 days. Not

to mention, worry about possibly dying or having someone we know die of this horrible disease.

It is also equally important to take care of ourselves and our families, making sure we get enough helpful sleep, rest, exercise, healthy nutrition, vitamins, acupuncture, chiropractic, herbal medicine, tea. It is helpful to pray, meditate, talk to our peers (virtually since we cannot visit them in person), spend time with our pets and remind ourselves that we need to be thankful for all the good things we have.

Fortunately, during Phase 2 of the re-opening, many daycares are now open, so veterinarians with young children can bring them back to their daycare and parents will not have to do homeschooling. That will allow many veterinarians to get back to helping their patients.

We all hope for an end to this soon, most likely it will be in the form of a Corona vaccination, before a new strain is able to develop through mutation. We are truly all in this together, and are always open to helping each other in any way we can. Hang in there everyone! Follow TCVM principles to keep yourselves healthy and strong, including protecting your Lung and Large Intestine Meridians—wearing long sleeves and scarves to keep these meridians warm. Avoid v-neck shirts. Eat Blood tonifying foods and herbs that dispel Wind. And most of all, rely on each other for comfort and increasing our knowledge which gives us power and courage.



If there is light in the soul, There will be beauty in the person. If there is beauty in the person, There will be harmony in the house. If there is harmony in the house, There will be order in the nation. If there is order in the nation, There will be peace in the world. - Chinese Proverb

◆ They Said So

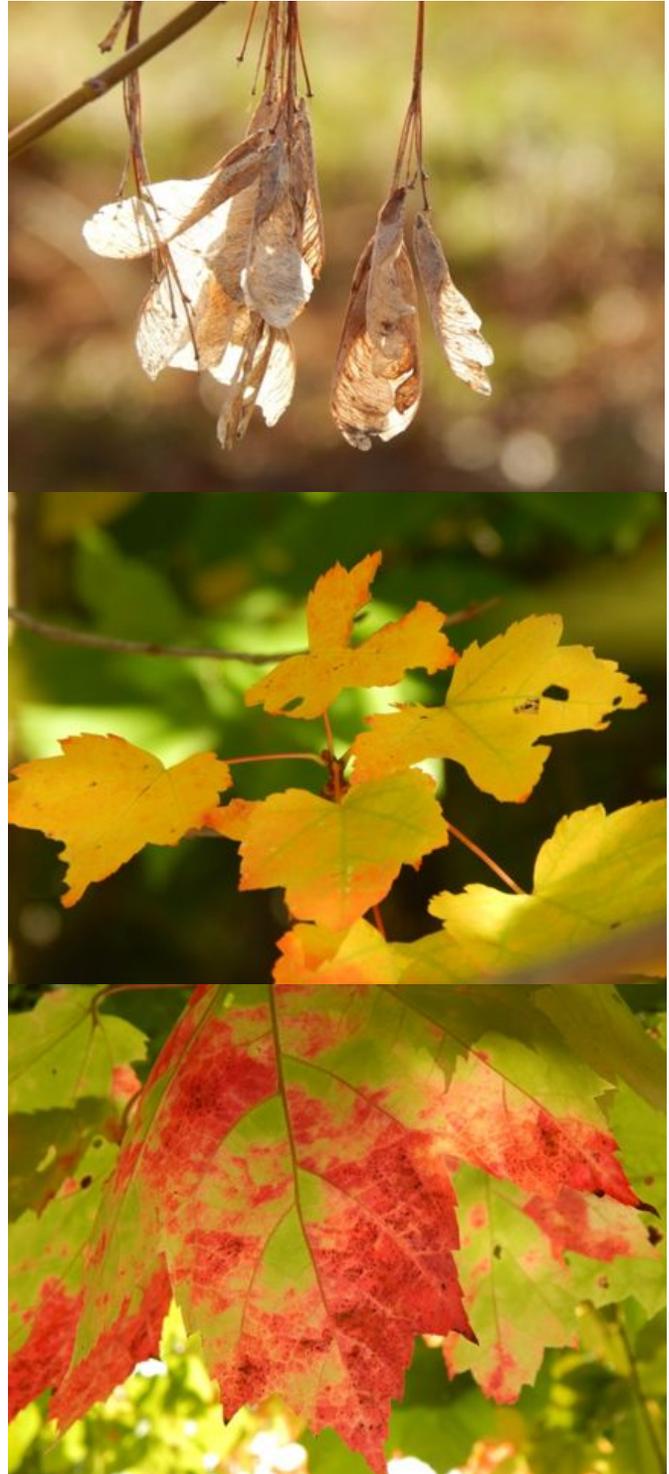
## Seeing beauty where you look

Photos and text by Jennifer Jobin

Mother nature may seem less friendly these days with all of our virus-related problems. Many are seeking solace in observing the natural world. While we are social-distancing, one of the only activities still encouraged is walking outdoors. Taking time to observe our local plants and animals can help our well-being and boost creativity.

The beauty of nature is that every day is different, each walk is an opportunity to discover something new. In March and early April, it was the beauty of ice and snow. Then came watching the beautiful emergence of the symphony of spring, followed by summer's fruits and flowers. Now the drama is in the fall leaves displaying nature's full palette.

When observing very closely, changes can be dramatic. No picture-postcard setting necessary. A close-up of tree bark, observing frost on grass or looking at colour reflecting in puddles can be enough. Trees all around are putting on a show. After taking time to observe a newly coloured leaf, one no longer sees an almost bare tree, but a collection of brightly coloured works of arts, waving in the wind. If we observe a dandelion and see a weed, we will look sadly at a yellow-dotted lawn. If we see a dandelion as a flower and a grocery-store



for bees, the yellow-dotted lawn becomes its own kind of flowery meadow.

Observing nature this way yields rewards, not just once, but with every subsequent glance. Make the time to take a hike or a walk and look at the scenes around you. Listen to the wind and feel the sun on your face. Find the time to discover something new and wonderful. Take a picture with your eyes or your camera and share it with a friend. Let yourself join the symphony of nature.



A birch tree shows off



A wildflower leans on a friend



## **2020 Joint IVAS/CIVT Virtual Congress- the first of it's kind, and hopefully not the last!**

Dr Julie Schell BSc(Hons), DVM, CVA, ACVCHM, CVC

I am very impressed with the quality and quantity of this successful Congress format:

<https://www.ivas.org/congress/>

The skills that CIVT has developed from organizing huge online, annual conferences in the past has really helped the joint IVAS/ CIVT Annual Congress excel.

As the era of Covid is deeply ingrained in our society, in all aspects, we had to find a way to offer the annual congress in virtual aspect. We did not want to skip a year as many of the lecturers were already prepared to attend the congress, which was originally going to occur in beautiful Scotland. Although it was super sad that we could not travel to that gorgeous country to learn and socialize with our beloved colleagues, we were still able to learn!

I definitely recommend attending- there are still live sessions September 12-13, 2020 and September 19-20, 2020. Once you have registered you can view these sessions and the proceedings any time.

Personally, I feel that the 2021 Congress will occur in the same format, online/virtual, as it will take a long time for Covid to become annihilated and for the world of international travel to come alive again.

But fear not, dear members, as CIVT and IVAS have you covered- you will be able to learn and build your skills seamlessly and uninterrupted thanks to the advent of the joint online congress!

**Did you know that there is a great international listserve for Veterinary Acupuncturists? It is a wonderful resource given the breadth, experience and depth of members - many of the legends in the industry. If you want to join, send your name and email to Dr. Cynthia Lankenau cyndvm@gmail.com . The listserve is called VETAP (previously known as PVA-L)**

## **Association of Veterinary Acupuncturists of Canada (AVAC)**

### **HOD Affiliate Report**

Dr Julie Schell of Calgary, Alberta

Dr Gwendolyn Jeun of Emeryville, Ontario

1. In addition to our regular AVAC Board of Directors virtual meetings, AVAC is organizing quarterly “Community Huddles” that are Zoom meetings open for all of the AVAC members to attend. Each time a different topic is chosen, such as “Coping with Covid in a new workplace” and “Acupuncture Pearls and Frustrations”.
2. We are preparing for our conference with Dr Michelle Tilghman- due to Covid it will change from a conference/workshop in Montreal, Quebec to a virtual, online webinar style. This will occur October 30 to November 1
3. We have upgraded our membership renewal options by offering online payments using Moneris. It is going very well so far!
4. We conduct and review surveys (Survey Monkey), asking our members how we are doing and what changes and improvements and services they would like as AVAC members. We want to stay relevant, close and helpful towards our members.



**Join us on Thursday, November 19 at 8pm EST for our 3rd community huddle. We are calling this one “Unstump your Stumpers”. So bring your cup of coffee or tea (or wine?) and bring your challenging cases to share with the AVAC community. Watch for the Zoom link in your email from AVAC.**

## AVAC 2020 Survey Results

(based on 26 responses)

1. Have you heard about the AVAC “Community Huddles”?

Yes - 87%

No - 10%

Maybe - 3%

2. Are you comfortable using Zoom for these “Community Huddles”?

Yes - 80%

No - 3%

Maybe - 17%

3. What topics would you like to see included in a Community Huddle in the future? Examples include practice tips, practice pitfalls to learn from and watch out for, discussion of interesting/challenging cases, discussion of favorite techniques, etc.

- a. Dealing with owners remotely during curbside COVID service
- b. Practice pitfalls
- c. Cases
- d. All of the above
- e. Discussion of how much to charge
- f. Questions and answer periods with renown practitioners like Dr. Marsden and Dr. Thoresen, discussions about great acupuncture resources such as curedcases.com
- g. How are we going to get CE?
- h. Favorite techniques
- i. Themed cases like dermatology, oncology, etc.
- j. How to get regular vets on board with acupuncture and refer cases
- k. Simple AP cases for people who don't do AP full time
- l. Mental health issues

4. With the current travel restrictions in place, would you be interested in participating in an AVAC online seminar, for example Dr. Michelle Tilghman in October 2020 rather than in person?

Yes - 69%

No - 12%

Maybe - 19%

5. Would you listen to recordings of previous seminars on veterinary acupuncture or a related topic?

Yes - 81%

No - 0

Maybe - 19%

6. Did you know that a benefit of having a 2020-2021 AVAC membership includes a complimentary recording of Dr. Linda Boggie seminar if you also join CIVT, the College of Integrative Veterinary Therapeutics? [www.civtedu.org](http://www.civtedu.org)

Yes - 12%

No - 88%

7. Did you know AVAC has a Facebook page (AVAC Community Forum, private group)?

Yes - 62%

No - 35%

Maybe - 4%

8. How can AVAC better suit your needs?

- a. Online CE
- b. Email newsletters work better for me; I do not have a FB account nor do I want one, no time to spend on social media, too busy with real life.
- c. Online meetings/huddles - difficult to get a time that works for both coasts
- d. More frequent case rounds discussion of interesting AP cases discussion
- e. Dealing with impatient/difficult clients
- f. Tools for practice: AP exam charts, AP referral forms and AP report forms for referring vets
- g. Keep website up to date, more communication about what is happening, timely newsletter or more frequent email blitz
- h. More regional representation feedback
- i. More local CE
- j. I believe AVAC should be a liaison for other CE opportunities. We should update our website with current "in person" and online CE opportunities. That means we have to be able to update the website routinely. We should allow the membership to send in links to CE opportunities and have someone designated to post that link, if appropriate. Even though we are an AP association, most of us use other modalities also, or would be interested in learning other modalities. There are many online webinars available for

human and veterinary modalities such as rehab, chiro, osteopathy, herbal medicine, and many are free.

9. In what province or territory are you located?

Nova Scotia - 8%/2

New Brunswick - 4%/1

Quebec - 19%/5

Ontario - 31%/8

Saskatchewan - 4%/1

Alberta - 12%/3

BC - 23%/6

10. How many years have you been doing AP?

Less than 1 year - 0

2-3 years - 0

4-6 years - 8%/2

7-10 years - 19%/5

11-15 years - 23%/6

>15 years - 50%/13

Editor's note:

This newsletter was put together fairly quickly in order to get important and timely information out to members, so there was no time to request input from members. When I first agreed to be the editor I wanted for all of us to be able to share information and ideas, but I also wanted to try to inspire, empathize, and connect with members needing compassion, understanding and motivation. I cannot remember a time in vet med when I have faced so much unhappiness, frustration and anger from clients. When I and my coworkers have been so physically and mentally exhausted. We live in a time when it has become acceptable to be hurtful and disrespectful and even threatening to others,

although it is usually done online, as part of a group, or on the phone; rarely are people brave enough to do this face to face. For the past few years Brene Brown has been a huge inspiration to me, so I thought I would share some of her knowledge and insight that has helped me continue to remain patient and compassionate (for the most part - there were a lot of "F" bombs that floated around the clinic when owners were not allowed in) :)

We are being forced to live in physical isolation, and this affects all of us in different ways.. People feel alone, disconnected, invisible, afraid. In our profession, we see that the pet is the only source of physical interaction and affection some clients have. So, I try to remind myself of Brene Brown's words when I am dealing with difficult people:

**It is so much easier to cause pain than feel pain.  
We are neurobiologically hardwired for connection with other people.  
In the absence of connection, love and belonging there is always suffering.**

And so for all of you who still go to work with a smile on your face, doing your best, sometimes wondering why, remember the quotation by Theodore Roosevelt:

**IT IS NOT THE CRITIC WHO COUNTS:**

NOT THE MAN WHO POINTS OUT HOW THE STRONG MAN STUMBLES,  
OR WHERE THE DOER OF DEEDS COULD HAVE DONE THEM BETTER.

**THE CREDIT BELONGS TO THE MAN WHO IS  
ACTUALLY IN THE ARENA**

**WHOSE FACE IS MARRED BY DUST AND SWEAT AND BLOOD**

WHO STRIVES VALIANTLY: WHO ERRS, WHO COMES SHORT AGAIN AND AGAIN

**BECAUSE THERE IS NO EFFORT WITHOUT  
ERROR AND SHORTCOMING**

BUT WHO DOES ACTUALLY STRIVE TO DO THE DEEDS

**WHO KNOWS GREAT ENTHUSIASMS, THE GREAT DEVOTIONS**

WHO SPENDS HIMSELF IN A WORTHY CAUSE

WHO AT THE BEST KNOWS IN THE END THE TRIUMPH OF HIGH ACHIEVEMENT

**AND WHO AT THE WORST, IF HE FAILS**

AT LEAST FAILS WHILE DARING GREATLY

SO THAT HIS PLACE SHALL NEVER BE WITH THOSE COLD AND TIMID SOULS WHO

NEITHER KNOW VICTORY NOR DEFEAT.

**- THEODORE ROOSEVELT**